Anthropology
A Humanistic Science

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Content

LIMINAL TRANSITIONS

Introduction:
Integrating Humanistic and Scientific Perspectives in Anthropology

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This edited volume weaves together scientific and humanistic approaches in anthropology in a way that they complement each other. The scientific 'camp' in anthropology affirms the material, social and symbolic reality of culture. Whereas, the more humanistic camp, by and large, rejects the noun 'culture' and favors the adjective 'cultural' as a means of signifying something that is shared among people, that has been constructed by the people themselves and is a product of local history (Lughod 1991). More recently, there emerged a trend that rejects anthropology's association with science. Instead, the *new* (now *old*) trajectory embraced a humanistic anthropology that avows the intersubjectivity and personal biases that inherently make cultural descriptions of 'the Other' (subjective) interpretations rather than (objective) representations. By definition, 'interpretations' eliminate the possibility of objective reflections of 'the Other'. Our trajectory offers yet a 'newer new' dialectical trajectory which opens the gateway for the emergence of a synthesis between the humanistic and scientific visions of anthropology.

Participants at our conference titled *Old Discipline, New Trajectories: Theories, Methods and Practices in Anthropology*[1] held on June 16–18, 2022, at Vilnius University, participated in molding a new trajectory, consisting of intellectual, ethical and multi-modal anthropology that is nonbinary as it embraces both science and humanistic approaches. This edited volume provides a front-row seat to recover and review this event and its intellectual output.

This volume brings together the conference's papers addressing the persistent divide between scientific and humanistic approaches in anthropology, while also examining methodological complexities, interdisciplinary connections, and the global and local challenges shaping the field today. Beyond these disciplinary debates, the volume engages with various contemporary issues: minority and majority relations in Poland, China, Palestine-Israel, India; localized effects of neo-lib-

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1   https://www.sasciconf2021.fsf.vu.lt/

eralism and its impact on the environment in Mongolia; social inequalities and marginalization linked to ethnicity in Lithuania and caste in India; evolving family dynamics and population decline in Europe; minority religions in Ukraine and India; and precarious labor on Indian opium farms. This edited volume presents a rich and multifaceted exploration of anthropology as a discipline while illuminating the complexities of contemporary human condition.

Below, we briefly discuss the current state of affairs in anthropology which motivated us to hold this conference. Thereafter, we will give an overview of the keynote talks and the papers presented in various thematic panels of the conference. We end our introduction with an acknowledgement of all the people who contributed to this conference behind the scenes.

Unravelling anthropology's present landscape

The complementarity of scientific and humanistic approaches to many anthropologists may appear as a pollyannish pipedream that hearkens back to the 1960s, when anthropologists were mostly unified, primarily because they did not get their knickers in a knot about whether anthropology was science or humanities. In their world, anthropological data is typically both qualitative and asystematic as it is primarily obtained through participant observation and interviews. Yet, what made this 'scientific' was that the anthropologists thought of themselves as objective observers who could gain enough understanding of the culture of a particular community to be able to represent it ethnographically. One might wonder how anthropology could ever claim to be a science as the methods are fundamentally not systematic or reliable, or even valid, given the lone-wolf approach of most anthropologists. Hence, the epistemic bias of anthropology as a self-identified science must seem dubious to natural scientists and those nearer to home, like psychologists, sociologists and political scientists, all of whom, in the main, have bought into the scientific paradigm. This hubris of anthropologists who claimed anthropology to be a science was gradually — and then at hyper speed — deconstructed, partially as a result of Foucault and his notion of distinctive epistemes, and also Derrida, who undermined the stability of any kind of claim to objectivity with his notions of the unstableness of any definition for any word.

In the social sciences, concepts must be operationally defined, theories should produce deductive causal and correlational claims, and all data collection methods should be systematic, adhering to established sampling criteria. Such professional

structures are impossible for anthropologists to adhere to when collecting data. Systematic methods for data collection and analysis require that methods are prioritized over becoming an ersatz member of the community in which the anthropologist lives and seeks to study. Anthropology becomes an obvious qualitative discipline, given that life unfolds and is experienced qualitatively. At best, anthropology can rely on case studies that provide a qualitative sidebar affirming the strength of hypotheses deductively derived. Analogous to how the universe is rapidly expanding toward increasing entropy, similarly, the discipline of anthropology has fragmented into ever more associations that hold very different ideas about the nature, purpose and products of anthropological research.

The entropy of our discipline was evident in the recent online discussion between the President of *The American Anthropological Association* (Professor Akhil Gupta) and his colleague (doctoral candidate Jessie Stoolman) and, on the scientific/empirical side, Professor Herbert Lewis and Associate Professor Gitika De (who served as a discussant)[2]. The two sides promoted prominently different visions of the history, methods, and purpose of anthropology. Such a process of fragmentation promotes a positionality analogous to Frankenstein adrift on a shard of ice; no one is listening or talking back. The field is undergoing fragmentation with multitudes of epistemic and ontological shards, as if anthropology is a broken vessel.

Perhaps the state outlined above is an overly pessimistic view of anthropology, but, without strong claims, there is no effort put into healing the discipline and re-creating a holistic conception of what anthropology is about and how we can regain our mojo. The purpose of the conference was to offer a meeting place for positioned imaginaries to converse with each other and agree to a dissonant orchestration of panels that, in their very performance, created intrigue and interest rather than an orchestral accommodation of different voices and visions. This means that the organizers of the conference did not intend to be the choir for science or humanism; we intended to bring together practitioners in both camps and let the 'wisdom of the crowds' lead to interchanges and theoretical crossings.

The conference offered an opportunity to anneal the shards back together without silencing their respective theoretical and methodological voices. We embraced Eric Wolf's dictum, "Anthropology is both the most scientific of the

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2   This event was co-organized by the Institute of Asian and Transcultural Studies at Vilnius University and San Diego State University: https://www.sasciconf2021.fsf.vu.lt/conversations-in-anthropology.

humanities and the most humanistic of the sciences" (1964, 88). Of course, the task of inviting participants and organizing and presenting papers that shared this contrapuntal vision of anthropology was a difficult chore. We wanted to make sure that scientific and humanistic studies were displayed so that the audiences could eat and digest data and ideas from all sorts of perspectives. For this purpose, we sought to sequence talks in ways that provide opportunities for participants and audience members to attend both *science*, *humanistic*, and *in-between* types of talks. Our imprint on the world of Anthropology is small, but the conference provided a template for accommodating different voices without relying on soundproof rooms.

Organization of the edited volume

In this edited volume, we present a small yet significant part of the conference talks. The conference panels and papers showcased the thematic and methodological diversity existing in anthropology today, and we seek to provide space for this diversity in this edited volume. Conference papers covered such diverse topics as the history and nature of the discipline of social anthropology, various methodological frameworks for data analysis, religion, family, ethnicity, social exclusion, environmental issues and the state's regulation of precarious labor. From the methodological point of view, they count on the traditional methods of ethnography, such as interviews, conversations and participant observation, but also historical, free-list, theoretical and methodological analysis. They present empirical research conducted in China, Poland, Palestine-Israel, Mongolia, Ukraine, India, Lithuania, etc. and also the theoretical analysis that moves beyond particular regional contexts.

The edited volume is divided into three sections. The first section, ***Overview of Key Issues in Anthropology*** contains the papers written by the conference's key note speakers. Ideologically, the key note speakers placed their stamp on what each perceived to be a key issue (or set of issues) in anthropology. Each of these papers is bold and 'full screen' in its view of the frailties, function, tools, and aims of anthropology.

Our first keynote speaker was Professor Chris Hann. He is committed to ethnography not as a preliminary stage of research, but as the basis for how we conduct research on human beings and the social systems they construct. Hann's paper *Anthropology, Science and Politics: Renewing the Vocation* is both diachronic and synchronic; he traces the trajectory of his research in both China and in Po-

land. His paper is a *tour de force* overview of how anthropology is both a scientific and political endeavor. In the fieldwork phase anthropologists are also engaged in the political realities of the behavioral environment — the people they want to study, the politicians and bureaucrats that they have to deal with to obtain a visa, permissions to conduct research, assistants to translate and connect them to people — and so on. Hann explores the back stage world of the anthropologist as well as the front stage. He knits these two stages together as inseparable parts of fieldwork. Anthropologists tend not to mention the politics inherent in getting to the field, using assistants to interpret and swerve through the legalities and morality of field research. It is to his credit that Hann does a remarkable job of combining both realities over a diachronic analysis of two fieldwork sites. Hann covers a wide range of contemporary topics concerning the history, purpose, and ideational hemorrhage that is currently occurring in the field of anthropology. He is quite clear about favoring a scientific approach to research and curtailing one's own political stances when in the field. Combining these two positions allows him to emulate Weber's idea of 'Verstehen'. Hann's theoretical perspective and methods rely on an agented, cultural circuitry connecting symbol, speech, institutional roles, affect and collective behavior to understand the processes by which leaders cloak their own interests within a narrative that spawns ebullient nationalist sentiments. His discussion focuses on his wife's and his own ethnographic work in the southern Xinjiang region located in the northwest of China. There, the Uyghurs are being fully displaced by Chinese Han (an ethnic group). Hann captures the intrepid highs and depressive lows of anthropological fieldwork, while also providing an excellent example of how to carry on anthropologically substantive research under challenging conditions. Hann also writes about his ethno-historic work on Ukrainian minority in Poland which sheds light on the current relations between the two countries.

The second keynote talk was delivered by Smadar Lavie, professor emerita of Anthropology at the University of California, Davis. She was a Fulbright scholar at Vilnius University for the semester at the time the anthropology conference took place. In her paper titled *Who Can Publish Decolonized Ethnography and Cultural Theory with the Anger it Deserves? Unclassified Lloronas and the Academic Text*, Lavie provides a deep dive into how hegemonic forces constrain what and who is 'in' and 'out' in academic business. She points both to the 'tyranny' of the English language and that of the academic elite who control the academic reward system. She makes visible the hegemonic wall built by elite feminist academics to keep out or belittle the work of grassroot indigenous scholars. She talks about a feminist-of-color positionality which critiques the US-UK academic

establishment's domination over the publication process in terms of the decision-making criteria for what constitutes a publishable paper. Lavie explores who is entitled to narrate the anger of the woman-of-color in academic text. She argues that tenured women of color of what is considered "recognized US minorities" are able to express emotions such as anger or sadness in their texts. However, women scholars of color from the Global South are not, and, if they do, they do not fit the racial classification of the US-European academe. Lavie's essay shows the means and manipulative tools which those in the majority use to deflect, neglect, and closet the work of women from minority ethnic groups and women who speak, in essence, "truth to power." She contrasts female scholars from the Global South with those of the Global North. The latter are motivated to simplify the works of feminists in the Global South for the sake of creating a unified feminist epistemology that counters the dominant master narrative supporting patriarchy and its offshoots (for example, Perry's 2022 book *The Case Against the Sexual Revolution*). Particularly, Lavie discusses the *conocimiento* model of Anzaldúa which seeks to replace the "monological and unidirectional anthropology" of the North (p. 43) with a subaltern voice that equalizes the scholarly landscape. Lavie continues her historical critique of how the academic establishment filters what is acceptable to be published and what is not by turning to Palestine-Israel and intra-Jewish relations from the perspective of Mizrahis, so-called Eastern or Oriental Jews, who also constitute a 'racialized majority'. She reflects on the complicated situation of "Mizrahi feminist author-activists" who reject Zionism and Ashkenazi dominance, as "they must fight to carve out a third space between the binarisms available for international public consumption: One is the Jewish State versus its Arab-enemy neighboring states. The other is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict" (p. 45). Lavie's essay is a diachronic analysis of the historical process of silencing minorities or non-dominating groups by means that are not just immoral but purposefully cruel, even abominable. It is that very abominableness that leads to the importance of justifying writing with anger.

Another keynote speaker at the conference was Professor Dulam Bumochir who at the time of the conference was the chair of the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology, National University of Mongolia. In his paper titled *Indigeneity of Neoliberalism in Mongolia's Nation Building*, Bumochir traces the history of corporate and foreign interests in mining in Mongolia. These companies were invited as the government embraced neo-liberal policies for the 'development' of the nation (shades of Hann's theoretical model). He follows the engagement of Mongolian environmentalists (comprised mostly of locals) to stop or modify

the encroaching activities of multinational corporations to excavate mineral deposits along the rivers of Mongolia. Bumochir's *emic* (inside) perspective and participation in supporting the rights of those Mongolians most affected by the degradation of their environment shows us the power of ethnography as a "weapon of the weak" that can effectively counter the aims of neoliberal policies. Mongolian resistance to foreign mining companies is examined at the micro level of decision-making by people most affected by the incursion of mining into their lives and country. These people — politicians, entrepreneurs and the common folk — seek to defend their Mongolian heritage and land use traditions. Bumochir moves to the institutional level by examining government policies as they seek to find a middle ground between modern capitalism and traditional practices. While his account of the incursions of mining industry is specific to Mongolia, similar anguished issues can likely be found in many other countries. His account is not just about the Mongolian nation but about all countries where foreign business has deep economic interests that, in turn, have importunate consequences on the environment and on the lives of people living in the mining areas.

Our keynote sessions were closed by Professor Vytis Čiubrinskas, perhaps the most well-known Lithuanian anthropologist, who possesses knowledge of the birth, growth, and tribulations of anthropology in Lithuania. In his paper *Social Anthropology in Lithuania: Challenges, Resilience, and Particularity of the Discipline,* Čiubrinskas traces the diachronic ups and downs of the viability of an anthropology discipline in Lithuania. In doing so he excavates into the history of American-Lithuanians who returned to build a department at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas in the 1990s and then discusses the support of Scandinavian anthropologists that were crucial in building the anthropology program at Vilnius University at the turn of the millennium. He then focuses on further developments of the anthropology field at Vytautas Magnus University and other institutions through cooperation with various European and American colleagues and universities. Čiubrinskas' recounting of the history of Lithuanian anthropology demonstrates the central importance of anthropology for constructing a worldview in which the Lithuanian culture is weaved into the cultural patterns outside the territory of Lithuania, and, in that way, the Lithuanian culture is not just a national but part of a global culture.

We have labelled the second section ***Engaging New Diachronic and Synchronic Methods for Ethnographic Research***. Most of the contributions in this section rely on important emic methods that are also systematic.

One of the primary goals of the conference was to provide a platform for the exchange of knowledge between scientific and humanistic approaches within social anthropology. James Rose's paper *Science and Social Anthropology: Resolving Hierarchical and Horizontal Knowledge Structures* aptly untangles this theme. Rose explores the relationship between social sciences, particularly social anthropology and natural sciences, by focusing on how knowledge is produced and reproduced in these disciplines. He relies on pedagogic sociology to ground his argument about the differences between social and natural science disciplines and their pedagogies. In his view, natural sciences and their disciplines are paradigmatic, which means that they integrate each other's findings and theories, while building a coherent paradigm which serves as a consensual base for these disciplines. Meanwhile, social sciences and social anthropology continue to be pre-paradigmatic because they tend not to build upon already existing discoveries within the social science field, but rather seek to challenge the already existing theories with new theories. The literary turn or, what Rose calls linguistic philosophy, further distanced social anthropology from the systemic integrative approach. Rose argues that, within social anthropology, specific fields of research have had more of an integrative systematic character (i.e. kinship, religion, language and economy studies), and consequently they can serve as a base for seeking greater integration in social anthropology and in the other social science disciplines that continue to be "trapped in a persistent 'pre-paradigmatic' state of self-contradiction and conflict" (p. 100). Rose discerns certain scholars within natural sciences (Kuhn, Wilson) and social anthropology (de Munck and Bennardo, Leaf and Read) whose work could be used for creating a more integrative approach with a 'strong grammar' (p. 113) in the natural and social science disciplines.

Another contributor, Ann Feuerbach, approaches the question of science in anthropology from a methodological angle. In her paper *An Easy Framework to Organize Complex Data*, she highlights that social anthropology and other social science disciplines (e.g. Archaeology) often lack a systematic approach towards data analysis. Even though some anthropologists expressed the need for a scientific approach in research methodology, many works have been theory and not primarily data-driven. Therefore, she proposes a model, or a 'framework', for complex data analysis which relies on merging inductive and deductive approaches. This approach initiates with an inductive method, where the testable evidence is re-evaluated to identify patterns by aiming to narrow down the variables that are significant for addressing the specific research

inquiry. This model includes such aspects as space, time, matter (i.e. people and things) and energy (i.e. actions) described and analyzed from the emic and etic perspectives. Feuerbach not only presents this model in abstract terms, but also shows how it can be used in practice for specific case studies. She describes two well-known archaeological cases, *Mappa Mundi* and the *Ulfberht* swords, to show how this framework could bring more depth to the analysis while revealing the worldview and knowledge of people who created the map and how *Ulfberht* swords can be linked with specific personalities and the wider social, biological, economic, religious, and military circumstances of the time. This model can be useful for creating a theory built on robust, credible and rich data. Even though most of the criteria of data analysis presented in the model might be intuitively applied by many researchers, this framework could work as a good reminder for anthropologists to keep the systematic approach and not miss any of the previously mentioned criteria in data analysis.

The three following papers fall under the theme of family, its historical evolution and contemporary forms. Inés Gil-Torras explains the trend of co-habitation in Europe as a historical legacy of the pre-industrial family system. She points out that, historically, there were diverse family systems in Europe, and that marriage as a formal union was institutionalized only after the Council of Trent (1563). Apparently, marriages tended to get more institutionalized in the contexts where dowry customs were prevalent. Gil-Torras argues that the current co-habitation practices could at least be partially related to the pre-industrial family systems in Europe and that "the common sense linked to these family structures has persisted till today and is still affecting our behavior even after these family systems changed their historical structure" (p. 143).

Two other papers on the family theme are a part of the larger project "Love Relationships in Contemporary Lithuania and their Effect on Marriage, Fertility and Family Choices" (led by Prof. Victor de Munck; funded by The Research Council of Lithuania). Jūratė Charenkova explains the declining fertility rates of Lithuanians by looking at the changing perception of children. Žygimantas Bučius explores the changing conceptualization of family among Lithuanians. Drawing on the free-list data, both researchers focus on the changing cultural meanings and conceptualization of children and family among Lithuanians rep-resenting four age groups. Charenkova's research shows that, regarding children, adults in the older age group expressed mostly positive meanings to children, while the younger groups associated having children with challenges, difficulties and responsibilities. In terms of marriage, Bučius argues that "Rather than being a natural (or organic) part of the life cycle, marriage has now become a choice"

(p. 194). Both papers are based on a preliminary free-list research model that could later serve as a useful base for the emic-informed interviews and surveys. With a focus on cultural meanings, norms and values, these two papers provide valuable insights that could help explain the worrying demographic tendencies in Lithuania.

The edited volume contains four papers dealing with very different themes and contexts. However, each of them focuses on marginalized social groups that are on the fringes of the normative boundaries of society. All four chapters use ethnographic methods to portray the way individual members of liminal social groups understand and act on their positionality within the larger cultural landscape. Because of the liminal position of the groups under study we label this third section ***Liminal Transitions***.

Eugenijus Liutkevičius' paper analyses the worldview of Baptists in Ukraine. He shows that Baptist followers develop the capacity to perceive the world beyond the constraints of time and space, while including the third dimension encompassing the biblical narratives and symbolism into their everyday perception of reality. Liutkevičius argues that "The Bible thus serves not only as the expression of the eternal divine will, but also, at the same time, the Bible offers templates for interpreting the contemporary events" (p. 209).

Afsara Ayoub's paper explores the religious conversions of Dalits (so-called ex-untouchables in the Indian caste system) from Hinduism to Buddhism in Shabbirpur village in the northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. By looking at religion beyond faith and belief, she explores the sociocultural and political dimensions associated with religious conversion. Rather than spiritual acts, conversions are recongnized by her interlocutors as political and social strategies which enable Dalits to fight caste discrimination and assert their different religious identities from Hinduism.

Agnieška Avin explores the meaning of 'here' and 'there' among Lithuanian Roma individuals. She explores their decisions to emigrate to Western Europe in search of a better life or to stay here in Lithuania, where social stigmatization continues to shape their identity. She contends that "for Vilnius Roma, (im)mobility imaginations can be seen as a space for social critique of experienced inequality and injustice" (p. 246). These imaginations also allow Roma individuals, whether staying or leaving, to better understand and relativize their social, cultural and ethnic identity.

Linas Tavaras explores legal opium farming in India, the everyday reality of these farmers and the State's regulatory practices regarding opium farming. Based on the fieldwork in two villages in Madhya Pradesh among legal opium

cultivators, Tavaras shows how opium farmers' lives and profession unfold at the intersection of the cultural tradition, burdensome regulatory policies of the Indian Government and temptations from the black market.

Acknowledgements

Our texts, whether humanistic or scientific, inevitably represent 'the Other'. At one extreme, we can represent 'the Other' like Paul Gauguin, invoking the sensual beauty of what it means to be 'this human,' or, like Francisco Goya, capturing our capacity to kill each other. The conference panels worked across such varied dimensions. From the first to the last day, the participants practiced the principle of unity in diversity. This unwritten principle not only greased the wheels that propelled the daily slate of talks but also led to the porous nature of groups; we intermingled, and there were no outsiders or insiders, no ideological factions rattling sabers. While always respectful, we did not need to be cautious for fear that our discussions or debates would produce embers of rancor; indeed, they stoked the fires by which we could stay warm into the night. We could sense that many held views in opposition to others, but this led to detailed, informative discussions from which we learned to appreciate new ways of drinking old wines.

The very idea and possibility of the conference emerged from a number of sources. It could not have happened, or even been considered, without the enthusiastic support and open channels between two institutions on the opposite sides of the Atlantic. In North America, the Society for the Anthropological Sciences (also called SAS) and, on the Eastern shores of the Atlantic, the Institute of Asian and Transcultural Studies at Vilnius University. The conference was held and mostly supported in all ways by Vilnius University and the efforts of both the Institute's staff and students. It was funded by the Research Council of Lithuania. We thank Stephen Lyon, the former president of SAS for his support, attendance and inspiring speech to open up the conference.

Victor de Munck, a professor at the above Institute and an executive member of SAS, and the Institute's former director, Dr Kristina Garalytė, recruited a working committee of anthropologists from around the world. The committee consisted of members from UK/Pakistan (Stephen Lyon), India (Gitika De and Eswarappa Kasi), Ukraine (Kateryna Maltseva), the United States (Giovanni Bennardo and Douglas Hume), and Lithuania (Victor de Munck and Kristina Garalytė). As a result of the geographically ecumenical makeup of the committee, we were able to recruit researchers from nearly every continent except Africa.

We are grateful to a number of people who helped us make this conference come into being, to name a few: Vilmantė Matuliauskienė, without her, we would not have even had our name tags, much less bags. Second, Tomas Bedulskij, who took upon himself all software issues – the *Zoom* connections, printing, and whatever else computers can do. Deimantas Valančiūnas, who oversees, participates, nods, and ensures that things go smoothly, while looking for adaptive shortcuts when we are stumped and finding ways to go forward. Then there are all the undergraduate and recently graduated students who have helped, Ieva Svigarytė and Emilis Nikitinas certainly ranked first, but then there are those who helped just to help – Rapolas Vrubliauskas, Ieva Jokužytė and Linas Tavaras.

We also want to thank Valdas Jaskūnas, Vice-Rector for studies at Vilnius University, for coming at such short notice to give this conference the blessings of our noble administrators who generously supported this project and are sincerely interested in making Vilnius University an important center for anthropology.

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Key Issues in Socio-Cultural Anthropology

Anthropology, Science and Politics: Renewing the Vocation

Chris Hann (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology)

Abstract. In Germany, the discipline known traditionally as *Völkerkunde* or *Ethnologie* is currently (as a result of Anglophone dominance) being rebranded as *Sozial-* und *Kulturanthropologie*. Irrespective of the name, as a holistic field of enquiry, anthropology exemplifies the difficulties involved in demarcating boundaries between the humanities and the social and natural sciences. In the German language, all three are forms of science (*Wissenschaft*). Following these preliminaries, this paper draws on the celebrated 'vocation' lectures of Max Weber to probe the political dimensions of anthropological research. The possibility of a value-free science was precluded in socialist ideology, and it is again unfashionable nowadays wherever 'activism' supplants 'academic' agendas. In defending the Weberian ideal that stipulates the separation of the scholar from the politician, the chapter draws examples from various locations in Eurasia: Gypsies in Hungary, Uyghurs in China (Xinjiang), and finally Ukraine. It is important to maintain a dialogue with 'local scholars' subject to political constraints. Joint projects to test an agreed hypothesis may be an appropriate way to maintain conversations and advance knowledge. The chapter concludes with a personal note about the difficulties which arise in socialist and postsocialist Eurasia for a researcher from the West who is sympathetic to socialist ideals.

Keywords: Hungary, Max Weber, politics, science, Ukraine, Xinjiang, values, value-free.

Introduction

The anthropological field is a curious playground of research traditions, imperfectly reflected in confusing nomenclature, even within one and the same language. *American Ethnologist* is a highly competitive cutting-edge journal, yet where I come from in the UK the term 'ethnology' reeks of nineteenth century expeditions, antiquarian classifications, and museum collections. When Günther Schlee and I started the new Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle in 1999, we were advised that a more appropriate German name would be *Max Planck Institut für ethnologische Forschung*. Not being very familiar with either the language or the disciplinary traditions in German, I accepted the reassurance I received that *Eth-*

nologie was the appropriate contemporary term. However, the professional association I joined soon after my arrival was called *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Völkerkunde*, the name that was more familiar to the general public. A few years ago, without any suggestion that the nature of activities should be modified, this association decided to rename itself the *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Sozial- und Kulturanthropologie*. I voted against this change, which seemed to me to be an example of the global dominance of English of which our discipline should be especially wary.

The Max Planck Society devotes most of its resources to the 'hard sciences'. English is the dominant language of communication. Institutes in the humanities and social sciences are lumped together with several legal institutes, some of which do operate primarily in German because of the nature of their research. What we have in common is that we all aspire to science, at least in the sense that the standard term for the humanities in German is *Geisteswissenschaften*, literally, 'spiritual sciences'. I shall not be concerned with the history of art, or law, or science, all fields in which the *Society* is very productive nowadays. I take it for granted that social anthropology belongs in the social sciences rather than in the humanities (though it is still housed in the latter in many German universities). I shall argue that the knowledge we produce should be assessed by the same basic rules as those applied in the so-called natural sciences. At the same time, we must accept that our discipline is less likely to advance through technological innovation than some of those we have worked closely alongside in the past. We may, for example, be able to do many things more efficiently through the application of computers or the use of new recording equipment. But it is unrealistic to imagine that anthropology can ever be transformed overnight in the way that, for example, carbon dating and chemical advances have made archaeology a more rigorous scientific endeavour than it had been previously. We must accept that our science advances differently, and that it is legitimate to look back to classical social theorists to outline our epistemology and our methods.

In the first section of this paper, I shall explain why Max Weber has often been criticized for asserting that the social sciences (in his case, sociology, but here there is no significant difference to anthropology) must remain *wertfrei* (value-free). Closer inspection reveals Weber's historical sociology to be shot through with Eurocentric prejudice. He was a conservative nationalist who admired charismatic leaders (it is perhaps just as well that he passed away more than a decade before Hitler came to power). Contemporary anthropologists are likely to hold very different values. They frequently investigate politically sensitive, socially controversial topics. Is a progressive, 'public' or 'activist' anthropology consistent with the mantle of science? Does postcolonial or decolonizing critique

still have a long way to go before the production of knowledge in our field is truly emancipated from the poisons of imperial legacies? Or has the self-critique already been overcooked to the point that we can no longer recognize the achievements of the past and paralyse ourselves in the present?

After exploring these perennial issues in the philosophy of social science and reviewing lively contemporary debates with reference to Gypsies in Hungary, in the second half of the paper, I shall illustrate the issues empirically. I turn first to Xinjiang, also known as Eastern Turkestan, a large region of Northwest China in which I have fieldwork experience dating back to the mid-1980s, but which I am no longer able to visit due to the repressive policies of the government in Beijing. Finally, in the heart of Europe, I imagine how a *wertfrei* anthropological project might shed light on the ghastly war that has been unfolding before our eyes in Ukraine in the year 2022.[1]

Science

In two celebrated lectures given in Munich at the end of the First World War, Max Weber addressed student audiences on *Science as a vocation* and *Politics as a vocation* (Weber 2004). The key is to maintain the separation of the one domain from the other. The task of the scientific historical sociologist (for that is the principal field in which Weber worked) had been elaborated in earlier years. The method depends very largely on the construction of ideal types that do not reflect any specific empirical reality but which nonetheless, if the components are appropriately selected, facilitate the formulation of hypotheses, empirical testing, and generalizations about cause and effect.

This framing of causal explanation sounds simple enough, perhaps resembling a naïve positivism. At the same time, Weber is steeped in German idealist philosophy. The causal variables that interest him most are the ideas people have in their heads, rather than economic trends or political convulsions. The key word is *Kultur*. The task is to understand (*verstehen*) other mental worlds, since only by correct interpretation of subjective states of mind can we explain the actors' behaviour.[2] In recent times, such ideas have been called memes and theorized in

2   In contemporary German political discourse, the verb *verstehen* has come to be associated with 'excusing', especially when it comes to President Vladimir Putin.

terms of selection and adaptation. Max Weber did not use this vocabulary. His historical sociology does not engage with Darwinian evolutionist theory and will be perceived as suspect by all those for whom this is the litmus test of a scientific approach.

Nor (as far as I am aware) did Weber pay attention to the work of the ethnologists of his day, though he wrote in the decades in which the great wave of diffusionist theory was taking shape. The obvious reason for this neglect is that the early ethnologists were busy investigating the enchanted worlds of primitive tribal societies in remote places, whereas Weber wanted to understand the great literate civilizations (*Kulturwelten*) of Eurasia. In particular, he wanted to explain how disenchantment (*Entzauberung*) had become a dominant characteristic of the Western Christian world in which he lived.

Whether Weber lived up to his own methodological precepts concerning value neutrality in these comparative explorations is very doubtful (a case for the defence is made by Runciman (2013)). His most famous project hypothesized a link between a distinctive Protestant ethic, that is to say ascetic beliefs sincerely internalized, and the economic behaviour that catalysed the transformations we refer to as capitalist modernity. A century later, few historians or social scientists anywhere will defend this argument in its original form. Weber's focus on Calvinism was not backed up by evidence. His devaluing of Orthodox Christianity and Roman Catholicism and flaws in his analyses of the other great religious traditions of Eurasia reveal his prejudices, above all the Eurocentrism that was still so widespread in his age. To argue that there was something intrinsic to Protestant ideas that equipped their holders to be more successful capitalists than, say, Jewish or Armenian entrepreneurs, was to neglect more concrete economic and institutional conditions, such as the limitations imposed by Christian power holders on Jewish communities through the centuries. For all of these reasons, scholars such as Jack Goody rejected Weberian claims that postulate a "European miracle" based on inner-worldly asceticism and new processes of rationality (Goody 1996; 2010). Goody went so far as to dismiss the significance of religion altogether in his analyses of "alternating leadership" between Europe and East Asia over millennia. He was sympathetic to the California school of historians who date a "great divergence" between China and Europe only from the early nineteenth century (Pomeranz 2000). And if Goody were still alive today (he passed away in 2015), he would no doubt see the rise of China as a resumption of the East-West pendulum that he identified in numerous late publications.

I should disclose that Goody was my supervisor in Cambridge in the 1970s. At this time, a certain wind was beginning to blow against taken-for-granted

methods and theory building in anthropology. The interpretive approach of Geertz, emphasizing webs of meaning with more than a nod to Weber, was popular on both sides of the Atlantic. The structuralism of Edmund Leach encouraged making connections on the basis of inspired guesswork, rather than rigorous comparison. Leach explicitly decried the comparative method, arguing that the units were inevitably incoherent. Jack Goody disagreed and made use of the *Ethnographic Atlas* to support his comparative analysis (Goody 1976). By this time, such synoptic projects were already very exceptional. The Anglophone discipline was dominated on both sides of the Atlantic by particularist case studies and the specification of localized cultural knowledge.

I have no space to review methodological debates in all the different branches of our field. At one end of the spectrum, the rigor of the natural scientist must be precisely followed if results are to have credibility. We can draw on innovations in other fields and apply them to provide better answers to questions that are distinctively anthropological. For example, new knowledge in archaeogenetics may shed fresh light on household organization and kinship in prehistoric societies. But the great majority of socio-cultural anthropologists are no longer interested in testing hypotheses to validate comparative generalizations. They emphasize subjective dimensions, the *Verstehen* of Weber and Geertz, but they seldom test for causation and generalize their results. Explanation cedes place to culturalist accounts in which narrative devices are more important than attempts to quantify and correlate variables. The line separating work of this kind from work undertaken in cultural studies has long been fuzzy.

I think this is a shame. We might regain our scientific vocation if we looked once again at the old Weberian procedure of ideal types, irrespective of whether he himself was successful in formulating them. We should also revisit comparative methods. This might be helpful if we wish to make ourselves heard in public political debates, a topic to which I turn in the next section.[3]

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3   A reassessment of comparative methods was undertaken some twenty years ago by Richard Fox and Andre Gingrich. It resulted in an interesting collection (Gingrich and Fox 2002), but it has had little impact on practice in our field. I would particularly commend the historical chapter by Gingrich himself in which he coins the notion of "dethroned majority" to set about comparing the excesses of nationalist sentiment when empires collapse and many members of the formerly dominant people are now left outside the boundaries of their shrunken state. The cases explored by Gingrich are the empires of Ottoman Turkey and Austria-Hungary, but he also has a section analysing the disintegration of federal Yugoslavia in the 1990s. It is regrettable that models and comparative perspectives from our discipline are largely missing in current analysis of the Ukrainian war to supplement the accounts of political scientists, international lawyers, etc.

Politics

It goes without saying that the anthropologist as a citizen can take a public stand on political issues. If the scholar is famous and can invoke the results of scientific work to support the political commitment: so much the better! The archetypal case is the elderly Franz Boas marching to protest the rise of Nazi power in 1930s Germany. For contemporary possibilities we might think of protests against the likes of Trump and Johnson, with their blatant disregard for factual accuracy and for the law of the land. But with so many notions of populism swirling around, it will not be easy to construct an ideal type that would serve comparative analysis in the Weberian fashion.

I have engaged a little with the case of Hungary's Viktor Orbán, who launched his career in the late 1980s as a liberal critic of Communist domination but is nowadays the supreme leader of another one-party system. Orbán and his party dominate the national media, just as the Communist Party did when I worked in Hungary in the 1970s. If I were resident in the country, I am sure I would sign protests and turn up on the streets to signal my disapproval of this government. But I would do this on the basis of my personal values, not on the basis of my on-going research in provincial Hungary. The great majority of rural Hungarians deplored collectivization in 1959–61, even though they profited from the ensuing symbiosis between the socialist cooperative and the household plot in the last decades of the socialist rule.[4] In the depressed economic climate of the new century, they find Orbán's conservative (in my opinion, often demagogic) messages attractive. They much prefer him to the nominally socialist governments they had in the 2000s, and to any of the opposition parties which challenge his power nowadays. Given these circumstances, I am obliged to try to keep my political preferences separate from my ethnographic observations and analysis. It would be an injustice to decent intelligent people I have known for decades to insinuate that they only vote for Orbán because he has brainwashed them through his media monopoly and primitive appeal to nationalist sentiments. Rather, my research has to be bracketed apart from my politics in the Weberian fashion, however difficult this is in practice. This allows me to emulate his *Verstehen* approach, for example by exploring the symbols and the emotions that

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4   Since the 1990s, I have noted that increasing numbers of rural citizens have come to regret the way in which decollectivization was implemented, and to see the dynamic decades of household accumulation before 1990 in a much more positive light; see Hann 2015.

Orbán and his party manipulate so effectively. More comprehensive explanations will require engaging with concrete variables, such as institutional mechanisms for job creation and the funding of public goods. Ultimately, it is necessary to consider the entire neoliberal political economy, with its mix of transnational investment (mainly German car-makers), subsidies from the European Union, and simultaneous rapid formation of a national bourgeoisie. These tasks of understanding and explaining must be kept logically apart from evaluation and political activism. Max Weber ranted against professors who sought to impose their own values on impressionable students (though, again, he arguably fell into precisely this trap in his theorizing of politics, when elaborating his personal preference for the charismatic *Führer* and highlighting the dangers that he took to be inherent in over-bureaucratized electoral democracies).

This brings me to a consideration of current political trends within the anthropological field and the kind of knowledge we produce. Beginning in the last century with movements described loosely as postmodern, continuing somewhat more precisely in postcolonial theory, and later with terms such as intersectionality, the epistemological foundations of socio-cultural anthropology have been radically challenged. It is no longer a question of coming to terms with the inequalities in power that characterized European colonialism, and which gave rise to 'Orientalist' distortions even in cases where no formal empire existed. These problems were already widely debated when I was a graduate student. Marshall Sahlins commented wryly in 1993:

> "[…] in America many graduate students are totally uninterested in other times and places. They say we should study our own current problems, all other ethnography being impossible anyhow, as it is just our "construction of the other." So if they get their way, and this becomes the principle of anthropological research, fifty years hence no-one will pay the slightest attention to the work they're doing now. Maybe they're on to something."

The late Marshall Sahlins was one of the giants of our field for more than half a century, but 30 years ago he was already worrying about the future of our discipline as an accumulative body of knowledge. The mature Sahlins gave up his early evolutionist interests, polemicized against the sociobiologists, and was not the sort of anthropologist to care too much about the mantle of science. But, by the 1990s, even he was concerned about the way things were going.

The pressure today to pursue the decolonization of our discipline rides roughshod over what is perceived now to be a reactionary distinction between

science and politics. One recent manifestation of this juggernaut came when Akil Gupta, President of the American Anthropological Association, invited members in 2021 to consider a counterfactual past in which anthropologists did not buy in to the system and adhered instead to the values of decoloniality as understood today. This infuriated many, mostly senior scholars who felt that this radicalism was an insult to the motivations and solid accomplishments of generations of US anthropologists working in the traditions conventionally traced back to Boas (who, we should recall, like his contemporary Weber, was steeped in German idealist traditions).[5]

These polemical debates have implications for the work we do on the ground. It would not surprise me to hear that more dissertations in socio-cultural anthropology are prepared nowadays on the basis of activism in the framework of an NGO than on the basis of studying ordinary villagers in the way I worked in Hungary in the 1970s. Ethical guidance nowadays inhibits 'hanging out' because of the expectation that consent forms be signed, thus making every ethnographic interaction resemble an interview. The best defence for qualitative methods is the access they offer to informal 'backstage' relationships, to jokes and gossip, to all the richness of human sociality that other disciplines cannot hope to penetrate. We give up a great deal if we abandon all this.

Let me offer a brief illustration from Hungary. Michael Stewart worked among Vlach-speaking Gypsies in the 1980s, and his monograph is one of the richest accounts of their communities (Stewart 1997). Later in his career, as an academic based at University College, London, he trained many young Roma (in particular, at summer schools organized in Budapest by the Central European University). But the new generation is infected by the vogue for activist political engagement and sceptical of the academic standards upheld by Stewart (2017). This is problematic for numerous reasons. One is the simple fact that concrete phenomena in the real world are not being investigated and explained as they would be if the earlier ethnographic standards still prevailed. Another is the fact that political activism in the cause of 'Roma rights' tends to flatten and homogenize very different kinds of Gypsy community, thereby constraining the freedoms and creativity of their members.

Like Michael Stewart, I think that a renewal of our vocation as anthropologists practising a cumulative science can help us avoid these problems. In the long run,

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5   For more on these current debates, see the event organized at Vilnius University in February 2022: https://consent.youtube.com/m?continue=https://www.youtube.com/ watch%3Fv%3DgeljKqVxoO4%26cbrd%3D1&gl=GB&m=0&pc=yt&uxe=eomty&hl=en&src=1

we are more likely to make a difference politically if we abstain from short-term campaigning and get back to the basics of our ethnography-based discipline. This seems to me especially important in the early phases of an anthropological career. Political activism should be postponed until the point when it can be supported by one's own ethnographic materials and comparative analysis carried out dispassionately and professionally (so that it would have to be accepted by any other observer/analyst, including rivals with different values and political preferences). I now turn to illustrate these principles and their concomitant challenges in two very different locations of Eurasia.

Research cooperation in Xinjiang

Ildikó Bellér-Hann and I have worked intermittently in North-West China since the mid-1980s. There is no consensus on the history of the territory known officially (since 1955) as the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region. Uyghurs were the dominant people here until the socialist era. Over 80% of the population in the 1940s, they have long become a minority in their homeland (which they would prefer to call Eastern Turkestan). Today, immigrant Han Chinese dominate numerically as well as politically. Uyghurs have been accused of 'splittism' and religious fundamentalism. The latest phase in Chinese assimilation policy is to incarcerate vast numbers of Uyghurs in the so-called 're-education centres'. Although I have maintained cordial relations to scholars at the *Minzu* University in Beijing ever since the 1980s, it has been impossible for my wife and me to visit this region since 2013. Our principal partners in the region are in the centres or in prison.

Ethnographic fieldwork, even when it was still possible, was never easy. Even if they have some form of research permit, foreigners are not able to hang out freely, especially once they leave the major cities. We wanted to work in the countryside. In the 1990s, Ildikó had a number of projects that combined manuscript research in European archives with fieldwork. We spent some time in the oasis of Kucha, but had to leave at short notice due to ethnic antagonisms in that region. We were directed instead to the larger city of Kashgar and obliged to live on the campus of a teachers' training college, from which Ildikó would cycle out daily to the villages of the hinterland. She was accompanied by a Han Chinese, actually a professor of literature, but one of the few Han in Xinjiang whose Uyghur was good enough to be able to monitor our research. Imagine how villagers felt when a European knocked on the door of their home, accompanied by her Chinese

monitor. After a couple of months, the tensions boiled over. When I joined the daily research trips to the village, I noticed that Professor Fang was secretly recording the conversations on a simple recorder hidden in his pocket. When we protested that this was unethical, he responded vehemently: "You ask the same question in every house; you don't write down the answers; this is unscientific!"

In the 2000s, we were not allowed to return to southern Xinjiang due to escalating ethnic violence. Instead, we were granted permission to spend the best part of a year in the eastern oasis of Qumul. Here, too, we were carefully monitored; but, in spite of many minor frustrations, we were able to work for several months without daily supervision in two mountain villages. This was the most satisfying part of the research. As in earlier projects in Eastern Europe and Turkey, I used a questionnaire to gather basic quantitative data (local census, farming and other data on production and incomes) and to pose specific questions on cooperation and social support, which was the principal theme of the project. I combined this with 'hanging out' and followed up all kinds of threads originating in unscripted, informal conversations. This mixture of pre-planned lines of enquiry and taking advantage of serendipitous opportunities that could not have been predicted in advance enabled us to contribute to general discussions about kinship and social support in the cluster we organized at the Halle institute (see Endres and Hann 2017). But we also explored the production of local history, cultural heritage, ritual and religion, and other topics that had not figured at all in the project outline we had submitted, but for which we gathered materials almost effortlessly as the research unfolded (Bellér-Hann and Hann 2020).

We took the precaution of changing some personal names, and we avoided using photographs that would have identified individuals. Nothing in our book can be considered subversive by the Chinese state, but there is confirmation of the conclusions emerging from the research of other social scientists into the deeper causes of the spiralling antagonisms of recent years. Uyghur discontent has causes in political economy, and, more specifically, in the disadvantages experienced by Uyghur rural youth when seeking jobs in competitive labour markets. But institutional variables aside, through fieldwork, Ildikó Bellér-Hann and I have broached the *Verstehen* that was so important for Max Weber: if you understand the importance of Muslim ritual for the everyday life of the household, you will have a better grasp of why people feel so strongly when it is repressed. If you probe the resentment that is bound to arise when closely related peoples of the former Soviet Union became sovereign states, while your own people are locked into ever more oppressive relations with the dominant Han, then you can add a valuable subjective dimension to the work of other social

scientists. It is also possible, stepping back from the fieldwork materials, to place the case of Chinese settler colonialism in Central Asia in a wider comparative framework. China's decision in the 1950s not to emulate the USSR by opting for a federal constitution reflects its history over millennia as a 'civilizational state' (Arnason 2020).

This Xinjiang example shows that it is possible to combine the micro level of fieldwork in the present with archival research and with more speculative macro-level comparative explorations of the *longue durée*. That is the scientific side. As for the politics, although I have always found public anthropology attractive in principle, problems arise in its implementation. An international debate about Beijing's policies in Xinjiang has been raging for several years. The government initially denied the existence of the institutions in which more than a million Uyghurs have been incarcerated since 2017. When the evidence became incontrovertible, it switched its stance and presented these institutions euphemistically as "re-education centres." Foreigners, not just the Uyghur diaspora and their supporters in the Turkic-speaking world, but also the international scholarly community in Xinjiang Studies, liken them to concentration camps. The official view of the USA since Donald Trump's presidency is that a genocide is taking place, while the world looks on ineffectually. This is one area of policy where President Biden has followed his predecessor.

How should the anthropologist position himself in this minefield? For a long time, it was of primary importance for me to keep academic contacts alive. After all, without the support of Han Chinese colleagues, Ildikó Bellér-Hann and I would not have been able to live in rural Qumul as we did. We wanted to go back there and wrap up our research in a more satisfactory fashion. It has become hard to maintain this stance when all prospect of a return to the field disappears, and our Uyghur research partners have been placed in prisons or camps. I have therefore joined the international campaign for the release of Rahile Dawut, for long the principal gatekeeper for foreign anthropologists working in the region. Rahile is an internationally distinguished folklorist, and her imprisonment on trumped-up charges is an absolute scandal. Her family has appealed for international support, and Ildikó Bellér-Hann and I have signed up. In other cases, however, we are fearful of signing petitions and naming individuals, for fear that this might only lead to further sinister sanctions and reprisals against persons whose only crime was to assist us in the course of our long-term research in this region.

There are other reasons why I hesitate to endorse Trump's condemnations and to use the most explosive emotional terms available to us, such as 'concentration

camp' and 'genocide'. Many Han, scholars among them, argue in good faith that their state's investments in this region are acts of enlightened benevolence which bring development that is in the interests of the rural Uyghurs themselves. There is continuity here with the long-term civilizing mission of the Chinese state. Similar justifications can be put forward to support at least some aspects of the language policy: after all, it is truly in the interests of Uyghurs as Chinese citizens to acquire full competence in the language of the state, especially if they wish to compete on labour markets more effectively. Foreigners need to appreciate these factors and be able to practice *Verstehen* on both sides of the conflict.

My stance is that one should be able to debate such issues, to assess the evidence gathered by researchers like ourselves, and to prepare reports for policy makers in addition to articles for scholarly journals. Joint publishing with Han colleagues and consensus recommendations are unlikely, but severance of academic contact seems to me unhelpful. It is important to maintain some kind of dialogue in which one takes opportunities to question the nationalist view of Chinese history and calls for more attention to the aspirations of the Uyghurs themselves. Because I do not endorse every petition that is drawn to my attention, I am probably considered a spineless *Schleimer* by some scholar-activists. "How can you cooperate with and respect such a despicable regime?" is the sort of question I have to put up with. But, of course, I am not defending the repressive policies that have now been pursued for decades. It is just that I do not believe that the situation of the Uyghurs will be improved if I were to become a vociferous activist. At an institution such as the Max Planck Institute, dedicated to basic research, I tried to keep diplomatic doors open, and to amass evidence through research projects like the one I have talked about in this section, which reach deeper into the changing conditions of Uyghur civilization than any foreign journalist or non-anthropologist social scientist can penetrate.

Familial well-being in Ukraine

How would the pragmatism that I have outlined with respect to China and Xinjiang translate to the case of the Russian Federation and Ukraine in these months of extreme violence in 2022? I have not carried out fieldwork in either of these countries, nor do I have the linguistic ability to do so. I do, however, have fieldwork experience on the Polish side of this border. This project began in 1979 in the Lower Beskids section of the Carpathians, among people traditionally classified by Polish ethnographers as Lemkos. In the socialist decades, they were

classified by both the Polish state and the Soviet state as forming part of Poland's Ukrainian minority. In the course of my research, I learned about the deportations of the great majority of the indigenous inhabitants in 1947 (*Akcja Wisła*). This was the government's emphatic response to several years of 'terrorist' activity by the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, led by Stepan Bandera. Some of the old people I knew in the village of Wisłok Wielki recalled those events with bitterness. Some had participated in them, and lost family members to the Polish army. None had found it easy to return to their native community after years of exile. By the time of my work there, most inhabitants of Wisłok Wielki were Polish colonists. My project focused on their socio-economic conditions. I devoted an early chapter to the complex ethnic history of the Lemko-Ukrainians of this region, but the minority did not figure prominently in the main body of the book (Hann 1985).

During the 1990s, in the immediate wake of the collapse of socialism, I returned to the region. This time, I focused on the border city of Przemyśl (Ukrainian: Peremyshl), located north of the mountains on the San river, less than an hour away from L'viv. I was interested in how the new freedoms were impacting on inter-ethnic relations. One sacred building in Przemyśl was especially contentious. Ukrainian Greek Catholics, who formed a sizeable minority in the city, looked forward eagerly to the restitution of their cathedral, located on a prominent central hilltop, which had been appropriated in 1946 when the Greek Catholic Church was repressed (following the model of the USSR). Pope John Paul II himself urged that the building be returned from Roman Catholic stewardship to its historic owners. However, conservative clerical forces combined with secular nationalists to defend "the Polish character of the city." It was argued that the building had in fact originally belonged to Western Christians, and that it was right that it should remain in the hands of the Roman Catholic Carmelites. After numerous protests and violent incidents, this is indeed what came to pass. The Greek Catholics had to content themselves with a replacement building of less symbolic significance. The dome of their cathedral was dismantled and replaced by an elegant spire intended to emphasize the Western character of the city skyline (Hann 1998a).

In these years, then, relations between the majority and the minority in Przemyśl were highly antagonistic. Negative stereotypes of Ukrainians were widespread in virtually all sections of Polish society. Activists (many of them veterans who referred back to the violence of the 1940s) campaigned against the extension of new socio-cultural rights to the minority. They looked with disdain at the petty traders who flocked in during these years, driven by poverty in their native communities. Historical memories of Ukrainian 'terrorist' activity

that was a reaction to authoritarian Polish rule in the inter-war decades were cultivated in popular literature during the socialist decades. They were now supplemented by negative perceptions of Greek Catholic aspirations and 'dirty traders' (Hann 1998b).

In the light of these personal research experiences in the last century, I would not have predicted the strongly pro-Ukrainian sentiment of the media and virtually all political parties in Poland since President Putin's forces invaded Ukraine in February 2022. Inter-ethnic relations in Przemyśl began to improve in the first decade of the new century, not least because entrepreneurs (irrespective of ethnicity) realised that to rediscover the ethnic and religious diversity of this beautiful region would attract tourists and contribute to economic prosperity (Buzalka 2006). In the country as a whole, perceptions of Ukrainians improved as large numbers crossed the border to work in Poland, especially in the care sector. When Poland joined the EU and huge numbers migrated in search of opportunities in the West (especially in the UK), some of the gaps left in local labour markets and in families were filled by eastern neighbours (Follis 2012). Leaving aside all the contested questions of politics and geopolitical strategizing, the massive surge of goodwill that we have seen on the part of ordinary Poles towards Ukrainians in 2022 may owe a great deal to the familiarity bred by these intensified economic links.

I put this forward as a hypothesis which could be tested through anthropological research. After all, the most important methodological feature of what we do is the collection and direct reporting of qualitative data from the field. This is seldom sufficient to obtain funding. We are usually expected to formulate either a testable hypothesis or at least some *Leitfragen* ('leading questions'). These may secrete bias (the values of the investigator, or perhaps those s/he take to be the values of the committee members who will make the decision on the grant). But, irrespective of the working hypothesis, the anthropologist as ethnographer always ends up uncovering a great deal more material. The challenge is to make sense of it all. If the analyst clings to a position that is inconsistent with the data presented, the reader should be able to spot this. Values and positions on key issues may be nuanced throughout a population; or they may be entrenched in quite extreme ways in different segments of the population; this needs to be made clear in the analyst's publications. It ought to be possible to investigate Polish attitudes to Ukraine in 2022 in objective ways, irrespective of the investigator's own opinions.

Let me close this discussion by suggesting how a team of anthropologists might accomplish useful research tasks inside Ukraine, even as it burns. It is perhaps

no more likely that a team of foreign anthropologists would be able to work there in the immediate future than it is that Ildikó Bellér-Hann will be able to resume our research in Xinjiang. But, for the sake of the argument, let us dream. Let us also dream that the results of this research could be debated by Ukrainian and Russian scholars and politicians, alongside those of other countries.

My Weberian proposal would be to construct an ideal type of *familial well-being* and to operationalize this through fieldwork in at least six regions of Ukraine (more, if money and qualified researchers were available!). The research would have to start with a consideration of the semantic fields of Ukrainian terms such as *dobrobyt* and *blahopoluchchya*. Data collection would be undertaken in a selection of settlements roughly comparable in size. Yaroslav Hrytsak carried out valuable comparisons between L'viv and Donets'k in the first postsocialist decade, which demonstrated significant differences in self-identification and collective memory (Hrytsak 2000). It would be instructive to see what has changed in these two cities in the intervening decades, one a stronghold of national sentiment, and the other a major centre for the "dethroned majority" (Gingrich 2002). The remaining locations of this comparative anthropological project should be smaller, since the majority of Ukrainians reside in small and medium-sized towns. The dimensions to be investigated should include language and religion, where much research has been carried out already. National sentiment has tended to be strong among Greek Catholics, whose Church is concentrated regionally in the former Galician districts and could only emerge "from the catacombs" in the 1990s. But neither religion nor language determines allegiance to a national community in any mechanical way. Bilingualism and more or less systematic patterns of switching complicate the situation on the ground, where fluid accommodations are the norm in practice. It would be instructive to investigate what has changed in this regard since the pioneering fieldwork carried out by Catherine Wanner before the *Maidan* (Wanner 2014).

It would be plausible to assume that people experience the opposite of well-being (discomfort and anxiety, *Unbehagen*) when their existential securities are being threatened. Whether this influences their sense of belonging to a nation is a question that should be left open. For example, the residents of a town that has already lost a high proportion of its young people due to out-migration following the collapse of local industries might be keen to join the EU as rapidly as possible, in the hope of rebuilding with the help of transfers and new investments from the West. But others might prefer to try to avoid this disintegration in the first place, e.g. if their conurbation is integrated into some sector of the Russian economy,

and that this has enabled greater continuity in the lives of families and local communities.[6]

One might expect significant changes as the war continues, e.g. hatred of the enemy among those who have lost family members, reduced socializing across a newly salient ethnic divide, fewer 'mixed marriages', and further shifts away from the Russian Orthodox Church. But this anthropological research, according to Weberian principles, might also throw up surprises. It might reveal aspirations to both social and geographical mobility, especially on the part of young people; but, at the same time (and partially conflicting with such aspirations), a high valuation of local solidarities, e.g. being able to visit kin regularly because they work and live close by, and are not obliged to make their living in Poland or the UK. It might reveal as much mistrust of supposedly more transparent institutions in the European Union as that felt towards the 'oligarchs' who have hitherto dominated in Ukraine and Russia alike.

Conclusion

In this paper I have tried to defend the Weberian ideal of a value-free social science. This has become unfashionable in much of academe, but it seems to me more important than ever in an era in which notions of truth and evidence cede to 'fake news' and the proliferation of conspiracy theories and propaganda. It is possible to investigate even the most sensitive topics in objective ways, irrespective of the anthropologist's own values, such that the results will be recognized as valid by others whose evaluations differ. This critical objectivity is especially important when it comes to the assertion of values by the holders of power (as in 'European values') to justify behaviour by laying claim to the moral high ground.

This commitment to objectivity does not mean that our own values become irrelevant. My personal values have not changed significantly in the course of the years. Now, as during my years as a doctoral student (when ethical codes and human subject protocols did not yet exist), it is self-evident to me that the prime concern of the anthropologist must be the well-being of the people

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6   Drawing on the work of economist Yuri M. Zhukov (2016), Gábor Scheiring (2022) has argued that, in the post-Maidan Donbas, "[…] local economic factors were stronger predictors of rebel violence than Russian ethnicity or language. Municipalities where the local population was highly vulnerable to trade disruptions with Russia induced by austerity and the E.U. free trade agreement were more likely to revolt and fell under rebel control earlier."

under investigation. In my student days, without subscribing to any simple notion of 'false consciousness', I was confident that certain elites could form a better understanding of how to promote that well-being than ordinary citizens left to themselves. Did that mean I turned a blind eye to the inefficiencies and hypocrisies of Marxist-Leninist domination? Not at all. Readers of my early monographs will find plenty of evidence of the abuse of power at the local level, and of the dissatisfaction felt by the majority of villagers towards their socialist rulers. In Hungary, this was due to the perceived injustices of collectivization. In Poland, it was because peasants lacked the material benefits that collectivization eventually brought to their Hungarian counterparts. These contrasting realities on the ground reinforced my fundamental value-based conviction that some form of socialist mixed economy and a pluralist, tolerant society was in the best interests of Eastern European populations.

It has never been easy for Western scholars to elaborate arguments about Eastern Europe rooted in left-of-centre sympathies. One is usually reviled in diaspora communities. Mainstream academics in one's home country look askance and diagnose political naivety, a failure to overcome the jejune anti-Americanism that was so fashionable during the last decades of socialism. Anthropologists, whether native or foreign, will question the arrogance of any investigator who appears to second-guess local preferences, such as those of Hungarian villagers who voted overwhelmingly for the Independent Smallholders' Party in the 1990s, and who vote *en masse* for Viktor Orbán today. My position is that we can understand these sentiments by approaching them in their historical context; we can explain them best if we proceed to introduce a range of what I have been calling institutional variables, reaching up to the level of EU membership and global political economy.

If the vocation of socio-cultural anthropologists is to understand 'the people', this does not mean that we embrace and endorse values we consider abhorrent. When the climate deteriorates to the extent that it has in Orbán's Hungary, we need to look very carefully at those institutional variables and the role of elites at multiple levels (from regional oligarchs to foreign Presidents, Prime Ministers and Chancellors) in order to specify the chains of causality. This combination of field research and attention to institutional contexts is the basis of our Weberian claim to the mantle of science, which is the mission of the Max Planck Society. Additionally, I have argued that we need to hold on to the qualitative methods that have served us well in the past, and to comparison at multiple levels. We should not be afraid to join public debates about such sensitive topics as human rights and cultural genocide, drawing on the data we collect whenever appropriate. We

should show respect for the full spectrum of our contacts in the countries where we work, and refrain from writing judgementally on the basis of a prior set of values that we hold as citizens of another country, which we may operationalize more freely at home, both inside and outside academic communities.

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Who Can Publish Decolonized Ethnography and Cultural Theory with the Anger it Deserves? Unclassified Lloronas and the Academic Text[1]

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Abstract. Gloria Anzaldúa's autohistoria-teoria presents subaltern theorization and autoethnography as testimony. Nevertheless, subaltern women anthropologists from the Global South are not part of the North American 'woman of color' classification of Latinas, African-Americans, and Asians. They are therefore expected to use the U.S.-U.K. formula of dispassionate (post)colonial scholarship. The underlying assumption for the unclassified woman ethnographer from the Global South is that she comes from her country's cosmopolitan elite. She is therefore required to deploy the detached Northern social science language. This paper calls academic publishers to remove the elite label from the unclassified Women-of-Color authorship, and publish them in the decolonized, emotive Anzaldúa auto-ethnography of bearing witness.

Keywords: Gloria Anzaldua, Mizrahi studies, auto-ethnography, World anthropology, ethnographic methodology, Palestine-Israel, transnational feminism of color, racialized classification.

On 16 October 2009, while teaching at the University of Virginia, Charlottesville's Women's Studies Department, I attended a lecture by Brinda Bose, then an associate professor of English at the Hindu College of Delhi University. The lecture was titled "The Transnational Trials of Taslima Nasrin." Trained as a physician, Nasrin is a Bangladeshi feminist who has written an impressive opus on women's oppression under South Asian Islam. She was forced into exile in Sweden due to multiple *fatwas*[2] calling for her death. Bose delivered her postcolonial lecture in Oxbridge English in a sari. As I listened to Nasrin's globe-trotting, my mind

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2 A *Fatwā* (Arabic) is a nonbinding legal opinion on a point of Islamic law (*sharia*) given by a qualified jurist in response to a question posed by a private individual, judge, or government.

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wandered to the logistics of it all. Is Bose a product of India's elite British schools? Who paid for her Oxbridge education? Nasrin and Bose seemed to be on the Global South-to-North traveling star circuit. Who's financing all of this? Even refugees need to pay a hefty fee to be smuggled across borders. Are they middle class? Who can afford to be mobile these days? Yet these kinds of speakers and their topics are in high demand in Northern universities because they speak the language of academe, not the transnational language of Gloria Anzaldúa.

The Faculty Club: North to South[3]

Many professors in major universities in the Global South were born into the upper-class, cosmopolitan, national elite. They are either well-versed in English or have the funds to translate their scholarship to English—the tyrannical language of academic quotation and promotion. These professors are eager, or perhaps obligated, to apply the United States-United Kingdom (US-UK) formula for academic publication. The formula requires substantiating the anthropological argument's authenticity through the deployment of field snippets. Such snippets emanate from the vagaries of daily life—ethnographic examples, devoid of their organic context—to decorate theories authored in US-European elite universities. As a result, these scholars are perceived by their North American colleagues as the preferred women of color scholars from the Global South. They are the favored alternatives to the in-house American scholars of color from the *ghetto* or *barrio*. But what about grassroots indigenous or migrant nonacademic, organic *teoría*?

The Global South faculty often conceives of this *teoría* as an unruly frontier of thought to be tamed or contained in first-tier English journals or university press monographs. Such publications are necessary for their career advancement. Annual international association meetings at five-star hotels present an opportunity to network with editorial board members as well. US-European faculty perceives the Global South faculty as brave interlocutors between the Ivy League and the subalterns of 'the field'. The Global South faculty (unless they have achieved celebrity status in the North) are often seen as emancipatory 'informants' to be theorized by Northern faculty. In turn, these cosmopolitan Southern scholars conceive of nonacademic, grassroots theoreticians as their

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3   These issues stem from the discussion of ethnographic authorship in my recent book *Wrapped in the Flag of Israel* (2018).

'informants', and their texts as data to theorize from. This domino effect of appropriation is laid out in Norma Alarcón's formative 1990 text "The Theoretical Subjects of *This Bridge Called My Back* and Anglo-American Feminism."

Alarcón points at the feminist of color theoretical richness underlying the essays, poems, testimonials, and tales in *This Bridge Called My Back* (Short title, *Bridge*) ("Theoretical Subjects"). She writes, "On the [one] hand, Anglo feminist readers of *Bridge* tend to appropriate it, cite it as an instance of difference by subsuming women of color into the unitary category of woman/women" (Alarcón 1990, 358). On the other hand, Anglo feminist humanities faculty treated *Bridge* as a mine to theorize from for their merit and promotion publications. They treated the feminist theory of color as atavistic repository and ignored its radical, alternative modes of writing up theory as they conjured up the "universal woman," whose class and race were not as significant as her XX chromosomes. Yet, for women of color, *Bridge* was a cornerstone of identification (Ibid. 358–60).

John Gledhill (2004) has argued that the US-UK anthropological journal and book formula and its "northern conventions of research, writing, and thinking about the world" has low tolerance for an ethnographer doubling as an indigenous "key informant" who theorizes rather than just tells stories. The anthropologist should not have near-complete overlap between her ethnographic experience and personal and communal biography. Feminist and Cultural Studies scholarship follows and instructs the scholar to avoid the victim narratives. The subaltern subject writing the US-UK formula is expected to produce dispassionate scholarship. No wailing, no anger.

The black anthropologist Faye Harrison offers a way out: "The transformed anthropology […] would recognize that although the profession's institutional centers have been dominated by British, American, and French axes of authority, the intellectual life of the discipline has extended well beyond the North's major metropolitan centers to a variety of sites, typically devalued as peripheral zones of theory around the world" (Harrison 2008, 11). Yet, her solution does not address the multilayered appropriation operation spelled out by Alarcón. Alarcón's focus is the racial and class hierarchies of US academe. Hers is a made-in-America pyramid whose foundation is the somatic experience of the displaced woman, uprooted from the South and planted in the North to suffer and mimetize her pain into stories for the Anglo US-UK Women's Studies scholars to theorize. Alarcón conceives of such colored articulations as theory, however. Harrison focuses on decentering anthropology beyond its elite-Ivy-League, US-UK stranglehold, often overlooking the privileged background of Global South faculty such as Brinda Bose. Yet scholars, such as Bose, while data-

mined for Northern anthropologists, are still the North's client in the patronage system of the academy. Nevertheless, both Northern anthropologists and their Global South constituents, who depend on them for references and tenure letters, created a body of scholarship—one that superimposes itself upon the subaltern woman of the South rather than horizontally dialoguing with her.

In recent years, US-UK anthropology has diversified in forms of theoretical argumentation and in various genres of ethnographic writing. But this diversity, let alone an ethnographer having a near-complete overlap between her ethnographic experience and personal and communal biography, rarely appears in the top tier US-UK journals or scholarly presses. Take, for example, Ruth Behar. Despite her class privilege, she used herself as a 'key informant' through creative writing about disenfranchised Latinas (Behar 1993). She was an anthropologist coming from Princeton and Ann Arbor, so she did not threaten her upper-middle-class colleagues. Even then, her more creative writings rarely appear in top tier anthropology journals. Autoethnographer Zora Neale Hurston never published her story of being an independent scholar living in dire poverty in top journals or academic presses. She died virtually abandoned and destitute at age 69. How ironic and tragic that she only achieved acclaim years after her death for works such as 1937's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Anzaldúa died at age 62 from lack of adequate medical care. Her monumental autoethnography, *Borderlands/ La Frontera* was published by Aunt Lute Books, a small, underfunded feminist press, because larger university presses deemed it incomprehensible. Overnight, *Borderlands* became an academic and activist bestseller to the dismay of the academic establishment. Mainstream anthropologists opined in 2003 that the book was "an industry" and that Anzaldúa's *mestizaje* was a "celebration" and "a leisure issue" (Friedman et al. 2004, 567).[4] I vividly recall anthropologists offering unsparing critiques of Anzaldúa in various panels at the *American Anthropological Association*'s annual meetings in the early-to-mid-1990s. Perhaps, given the prominence of Anzaldúa's *Borderlands/Frontera*, these conference presentations were not published as refereed journal articles or book chapters. The quotes from 2003 are the closest example of these critiques I could find in print.

Regrettably, the University of California bestowed upon Anzaldúa a long-deserved PhD—posthumously. In fact, the US-Euro-centered decolonization of anthropology has actually led to further colonization of the discipline as it was

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4   These quotes are taken from a conversation between three notable European anthropologists, who, back in the early 2000s, began to explore issues around the ethnography of the right wing. Right Wing studies did not become a point of interest in the US academic mainstream until the 2016 election, despite ultranationalism's ever-presence in the Euro-American social fabric.

mainly unidirectional. Theory continues to be formulated and articulated in US-European metropolitan universities, and the data, now decolonized, continues to come from the Third World or "Third Worlded" Western metropolises (Ribeiro and Escobar 2006).

The *Conocimiento* model and the stuff of life

Gloria Anzaldúa followed the path of Audre Lorde, who, thirty-five years ago, wrote *The Uses of Anger: Women Responding to Racism*, where she advocates for the articulation of raw anger in academic texts: "the anger of exclusion, of unquestioned privilege, of racial distortions, of silence, ill use, stereotyping, defensiveness, misnaming, betrayal and cooptation." Lorde argues that anger in academic language should retain emotional power because it is "a liberating and strengthening act of clarification." She discusses the multivocal orchestration of anger as text: "Women of color in America have grown up within a symphony of anger, at being silenced, at being unchosen, at knowing that when we survive, it is in spite of a world that takes for granted our lack of humanness […]. And I say symphony rather than cacophony because we have had to learn to orchestrate those furies" (Lorde 1984, 124–133).

In the early 1980s, Lorde and Anzaldúa continued the groundwork for the Post-structuralist analysis of culture from an intersectional-subject position first laid out in 1977 by the *Combahee River Collective* (Anzaldúa and Moraga 1981; *see* also Moya 2002, 66–99; Alarcón). Shortly thereafter, the US-UK academic world adopted Post-structuralism as it continued to trend in France from the previous decade. Yet Lorde and Anzaldúa's contribution to the made-in-America deconstructionist theory went, at best, unacknowledged, or ignored altogether. Their theories were dismissed as biographical ruminations, as each wrote from the margins of academia and the mainstream feminist movement of the time.

A key instrument in Anzaldúa's theoretical and methodological toolkit is her use of the word *conocimiento*, or 'knowledge'. *Conocimiento* is not simply 'knowledge', but rather a model that arranges the innate, underlying, raw emotions from the lived experience of the subaltern, racialized woman. This experience becomes a conscientious, flowing system of insights that derive meanings and modes of being or acting in the world. The model implores the racialized woman to articulate her raw emotion through seven stages: aftershock, the in-between, despair, call for action, putting the pieces together and testing them, rebirth, and spiritual activism (Anzaldúa 2015, 117–159). This model captures the life

cycle of subaltern, racialized women and lends itself to contextual cross-cultural comparisons.

Anzaldúa theorizes about the very specific path of the individual woman of color. Her data-set stems from the *autohistoria* of her own self. She does not, however, follow the self-fashioning formula designated for the construction and deconstruction of the US-UK analytical subject. Rather, her life and words are planted in multiple communities as she contemporaneously crosses borders between and among them all. This is her journey on the *conocimiento* path.

Written from a marginalized space, Anzaldúa's pathbreaking *autohistoria-teoría* framework was trivialized for years as only testimony. This Anzaldúan framework received only marginal reference in the transnational feminist arenas of scholarship and activism. But, as Anzaldúa writes, we have shifted. *Frontera* was published by Aunt Lute. *Light in the Dark* was published by Duke University Press, the Ivy League academic publisher.

Conocimiento "requires that you encounter your shadow side and confront what you've programmed yourself (and have been programmed by your cultures) to avoid […] confront[ing], the traits and habits distorting how you see reality and inhibiting the full use of your *facultades*" (Anzaldúa 2015, 118). Anzaldúa's *facultades*, or agency, cannot be separated from the shadow beast, as the enactment of the shadow beast-*facultad* involves not only courage but fear. Describing the interplay between the enactment of agency and the very fear of the woman of color from enacting her agency, Anzaldúa writes, "The knowledge that exposes your fears can also remove them. Seeing through these cracks makes you uncomfortable because it reveals aspects of yourself (shadow beasts) that you don't want to own" (Ibid. 132).

The rigid US-UK formula standardizes the explication of the stuff of life. But Anzaldúa allows for a range of non-standardized arguments illuminated and interconnected from within, what anthropologist, Michael Taussig termed their "epistemic murk" (Taussig 1986, 121–135)—the state of being so immersed in violence to the point that it is difficult to identify any particular source for it. The state of constantly journeying into "the heart of darkness" as a subaltern subject, until one experiences both madness and passion. Always moving, yet stuck in the confinement of race, gender, nation, and religion (Lavie 2011). Anzaldúa's refusal of Cartesian orderliness is imperative to the decolonization of the social theory. The very narration of these intrinsic, disorderly interconnections from within the murk has led to the stymieing of Anzaldúan genres from scholarship. This is not permitted by the gatekeepers, ever dutiful, who oversee the anonymous review process of major US-UK journals and scholarly presses.

Anzaldúa's *conocimiento* model calls for a reconceptualization of the relationships among communities of subaltern scholarly knowledge. She calls for the replacement of monological and unidirectional anthropology with the multivocal polyphony of *autohistoria* and auto-*ethnografía*, thus paving the way for a more creative and egalitarian environment that is embedded in inchoate communities. Her analytical categories engage the local. For her, the local is not data to be ethnographed by English-language metropolitans, but theory that refuses to adhere to the US-UK pretense of analytical coherence. Anzaldúa refuses to re-appropriate informant vignettes as she generalizes her model: "*La mestiza* constantly has to shift out of habitual formations; from convergent thinking, analytical reasoning that tends to use rationality to move toward a single goal (a Western mode), to divergent thinking, characterized by movement away from set patterns and goals and towards a more whole perspective, one that includes rather than excludes" (Anzaldúa 1987, 79).

La Llorona's Teoría travels to Palestine-Israel

While Lorde's focus is anger, one of Anzaldúa's main figures is *La Llorona*: "a woman who wails […] a sight of intersection, connection, and cultural transgression" (in Keating 2015, xiv). "Betrayed for generations, traumatized by racial denigration and exclusion, we are almost buried by grief's heavy pall. We never forget our wounds. *La Llorona*, our dark mother, with her perpetual, mournful song […]. Our symbol of unresolved grief, an ever-present specter in our psyches […]" (Anzaldúa 2015, 88). "*La Llorona*'s wailing in the night for her lost children has an echoing note in the wailing or mourning rights performed by women. As they bid their sons, brothers, and husbands goodbye, […] wailing is […] a Chicana woman's feeble protest when she has no other recourse. This collective wailing rights […] [are/is] a sign of resistance in a society which glorified the warrior and war and for whom the women were booty" (Ibid. 33). Anzaldúa employs La Llorona, a historical-mythical figure from Latin American folklore,[5] as part of her theoretical and methodological toolkit. La Llorona, the

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5   La Llorona is a prominent oral legend in Latin America, specifically, Mexican folklore. The colonialist lore states that a woman was unloved by her husband who loved their two sons instead. After catching her husband with another woman, she drowned her sons before drowning herself in a river out of grief and anger. Upon arriving at heaven's gates, she was refused entry until she could find the souls of her two sons. As a result, she cries and wails, taking children and drowning them in that same river. Chicana feminism rescues La Llorona as a hero who drowned her children so that the Spaniards would not enslave them.

wailing woman, represents the unanswered and unacknowledged cries of pain that she, and other subaltern women of color, endure.

After an impressive genealogy of struggle, North American women faculty of color are finally gaining the ability to express emotions in their academic publications and write in mixed genre—as long as they have tenure.[6] But, this feat remains impossible for middle-to-lower class women scholars from the Global South, such as Palestinians with Israeli citizenship and Mizrahim. It is beyond the scope of this essay to address Palestinian feminist scholarship coming from Israel or the non-Western Palestinian diaspora. Nevertheless, stepping into the Anzaldúan tracks, I write here about *mi gente*.[7]

Mizrahim (Easterners) are Jews from the Arab and Muslim World and margins of the Ottoman Europe and are Israel's demographic majority at 50 percent. Palestinians with Israeli citizenship are about 20 percent of Israel's citizenry. Ashkenazim, Jews originating from Yiddish-speaking countries, are only 30 percent, but they control the division of power and privilege in the State. Mizrahi women do not fall under the North American classification of the "woman of color." We are expected to use the US-UK formula of dispassionate scholarship because the underlying assumption is that we are elite—our parents paid for our expensive Ivy League PhDs. My parents drilled me, and I drilled my son to ace his courses, because our only way to receive education abroad (and in English) was by OPM—Other People's Money or performance-based scholarships. No affirmative action for Mizrahim in the United States. No affirmative action for Mizrahim in Israel. Even though we are racialized and minoritized, we are the demographic majority. The State of Israel will never admit to its own intra-Jewish racial formations as it is the designated post-Holocaust Jewish homeland on the lands of British Mandatory Palestine. No rectification. In the Jewish state, all Jews are supposed to be equal, or so Zionist rhetoric would claim.

Zionism is a European ideology of Jewish nationalism whose main goal was to colonize Palestine in order to establish a Jewish State. It can be described as an ethnic by-product of the rise of modernist nationalism in Europe in the mid-nineteenth century. The Jewish State in Palestine was to redeem the persecuted Eastern European Jews through importing the European cultural technology to Palestine. Concurrently, it planned to reinforce its conception of European

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6   An excellent, recent example of one such courageous, emotive authorship is Laura Pérez's essay collection, *Eros Ideologies: Writings on Art, Spirituality, and the Decolonial.* Published by Duke University Press, the book challenges the US-UK model of writing culture through a variety of evocative, poetic styles set aside from its academic language.

7   Unfortunately, aside from the Anzaldúan vocabulary, I know no Spanish.

superiority through primitivization of the native Palestinians. Unsubscribing from Zionism is a White, Ashkenazi privilege. It comes with trust funds, inheritances, home ownership, and the ability to pull strings, benefits unavailable to Mizrahim. The best way to silence Mizrahi feminist resistance is through financial deprivation.

Furthermore, Mizrahi feminist author-activists who opt out of Zionism (with or without experiencing the 'aftershock' stage in Anzaldúa's model) are not only caught in the US-UK formula. They must fight to carve out a third space between the binarisms available for international public consumption: One is the Jewish State versus its Arab-enemy neighboring states. The other is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We are prevented from articulating the in-between, be it W. E. B. Dubois's 1903 *Between Me and the World* (in *The Souls*) or Chela Sandoval's delineation of the space between Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* in his 1967 autoethnography (Sandoval 2000, 83–86). We are not allowed Lorde's anger or Anzaldúa's wailing. Abroad, we are Israeli Jews. In Israel, we are troublemakers—a demographic 'in-between' majority, devoid of majoritarian rights, who disturbs the simplistic Palestine-Israel or Arab-Jew binary known to the world. If we sell out, we might fit into the well-funded disciplines of Israeli and Jewish Studies. If not, we still cannot benefit from the welcome boom of critical publications on the Israel-Palestine binary. We are not 'Arab Jews' either. That is a historical concept that ceased to exist with the foundation of the Israeli State in 1948, and, at any rate, our own communities loathe the term.

We fall into silence when we refuse the containment enforced on our critique of Zionism in the name of Israeli ethnic diversity—diversity that masks itself in the illusion of free speech that lifts once we understand how and how far our criticisms of Zionism are permitted to reach. For us, after the Anzaldúan 'aftershock' stage, when we are on the *conocimiento* tracks and can understand the reality of Israel and the Arab World, Zionism is racism. We fall into silence when we upset the Palestinian national narrative whose secular, academic intelligentsia dialogues with the upper-class post- or anti-Zionist Ashkenazi elites we debunk. Progressive North American feminists of color and Anglo-feminists alike, stuck on the Israel-Palestine binary, label our wailing 'polemics' due to our dismantling of the comfortable progressive binarism of the Israel-Palestine narrative. Our grassroots works are omitted from the global circulation of feminists of color texts. What remains for us then? Wailing. So, we wail.

We, Mizrahi feminists, encompass both the shadow beast and *facultad*. Mainstream Mizrahi leaders, who align themselves with the Ashkenazi hegemony, and thus deny any intra-Jewish racial conflict, are referred to in Mizrahi-

activist slang as 'kapos' suffering from "Mizrahi kapo syndrome." 'Kapos' were concentration camp prisoners employed by Nazis as low-level management in exchange for subsistence level privileges. In turn, Ashkenazi mainstream and its Mizrahi 'kapos' judge anyone who speaks out about intra-Jewish race relations as guilty of *le-hitbakhyen*. In Hebrew, this means whining and being a crybaby. The term *le-hitbakhyen* is usually deployed by those Ashkenazim who, by default, articulate what they advertise as "the Israeli discourse of pluralist enlightenment." Their pluralism is rooted in meritocracy—equal opportunities based only on the skills, talents, and efforts of individuals devoid of their communal background. To them, entering the academic elite is a result of one working hard, and has nothing to do with money, the color of our skins, or our genders. So when we cannot use the advancement road they delineated for us, they conceive of our failure as personal, not communal. We are simply not enlightened enough to enter the sphere of their US-European renaissance humanism. We are atavistic because we do our best to rescue our traditions they violently attempted to eliminate since they brought us to Palestine as their Jewish blue-collar labor. They are the (post)modernists. We try to rebuild the communities they destroyed, and this makes us backward losers. Therefore, our plights are the wailings of cry-babies who had the bad luck of being born poor in the wrong neighborhoods. This allows them to control the discourse of advocating genuine social justice, as their White privilege permits them to discursively decolonize Zionism. We, as the majority, however, must adhere to Zionism—not the discourse but the practice— if we want to make it into their elite time-space. As we enter it, we can enjoy the liberation they envision for us, but only as individuals. Concurrently, our majoritarian communities' adherence to Zionism is the springboard that allows the enlightened Ashkenazim to criticize it while maintaining their privileges harking back to their European colonization of Palestine. And when we wail, they pull out of their sleeve the success of our Mizrahi 'kapos'.

The mindset of the Mizrahi 'kapo' is part of the structural-functional Parsonian analytical paradigm (Parsons) so prevalent in universalism vs. particularism's vulgar analysis of Israeli society offered by Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt. From the early 1940s on, Eisenstadt was not only a luminary sociologist at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He also designed policies that stripped Mizrahim of their culture, language, and family structure, and oversaw their execution so that Mizrahim degenerated into low-income laborers for the Zionist machine. He and his students remain crucial actors in the revolving door between Israel's academe and regime. To this day, their influence over Israeli social sciences is vigilant, as they continue to edit out scholarship and policy that deviates from this model.

Eisenstadt's ideological paradigm impacted Zionist policymakers as they shaped Israel's white-on-white public sphere. Within this sphere, the Ashkenazim are the true, progressive Israelis, and therefore, universalists. Their privilege, transparent. We are left with divisive, primitivist, ethnic particularism. So, we wail.

The most notable examples given for the evocation of *le-hitbakhyen* are the *Yemenite Children Affair* and the *Ringworm Affair*. These epitomize the Ashkenazi Zionist's perpetual denial of racially motivated atrocities and trivialization of Mizrahi feminists' legitimate outcries. Those who speak out are deemed as wailing without cause.

The Yemenite Children Affair was the systematic kidnapping of roughly 5,000 light-skinned Mizrahi, Balkan, and Yemeni babies from the 1930s through the 1970s. Health officials alleged that these infants were ill and subsequently died, falsifying documents for their families without providing a body. Ashkenazi Zionist politicians and bureaucrats sold or gave away these children in unconsented adoptions to childless Ashkenazi families in Israel and abroad. While the State of Israel is notorious for its rigorous archival practices, the archives intended to research and educate on this affair remain closed until 2066, with many hospital and court documents having conspicuously disappeared (Madmoni-Gerber 2009). Alternative archives on the affair, established by longtime Mizrahi activists, caught fire during unexplained electrical shortages.[8]

Repeated suggestions by activists to file in the International Court of Justice in The Hague, Netherlands, were refused by the families. Mizrahim paradoxically love the State that continuously tortures them. As a group, they tend to vote for ultranationalist parties (Lavie 2018). From the 1880s on, the Zionist socialist parties designed and upheld policies of intra-Jewish apartheid. As Mizrahim became Israel's demographic majority, they refused to endorse the parties that originated their subjugation. Until 1977, the right was the underdog of Israeli politics while Ashkenazi Zionist Socialist parties dominated. Then, the system was overturned by the Mizrahi vote. Post-Holocaust, Israeli and diaspora Jews conceive of the Jewish State as the last line of Jewish defense. No dirty laundry revealing; otherwise, it may be washed out in The Hague, before the *goyim* public. *Goyim* are non-Jews, and, in colloquial Hebrew, 'the enemy'.[9]

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8   It is interesting to differentiate between the official testimonies and figures provided by the Israeli regime (1053 cases), more updated data (about 2,000 cases) documented by scholar Nathan Shifris (2019), and estimates by activists (5,000 cases).

9   Due to public pressure, partial segments of State archival documents for the *Yemeni Children Affair* became available in 2018, but much of the material on these documents has been redacted. The majority of these documents are sealed off indefinitely.

The *Ringworm Children Affair* was when roughly 150,000 Mizrahi children were irradiated with high dose X-rays in the 1950s without their parents' consent or knowledge. The monumental documentary film *The Ringworm Children* by David Belhassen and Asher Hemias argues that about 75,000 Mizrahi children were radiated against 'ringworm'.[10] Current estimates find that this number reflects roughly a half of those irradiated. In Mizrahi history, this is a key example of the State-sanctioned violence against non-European immigrants. According to Belhassen and Hemias, the experiment was possibly funded by the CIA. These children grew up to develop ailments such as cancer, thyroid problems, and tumors without access to their own medical files from the experiment as they were deemed 'classified'. They continue to suffer from lifelong disabilities, if not already having succumbed to an early death.

Their ailments, and the resulting lack of income or sufficient compensatory funds, made suing the responsible physicians and policy makers impossible. They could not afford to purchase justice in the attorney marketplace, whereas suing a Jewish state for collective crimes against its own people is impossible. The development of these children was documented, well into adulthood, by the Israeli physicians responsible. Their souls rest between the pages of the most prestigious, English-language medical journals. Like the *Yemenite Children Affair* activism, the *Ringworm* activism was initiated by right-wing Mizrahim. Mizrahim refer to the *Ringworm Affair* and the *Yemenite Children Affair* as "our holocaust." I have written elsewhere that, in Israel, the 'right' is 'left', and the 'left' is the right wing (Lavie 2011, 2018). No dirty laundry washed out in front of the *goyim*. Needless to say that studying this affair from the families' or activists' perspective is taboo in Israeli universities, unless supervised by an Ashkenazi professor patron.

Israel, founded on Mandatory Palestine, conceives of itself as the national home of all world Jewry. Are not all Jews assumed equal in the homeland of the Jews? But members of Israel's Mizrahi majority find it next to impossible to present any case for racial discrimination in court. Their cases are almost always disarmed and stripped of legitimacy by accusations of *le-hitbakhyen*. Yet, this wailing rarely travels, nor does it ever transcend the boundaries of the Israeli State where the tyranny of the Hebrew language is one of Zionism's most successful miracles. The author and translation professor at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Anton Shammas is known mainly for his writings in Hebrew and translations of

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10   For further information about *The Ringworm Affair*, please see, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ringworm_affair.

Palestinian literature from Arabic to Hebrew. He told me, "Zionism gave the Jews a territory in the form of language. Hebrew is the only real victory of Zionism. The Hebrew that was resurrected was not the Mizrahi Hebrew. And that was the tragedy" (Shammas in Lavie 1992, 103). Since its establishment in 1948, Israel has had no internationally recognized border. No Oxbridge English in Mizrahi *ghetto* and *barrio* schools. No funds for translation, unless provided by the Israeli Ministry of Education that can bear the brunt of the bill. So the Israel-Palestine binary endures. The Mizrahi in-between is not a 'legitimate tragedy'.

How long can the regime depend on Mizrahi docile loyalty to the Jewish state? It is first blood — a fin-de-siècle racial wound inflicted by the Ashkenazi Zionist Left. So deep, yet invisible. An apartheid system where everyone knows their place, all entranced by the drumbeat of the miraculous ingathering of the diasporas. Like all Israelis, Mizrahim benefited from the occupation of Palestine. For the Israeli Left, protesting the occupation produces international funding for their NGOs. As elites abroad, they enjoy the cosmopolitan lifestyle of the global activist circuits, while at home, like all Israelis, they enjoy the constant economic boom the occupation generates for Israel's financial elites. For the Mizrahim, the occupation provides housing solutions in the West Bank settlements—close to Israel's employment sites in its center, yet outside Israel's center's unaffordable real estate bubble.

Creating a third space for Mizrahi *lloronas* is an ongoing fight for justice. The Israeli regime continues to appropriate Mizrahi identity politics as its veneer of civility to mask from view its racial atrocities. Opting out of Zionism, we remain unclassified. Staying in is tempting. The regime will fund our tours for the North American-European diasporas, perform our songs, poetry, plays, and art as tokens of diversity. The strings are attached: not a word on Palestine. *Sin frontera*. Walls, checkpoints, barbed wire, and minefields. The Israeli Ashkenazi hegemonic center keeps usurping, as its own frontier, the borderzones between European and Arab, Israeli and Palestinian, and Ashkenazi and Mizrahi. Not only is it difficult to distinguish the Israeli nation from its imperialism, but this overlap of *nation* and *empire* is imprecise and constantly in flux. Some vestiges of one or the other are always left over. The inner borders where these vestiges meet the larger central area, where nation and empire are fused, might be the only zones remaining for us to create, and in Hebrew. Because we are unclassified, racialized subjects, our creations rarely travel abroad or get translated to English, the tyrannical language of quotation. There is no "crossover" (Anzaldúa 1987, 49). Our wails are in modern Hebrew, a language resurrected by Europeans, that has become our native tongue.

A wail

On 20 March 2005, the *Mizrahi Democratic Rainbow* NGO held a book launch to celebrate Aharon Yitzhaki's book *The Mask: Introduction to Ethnic Strategy in the State of Israel—Comparative Research*. This self-published tome discusses, among other topics, the compliance of Israeli leftist academia with the regime and its apartheid toward Mizrahim. The book refers to Israeli universities' social science and humanities professors as "mercenaries of the pen." Likewise, the book dwells on the docility and lackluster thinking required of Mizrahi intellectuals, male by default, to get a foot in Israeli academe's door. If they are well-behaved, they will gain entry. During the discussion, a fierce young Mizrahi feminist stood out :

> Their racism toward us has gotten so sophisticated in the university. They used to totally shut me up, labeling me as *mitbakhyenet miktzo`it* (one who made wailing about racial issues into an expertise), but I've had it with their kissing ass to the Palestinians, as if our resistance needed a kosher stamp from them (the Palestinians) to be valid. […] Now they pretend they're listening to our wails. Unlike the Palestinians, we are not a category for teaching about social justice or human rights in the law school curriculum. We belong in their anthropology and folklore departments. As Jews, under the law we have equal rights. But when I insist [that] I am a legal category of racinated discrimination, they just mumble around, so we can move on. I'm the only loudmouth Mizrahi in the classroom, and they're just waiting to see how long it will take me to get worn out and sell out. Enough with this tying everything to the Palestinians! Let them cling to their Ashkenazim, whose racism toward us is now all but undetectable. In my parents' time, it was plain as day. Now we need X-ray vision to see it. That's how we're losing the younger generation. They see racism as just over, because if you see it, it hurts like hell. It's so subtle and so cruel, like cuts in live flesh [where] you can't see the blood.

<p style="text-align:center">* * *</p>

It is my hope that the unclassified, grassroots Anzaldúan scholar from the Global South can shift. That she is no longer given the default elite status. That she is able to publish academically through the *conocimiento* model of bearing witness to herself and society. This might horizontalize the power dynamics between and among feminists of color in US-European elite academe, feminist faculty in the Global South, and grassroots feminist intellectuals from the Global South. To lend myself to Harrison's vision, we need to listen to, read, and quote feminist

theory from ex-centric sites and break away from the Anglophone dominance of scholarship. Given that we cannot undo the tyranny of English, now let us shift to translation. Let us shift to the transnational language of Gloria Anzaldúa.

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Indigeneity of Neoliberalism in Mongolia's Nation Building

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Abstract. In brief, this paper shows the different consequences being contested in the process of nation building in Mongolia. Among the different consequences, I focus on what is called the liberal economy and market, which represent neoliberalism in Mongolia. I contextualize this through an analysis of the reconstruction of history and the continuity of the Mongolian legal system. These are the main contesting features that have consequences in Mongolian nation-building. In the contest, the historical reconstruction and the legal continuity are widely acknowledged and promoted by the public, and they remain the main force to justify the bills and political decisions to limit and tame some principles of neoliberalism. I argue that restricting and taming neoliberalism is a process to indigenize forms of neoliberalism employed in Mongolia's nation-building project.

Key words: Nation building, neoliberalism, indigeneity, resource, Law.

Introduction

In this chapter, I intend to respond to two related but different discussions on neoliberalism. One of them considers neoliberalism as something that is incoherent assemblage (Collier 2009; Ong 2006; Murray-Li 2007; Shore and Wright 1997; Shore and Pero 2011 cited in Bear 2015, 7) and is therefore difficult to use and make a clear discussion (Mair 2012). I need to respond to this claim in order to continue using the term 'neoliberalism'. Although I do agree with this claim, I also think that it is still possible to use the term 'neoliberalism' by making clear what it is *in Mongolia*. The second one considers neoliberalism as the external and colonial power of the international donor organizations, transnational corporations and capitalist states, such as the USA (Harvey 2010, 28; Graeber 2011, 2; cf. Peet 2003; Ferguson 2006; Ong 2006; Harvey 2005), and threatens the nation and inflicts death on the nation-state (Sassen 1996). My intent is neither to reject this claim nor *not* to take this approach. I choose not to repeat this claim in the case of Mongolia as it has been done by Morris Rossabi (2005) and Lhamsuren Munkh-Erdene (2012). In its place, I want to shed light on the employment of neoliberalism in the process of nation-building in Mongolia which indigenizes neoliberalism.

On 1 December 2012, in the *Group for Debates in Anthropological Theory* (GDAT), James Laidlaw and Jonatan Mair proposed a motion – "The concept of neoliberalism has become an obstacle to the anthropological understanding of the twenty-first century." Later on, on his webpage, Mair wrote that every time when the term 'neoliberalism' was tagged, they "seemed to be talking about quite different, even contradictory, things — the neoliberal tag seemed to add nothing." He continued, "Or worse, it seemed portentous to invoke a whole global theory as a background explanation without doing the work of showing how 'global forces' are actually linked to or expressed in the sort of 'local' settings" (Mair 2012). This is what Laidlaw and Mair proposed in the above-mentioned debate, and what many anthropologists find in their study of neoliberalism. "Anthropologists have shown that neoliberalism is not a single coherent project, but an assemblage of techniques and institutional structures" (Collier 2009; Ong 2007; Murray-Li 2007; Shore and Wright 1997; Shore and Pero 2011 cited in Bear 2015, 7). I acknowledge this argument and I agree that, cross-culturally, neoliberalism can be something that is incoherent and even contradictory (Ong 2006). The incoherence and inconsistency require authors not to abandon the use of the term as it was questioned by Laidlaw and Mair in the debate, but rather to clarify the meaning and the framework of the term in specific cultures when we decide how to use the term 'neoliberalism'. To overcome the burden of the term 'neoliberalism' as something that can be empty and fluxuating, I start this chapter by clarifying my use of the term 'neoliberalism', basing it on the way Mongolians identify with the current era. It is popular for many Mongolians to use the term *zakh zeeliin üye* which literally means "the era of the market" (Sneath 2002) to talk about the contemporary Mongolia. The strict application of the term *zakh zeeliin üye* in Mongolia makes it difficult not to use the term 'neoliberalism'. *Zakh zeeliin üye* in many ways captures the framework of neoliberalism which Manfred Steger and Ravi Roy (2010, 11) propose. Following Steger and Roy, I take neoliberalism as three intertwined manifestations: (1) an ideology, (2) a mode of governance, and (3) a policy package of deregulation, liberalization and privatization in the economy. I am adopting this definition not to test whether it fits in the case of Mongolia or not, but the ethnography I present in this chapter allows me to argue that forms of neoliberalism clearly exist in Mongolia at least in the range of the above manifestations (cf. Rossabi 2005; Munkh-Erdene 2012), which is hopefully good enough to justify my use of the term in this chapter.

While I acknowledge the argument on the incoherence of neoliberalism, I aim to advance it by asking what makes the consequences of neoliberalism incoherent, inconsistent and contradictory. By asking such a question, I intend

to escape from the above complaint Mair (2012) develops about the 'portentous invoke' of the "whole global theory as a background explanation without doing the work of showing how 'global forces' are actually linked to or expressed in the sort of 'local' settings". I argue that it is not only because neoliberalism assembles different projects, techniques and institutional structures as it is summarized by Bear (2015, 7). In this chapter, it is the nation-building project of the indigenous nation-state of Mongolia that makes neoliberalism incoherent and not the same as it is in other countries. Because neoliberalism is not simply a project of the economy that occurs in the line of the global economy. As Anna Tsing (2005) argues, it is always a by-product of the 'local' and the 'global'. Here, in the case of this chapter, with the 'local', I mean the indigenous nation-state. In fact, the nation-building of a nation-state, to borrow the sentence structure from Mair, is another portentous invoke that can be used as a background explanation but, unlike neoliberalism, it can do the work to show how global forces are actually linked to or expressed in the sort of local setting. But my intent is not to look at the relationship of the neoliberalism and the nation-state as something that is contradictory, which is a dominant narrative in the scholarly discourses I turn to in the following discussion.

The relationship between neoliberalism and the nation-state recalls Karl Polanyi's argument which claims that it is impossible to dissemble the economy from society and the State (Polanyi cited in Block 2001, xxvi–xxvii). Recently, the same argument has also been developed by Hanna Appel. She states that "there is no economy without state" (Appel 2017, 301). Following Polanyi and Appel, I consider that neoliberalism, as an asset in the economy in Mongolia, can be embedded in the nation-building project. Finally, the above-mentioned anthropological definition of neoliberalism as manifold projects, techniques and institutional structures justifies my approach to neoliberalism that it can be employed and used for nation-states for national purposes. In this case, we, as anthropologists, should be able to discover the diversity of neoliberal projects across the globe, and possibly not just indigenous responses and resistances against neoliberalism (Bargh 2007), but also the indigeneity of neoliberalism. With the term 'indigeneity of neoliberalism', I do not intend to mean that Mongolia accepts or rejects the principles of neoliberalism. Rather, the country attempts to make the best use of it by limiting and controlling its principles. This can be possible in such states as Mongolia, a country of a homogenous indigenous nation, except for the small population of Kazakhs.

As I mentioned above, my argument on the indigeneity of neoliberalism claims the opposite of what many scholars write. It is common in the literature of

neoliberalism, nation-state, globalism, and capitalism to consider neoliberalism and nation-state projects as something that is distinct and contradictory. For instance, in the works that discuss neoliberal domination and neo-colonialization (Harvey 2010, 28; Graeber 2011, 2; cf. Peet 2003; Ferguson 2006; Ong 2006; Harvey 2005), the death of the nation-state (Sassen 1996), or resource nationalism (Bremmer and Johnston 2009, 149; Vivoda 2009, 532; Maniruzzaman 2009, 81; Click and Weiner 2010, 784; Kretzschmar, Kirchner, and Sharifzyanova 2010), neoliberalism for non-western states stands as an external force that inflicts and threatens the nation-state or indigenous nations. In the case of Mongolia, neoliberalism is a complexity and multiplicity of opportunities and risks available for the nation-state to engage in. The neoliberal projects of marketization, privatization, and deregulation are nationalized and often considered to be for the sake of building the nation. Therefore, they are not only neoliberal projects, but they are also nation-building projects of the nation-state. In this project, the nation-state has some freedom to decide which consequences of neoliberalism to experiment with, and then, which ones to employ and which to reject. Such attempts have always been considered as a form of 'resource nationalism' (cf. Joffé et al. 2009, 4; Domjan and Stone 2010, 38; Bremmer and Johnston 2009, 149; Wilson 2015, 399; Childs 2016, 539). Meanwhile, for Mongolia, resource nationalism can be regarded as a means to tame the alien supremacy of neoliberalism which does not fit the principles of nation building. As I mentioned before, this does not put neoliberalism in a position of an alien power. In fact, it is the other way around. In the framework of nation-building, neoliberalism becomes an element that is employed in the national agenda for building the nation. While the nation-state employs neoliberal opportunities, the State is also highly critical of neoliberalism and often controls and attempts to tame the 'foreignness' and 'unfitness' of neoliberalism. With 'taming', I mean the State control, regulation, navigation by limiting and removing what is considered to be contrary, conflicting and threatening to what is called the *ünet züil* (values), *ashig sonirkhol* (interests) and *bakharkhal* (pride) of the nation. In other words, the nation-state of Mongolia attempts to manage, successfully or unsuccessfully, different consequences of neoliberalism. The overarching national project to build the nation decides which consequences of neoliberalism correspond or contradict to other matters in the process of nation-building, such as the construction of the history, culture, environment and the national identity. Therefore, what makes different consequences of neoliberalism inconsistent is the political decision that is relational to the imagined nation and the national building projects (cf. Anderson 1983). The nation State's capacity to decide and manage the consequences of neoliberalism addresses the

importance of the relational consequences of neoliberalism to the nation build-ing. In this vein, incoherence and inconsistency, which are widely targeted by anthropologists, are relational to the agenda of certain actors, such as the na-tion-state rulers. In other words, it can be consistent with the national economy while it might *not* be consistent with other aspects of the nation-building project. Any consequences of neoliberalism can be relational to certain principles imag-ined to build the nation. It is the imagining of the nation that greatly shapes the consequences of neoliberalism.

My approach to the employment of neoliberalism in the nation-building project and the taming of it responds to the question of *how much* neoliberalism Mongolia actually has. Some consider that Mongolia has too much neoliberalism. Meanwhile, some others consider that it is not liberal enough as I discovered when I went to the investment forum *For Mining without Populism* in 2015, an annual event of the *Mongolian National Mining Association*. The first part of the paper shall present the growth of the liberal economy in Mongolia from about the 1990s to the mid-2000s. The second part of the paper shall present the State control in the mining sector which rejects some principles of neoliberalism and makes Mongolia's liberal economy not liberal enough as members of the *Mongolian National Mining Association* have been complaining. The final section sheds light on two other principles in the nation-building project that can be more privileged and prioritized than the importance of the national economy. One of them is the reconstruction of historical incidents to protect the environment, natural resources, locality, territory, and sovereignty. The other one is a continuity of concepts about the natural source ownership and protection in the legal system in the last hundred years.

The growth of neoliberalism in Mongolia

In the critical economic situation after the collapse of socialism, it was not a coincidence that the first president of Mongolia, Ochirbat Punsalmaa (1990–1997) was a mining engineer who graduated from the Leningrad Higher School of Mining. During the times of Socialism, he worked as a chief engineer in one of the largest coal mines of Mongolia — Sharyn Gol, he served as the Deputy Minister of Mining and Geology, a Deputy in the People's Great Khural, a member of the MPRP Central Committee, the Minister of Mining and Geology, and the Chairman of the State Commission for Foreign Economic Relations, and then became the Minister of Foreign Economic Relations and Supplies.

His expertise in the field of mining was an important asset to help the collapsed Post-Socialist economy of Mongolia. This was one of the reasons for him to be elected the President, and, for the leaders of democracy and market reform, to support him and collaborate with him. In 1992, President Ochirbat founded and started the Gold program (*Alt khötölbör*).[1] In 2013, in the opening of his book *Development Strategy and Ecology of the Valuable Minerals Complex* (*Ünet erdsiin tsogtsolboryn khögjliin strategi ba ekologi*), Ochirbat explains that, in the situation with no currency reserve, export, investment and capacity to repay loans, and with the 325 percent inflation, it was impossible for the country to appeal for loans and investments. The country had to use its own facilities to increase the national currency reserve and the government's capacity to repay. Considering the situation, the quickest and easiest way was to use the gold deposits to assist the economy (Bold 2013). The emergency to consolidate the nation-state's sovereignty and the critical situation of the economy compels the rebuilding of the national economy where gold extraction became one of the building blocks of the national economy. The fact of being a building block of the national economy justifies extraction as well as the destruction of gold mining. In other words, policymakers and mine operators claim that both extraction and destruction of gold mining had to occur for the sake of the national economy.

To build the national economy, the Gold program had to support and develop the gold mining sector by creating a reassuring and appealing political, legal and socio-economic environment. N. Algaa, the president of the *Mongolian National Mining Association*, told me that, at the start, the Gold program was a wish list (*möröödliin jagsaalt*). In 1991, he worked at the *Government Agency for Mining* (*Zasgiin gazryn degredekh uul uurkhain tovchoo*), and he was in the team to draft a new Minerals Law. It was one of the first steps to turn the Gold program wish list into reality. This wish list was one of the milestones to shape the imagined Asian tiger national economy of Mongolia, as Ochirbat proposed. The main purpose of the law was to appeal to foreign direct investment. Steps to open up the mining economy carefully followed the advice offered by the *World Bank* (Sanchir 2016). In 1991, the World Bank conducted research in Mongolia that provided Mongolia with technical assistance for developing mining. The project report produced recommendations on the geological potential of mineral resources, the capacity

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1   Not only in 1992, but also in 1911 when the theocratic government of Mongolia proclaimed political independence, mining, and particularly gold mining, was immediately adopted to fund the emerging nation State and to promote its national economy (Tuya and Battomor 2012; Bonilla 2016; Jackson and Dear 2016). The same happened again in 1991, when President Ochirbat founded, and, in 1992, started the Gold program (*Alt khötölbör*).

of the existing mines, the legal environment, and the Government agencies and institutions to manage and assist the mining sector. In 1994, the draft of the law faced major criticism from some experts in the field of mining and geology whose concerns received lots of support in the Parliament. Algaa identified them as technocrats, and they were among the first to resist neoliberal changes in the mining sector. I will introduce these technocrats in the next section. Actually, Algaa called the 1997 Minerals Law a liberal law that equally distributed exploration licenses and equally permitted Mongolians as well as foreigners to own and operate mines. Meanwhile, the technocrats who resisted the law called it the *Black Law* (*khar khuuli*). Their main concern was not to allow foreigners to privately own mine(s) of strategic minerals, such as gold. They claimed that such strategic minerals can only be owned by Mongolians and the State of Mongolia, as it is declared in the Constitution of Mongolia. Ultimately, after making some major changes in the draft, the law was passed in 1994. However, it was not liberal and attractive enough to appeal to foreign investors. Finally, the liberal purpose of the law was fully accomplished when the *Mongolian Democratic Party* (MDP) won the election in 1996 and amended the *Minerals Law*. This time, it was not only President Ochirbat, but also M. Enkhsaikhan, the Prime Minister representing the *Democratic Party* who supported the law and pioneered the mining economy. By winning the election, democratic and market reformers became the other major State-driven force to support mining. One of the important changes in the amended law was the liberalization of mining and natural resources along with the stability agreement with mining companies. Starting from 1997, the law permitted the Government to issue thousands of exploration licenses for free (Bulag 2014, 132), except for a negligible administration and registration fee and tax. By 2000, 44 percent of the total territory of the country had already been given away for mining exploration. According to the *Mineral Resources and Petroleum Authority of Mongolia* (MRPAM), approximately 3329 mineral licenses were granted to both foreign and domestic companies covering 13.9 million hectares, or 8.9 percent of the entire territory, of which, 1494 were still operational, and 1835 were exploration licenses as of 2015 (Ganbold and Ali 2017, 4).

The amended Minerals Law from 1997 successfully turned Mongolia into an attractive country for mining ventures and brought mining companies from America, Europe, and Australia. *Boroo Gold* was one of the first, and the most famous example of foreign mining companies to make a large profit in Mongolia at that time. *AGR Limited* owned by *Resolute Mining*, an Australian mining company, purchased the *Boroo Gold* deposit and started its operation in 1999. In early 2002, *Cameco* (*Canadian Mining and Energy Corporation*), later

known as *Centerra Gold*, entered the *Boroo Gold Company*. Under the *Stability Agreement* signed with the Government of Mongolia in 1998, *BGC* was exempt only from the corporate income tax: 100% exemption for the 3 years from the start of commercial production in 2004 and 50% exemption for the next 3 years thereafter. Danny Walker, a miner from New Zealand, was one of those who were attracted to operating a mine in Mongolia, and personally experienced the case of Boroo Gold. He first came to Mongolia in 1998 and started his company *Cold Gold Mongolia* in 1999, just after *Boroo Gold* made the *Stability Agreement* with the Mongolian Government. He notes that Mongolia benefited massively from *Boroo Gold*, maybe not in the sense of the tax which *Boroo Gold* paid to Mongolia, but by other means. The operation of *Boroo Gold* in Mongolia was truly stimulating for many investors and mining companies all around the world, and, as a result, many foreign companies came to Mongolia to operate mines and to contribute to the Mongolian economy. Mongolian economists also confirm this achievement of the Government. Khashchuluun Chuluundorj and Enkhjargal Dandinbazar note that the liberal economic regime for investments in the mining sector resulted in a rapidly increasing inflow of foreign investment in the natural resource sectors, and Mongolia became one of the top 10 destinations in the world in terms of exploration investment (2014, 293; cf. Jackson 2014, 6; Bridge 2004). Later, on the television in Mongolia, I watched Khashchuluun's interview where he pointed out that the case of *Boroo Gold* was an important move for the Government of Mongolia that enticed foreign investors, enlarge the mining industry, and support for the national economy. In fact, there was a dramatic increase in the annual production of gold from 4.5 to 10.2 metric tons from 1992 to 2000, and from 11.8 to 24.1 metric tons from 2000 to 2005, and about ten thousand workplaces were created (*Gold 2025* program baseline research report 2015, 7–8) and brought a major contribution in the GDP with up to 20 percent (Bold 2013). Also, many of the major Mongolian national companies operating in the sector of food, construction, agriculture, education, health, media, trade and banking, etc. started their businesses from gold mines (cf. Appel 2017, 311). The owners of these companies, for instance, L. Chinbat, the founder and owner of the *Gatsuurt Company*, one of largest food producers in Mongolia that used to operate a gold mine, addressed the importance of gold mines in the building of the Post-Socialist Mongolian national economy. For this reason, many, including the first President of Mongolia, market reformers, gold mining companies and investors, etc. refer to the Gold program as a success story, which justifies the exploitation of gold by using the concept of the national economy. Mongolia's achievement as a mineral nation (Jackson 2014) excellently depicts the employment of neoliberalism for

the sake of the national economy (cf. Appel 2017). Here, neoliberalism becomes an important opportunity for Mongolian nation-state rulers to help its collapsed national economy. Neoliberalization of the national economy was a technique for Ochirbat, Algaa, and the *Democratic Union* Government to fund the emerging nation-state and build the nation.

Taming the consequences of neoliberalism

Alternatively, many Mongolians complained that the mining companies, namely, BGC, managed to complete the major extraction of the deposit within the first five years and ended up not paying as much as expected in taxes (Ganchimeg 2015). In 2007, the Parliament of Mongolia requested the *National Audit Office* to produce an evaluation. The report of the evaluation notes that the *Stability Agreement* with *Boroo Gold* was based on improper economic calculation, and announced that *Boroo Gold* would finish exploiting its mineral deposit by 2009 (Mendbayar et al. 2007, 12–13). The report found that the company would finish its exploitation much earlier than the Government of Mongolia's calculations indicated. This audition and the report were a result of some concerns, and thus conflicts and resistance appeared in the context of the rapid growth of neoliberalism in the gold mining sector. Those were the resistance of the above-mentioned technocrats against the mining sector, the opposition to environmental destruction caused by the mining companies, local protests against mining operations, and the understanding in the ownership of the mineral wealth and its distribution, which made the Government and the Parliament pass decisions to regulate the mining sector.

By 2000, as gold mining operations rapidly progressed in the country, their growth caused many other concerns, conflicts, and resistance. While the resistance of the above-mentioned technocrats against the new Minerals Law in the early 1990s was one of the earliest, the next major exposure to such concerns was the environmental and nationalistic movements which started in 2000. Starting from about the mid-2000s, the pressure stemming from some movements, complaints expressed by some technocrats, and concerns of the public eventually led the government and the parliament to slowly regulate the mining sector. One of the first attempts to regulate mining since the liberalization and deregulation introduced by the 1997 Minerals Law was the amendment of the Minerals Law in 2006.

The *Democratic Union* lost its power in the 2000 parliamentary election. The victory of the old Communist *Revolutionary Party* supported the arguments of

those technocrats who called Algaa's liberal law the *Black Law*. The key person in the group was Khurts Choijin who is a Doctor of Philosophy in the field of geology, and who was the former Minister of Geology and Mining Productions (*Geologi, uul uurkhain üildveriin yamny said*) during the Socialist times. In the debate on the Minerals Law and the liberal mining economy, he closely collaborated with some experts from the *National University of Mongolia*, namely, S. Avirmed, a mining engineer and economist, and J. Byambaa, a geologist. They considered that the 1997 Minerals Law of Mongolia needed to be amended entirely. In a media interview, Khurts complained that the law was written by a foreigner who was a *World Bank* consultant, and it was mostly translated from English (Tsogzolmaa 2010). Also, the law violated articles of other major laws of Mongolia, including the Constitution. There were three main reasons why they resisted the liberal minerals law and called it the *Black Law*. The first reason was that a large territory of Mongolia was distributed in the form of mining licenses to private mining companies, while, according to Article Six in the Constitution of Mongolia, "In Mongolia, the land, its subsoil, forests, water, fauna and flora and other natural resources shall be subject to people's power and State protection." More precisely, many argued that the territory of Mongolia was sold to private companies. The second complaint of those technocrats was the sales of those licenses (*litsenziin naimaa*). As a result, some people and some companies started possessing a large number of mining licenses for exploration, and also for extraction purposes. The third complaint of the technocrats problematized the fact that many of those people and companies possessing mining licenses were foreigners. In the media, this situation was publicly interpreted that foreigners were occupying Mongolia's land and stealing wealth.

This time, it was not the neoliberal group of Ochirbat and Algaa and the leaders of the *Democratic Union*, but the above group of technocrats and scholars led by Khurts who received political support from the ruling *Mongolian Revolutionary Party* and obtained a better political position to amend, or, actually, to re-draft the Minerals Law. At the time, one of the most influential and supportive people in the parliament was Enkhsaikhan Onomoo. Since the case of *Boroo Gold*, he was deeply inspired to amend the 1997 Minerals Law lobbied by the Democrats and the neoliberal reformers. In order to support the technocrats and scholars' group and to draft the new Minerals Law, he founded a movement called *Minii mongolyn gazar shoroo*, which literally means "My Mongolian Land and Earth." With the effort of Enkhsaikhan and a few other members of the Parliament, the new Minerals Law was successfully passed by the Parliament in 2006. The new law involved some major differences from the previous liberal version of the law.

For example, the new version of the law introduced a new classification of mineral deposits in Chapter One. The first class was denoted by strategic importance, and the State should own from 34 to 50 percent of the shares. This allocates the right and power for the State authorities to participate in mining and control the process. Then, Chapter Two was dedicated to the State Regulation in the Mineral Sector. Moreover, the regulation to issue licenses to those who apply first was eliminated. In its place, a selection process along with its criteria was introduced. Also, the section on the stability agreement was eliminated in the new version.

Another law that inflicted a major downturn in the growth of the gold mining economy was the *Windfall Profit Tax* law which was also passed at around the same time in 2006. In Mongolian, it is called *Genetiin ashigiin tatvaryn huuli*, which literally means the "sudden profit tax law". In 2005, the Government submitted to the Parliament a bill that provided for a "windfall profit tax on some products". The bill would establish export customs tariffs on some types of minerals. In May 2006, the Parliament approved the *Windfall Profit Tax* on copper and gold exports which required companies exporting copper and gold to pay a tax at a rate of 68% when the copper price exceeded $2,600 per metric ton and the gold price reached $500 per troy ounce on the *London Metal Exchange* (Tse 2007, 1). As the Government and the Parliament predicted, after the implementation of the law, the GDP of Mongolia had an average 56 percent increase from 2006 to 2008, while the average was 19 percent from 2001 to 2005. This was about 35 percent, or one-third of Mongolia's GDP (Mongolian Mining Journal 2008). This statistic also shows that the original intention of this law was to assist the national economy. This explains why the tax rate was 68 percent, which was the highest in the world. Rumors suggest that, in the original discussion, the percentage was not 68 but 80, in order to make it more beneficial to the national economy. The national economy was the major force to justify the legitimacy of the *Windfall Tax Law*. For those who introduced the bill and those who supported it in the Parliament, this law was the best possible way for the Mongolian Government to claim its ownership of the natural resources and to benefit the most from the production of natural resources, as it is pronounced in the Constitution of Mongolia. In relation to this logic, it would be interesting to look at the story of how the Government came to this idea in the first place.

It was a total accident for Mongolia to create and implement the *Windfall Tax Law*. In Mongolia, this law is known as the law of Fortuna's daughter (*Fortunagiin okhiny khuuli*). 'Fortuna' is a nickname of Batbayar Nyamjav, an economist and politician, who was a member of the Parliament and the Minister of Construction and City Building at the time of the law. Later rumors say that

Batbayar became a shaman and was performing shamanic rituals in the *State House* and at the Mongolian Embassies in some foreign countries. All of these make Batbayar a nationalist character. In 1992, he started his private business and a company called *Fortuna*. Later, it became clear that the idea of the law came from his daughter, Jargalan, who was studying economics at Columbia University from 2001 to 2004. Many Mongolians, according to Algaa, were sharing the joke that she learned about the law on the internet, or that the idea came in *Fortuna's* dream, etc. The origin of this law became an example for many people to make fun of the way how the leaders of Mongolia initiate and approve laws without serious research and knowledge. The story also says that, originally, the law targeted copper, but not gold, and particularly the Mongolian and Russian joint venture *Erdenet Mining Corporation*. The law was supposed to help Mongolia to benefit more than Russia. As Algaa explained it to me, it was unfair to target *Erdenet* and Russia; therefore, by taking the opportunity of the price increase of gold, the Government decided to include both copper and gold.

Unfortunately, besides the increase in the GDP, this law brought a disastrous outcome in gold mining. In my interview with some gold mining company owners and Algaa at the *Mongolian Mining Association*, everybody confirmed that gold mining companies stopped selling their gold to the *Mongol Bank*, which brought a dramatic expansion in the illegal gold trade in the following years. This is also a problem underlined in the *Mongolian Mining Journal* article. The article calculated that the amount of the production of gold decreased from 24.1 metric tons in 2005 to 17.4 metric tons in 2007, whereas the export of gold fell from 23.8 metric tons in 2005 to 11.5 metric tons in 2007. They also calculated that, within two years, because of the *Windfall Tax Law*, Mongolia lost about 565 million USD from gold exports (Mongolian Mining Journal 2008). On 25 August 2009, the start of the major strategic mines made the leaders of Mongolia cancel the *Windfall Tax Law*. In order to pave the way for the agreement with *Rio Tinto*, and its partner *Ivanhoe Mines*, to establish the *Oyu Tolgoi* copper-gold mine, the Government of Mongolia agreed to scrap the 68% *Windfall Profit Tax*. In preparation for the start of *Oyu Tolgoi* production, scheduled for 2013, the Government rescinded the *Windfall Law* in early 2011 (Swire 2009).

Gold production further dropped in the next couple of years due to "the law with the long name" passed in 2009. *Law to Prohibit Mineral Exploration and Mining Operations at Headwaters of Rivers, Protected Zones of the Water Reservoir and Forest Area* is known as "the law with the long name". This law was key to the success of activists in the river movements. The *Mongolian United Movement of Mongolian Rivers and Lakes* (UMMRL) drafted and lobbied politicians and

successfully managed to approve the law on 16 July 2009. The law banned mining exploration within 200m of rivers and forests. This affected hundreds of mostly gold mining companies and licenses. In 2012, the Government listed 789 exploration licenses and 346 mining licenses that had been granted before the law was adopted. According to the new law, all of these had to be cancelled. From around early 2000, it took over ten years of peaceful protests, hunger strikes and endless debates for environmental protestors to achieve this success. In 2001, Munkhbayar, who was chair of the citizens' representative meeting of Tsagaan-Ovoo *sum* (district) government, Dundgovi aimag, and five others from the eight neighboring *sum* governments of Dundgovi, Ömnögovi and Övörkhangai provinces along the River Ongi, Ongi River Movement (ORM, Ongi golynkhon khödölgöön) was the first to be started. In 2005 and 2006, 11 local river movements formed the Mongol *nutag minu evsel*, which literally means *My Mongol Homeland*. It was also known in English as the *Homeland and Water Protection Coalition* (HWPC) and the *Mongolian Nature Protection Coalition* (MNPC). It was a success story of Munkhbayar to unite eleven different movements. They successfully managed to close down 35 gold mining companies which were operating along the Ongi River. This success brought Munkhbayar the prestigious *Goldman Prize* in 2007. MNPC was dissolved in 2008. In my interview, Munkhbayar explained that five of the movements disagreed to use arms and pistols, and many of them decided to continue their movement through 'responsible mining' by creating a tripartite contract between the mining company, the local government, and the local movement. The remaining six movements re-organized as the *United Movement of Mongolian Rivers and Lakes* (UMMRL), which was formed in 2008. In 2011, the leaders of UMMRL incorporated ten other movements, mostly with strong nationalist agendas, and established the *Fire Nation Union* (FNU) to take fiercer political actions (cf. Snow 2011; Byambajav 2014; Simonov 2014). On 2 September 2010, members of UMMRL were shooting at the Chinese *Puraam Mining* and the Canadian *Centerra Gold* company equipment. In October 2010, UMMRL and FNU sued the Government for the improper implementation of the law. In the meantime, on 4 June 2011, UMMRL and FNU organized the herders' cavalry protest and shot arrows at the *State House* and broke a window to pressurize the government to implement "the law with the long name".

Their appeal trickled down to a district court but, in October 2011, the Supreme Court ordered the Government to enforce the law and compensate the mining companies affected by the law. As a result, their licenses were frozen, mining operations were interrupted, and not all but some gold mining companies stopped operating and closed down. The Government of Mongolia had to compensate at

least 647.3 billion tögrög (about 460 million USD at the rate of September 2012), while the GDP was less than 500 billion tögrög (Bold-Erdene 2013; Fehrbach 2013). The large sum made the Government unable to compensate the mining companies; therefore, the Government of Mongolia eventually had to amend the law in order to escape from the compensation. Protestors organized an armed protest at the *State House* entrance on 16 September 2013. Activists chose this day because the irregular session of the State *Great Khural* (Parliament) was planning to amend several laws including "the law with the long name". Munkhbayar explains that it was not a sudden incident; instead, it was a sign of desperation to protect the environment and the pastoral livelihoods in the mining areas.

In the years of tense environmental protests, in 2010, Elbegdorj Tsahia, the President of Mongolia, for the sake of the national security purposes, introduced a ban on issuing exploration licenses and on the assigning of the already issued licenses. It was a moratorium to create a better regulation and organization of mining licenses and to amend the *Minerals Law* and to find a resolution to the corruption and errors in the issuance of some thousands of licenses, and the overwhelming sales of land in the form of mining licenses (Ninjsemjid 2012). His moratorium lasted for about four years until 2014. As a consequence of the above laws and the presidential moratorium, the amount in the production of gold further dropped to 5.7 metric tons in 2011, whereas the gold export plummeted to 2.6 metric tons (Resource and Petroleum Authority of Mongolia 2015, 7–8). The Bank of Mongolia purchased 15.23 metric tons of gold in 2005, which was the all-time highest number. This amount dramatically dropped to 2.12 metric tons in 2010, 3.31 in 2011, and 3.34 in 2012.[2]

All of the above laws put strong constraints on liberal policies. Although their impact on the economy was sparse, and the fights were fierce, the above outlined concerns are neatly tied to the wider agenda of the nation-building which expands beyond the importance of the national economy and the employment of neoliberalism, which attracts enormous public attention. The above discussed laws and political decisions may seem violating for those who promote neoliberalism, and seem tame for those who promote the State control, they violate some principles of neoliberalism by creating State ownership; granting authority for the local governments, increasing tax, banning and stopping mining operations in the river and forest areas, and passing a moratorium on the issuing

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2   *Mongol bankind tushaasan altny hemjee 10 khuviar össön baina* (Gold sold to the Bank of Mongolian increased by 10 percent). *Bank of Mongolia*. Accessed 27 March 2018, https://www.mongolbank.mn/news.aspx?id=1711&tid=1

of exploration licenses and on the assigning of the already existing licenses. Some of these decisions and laws which tamed the extent of neoliberalism were temporary, some of them were scrapped and amended, while some of them still remain, which makes and 'unmakes' neoliberalism. This makes the situation of Mongolia neoliberal to a certain extent and not neoliberal to another extent. Concerns presented in the above laws and political decisions extend beyond the matter of national economy and neoliberalization. Therefore, I ask the following questions: What makes people initiate the above outlined laws, and what makes the Parliament and the Government approve those? What are the factors making these laws happen? These questions require that I should broaden my framework of neoliberalism to a larger project. This larger project that attempts to encompass neoliberalism is the nation-building, which embraces all sorts of different matters (besides the economy) that are imagined to build the nation. I suppose that neoliberal consequences in the economy collide with other matters in the building of a nation, which I shall demonstrate in the final section.

Contesting consequences in the nation building

The above discussed materials from 1990 to 2017 present several chronological processes – to exit the Socialist state-regulated economic system, to establish a free market and a liberal economy, and then to return to the tendency to regulate and control the economy and markets, and, finally, to revert back to the tendency to deregulate. Different agents, such as the President, the Prime Minister, members of the Parliament, technocrats, scholars and protestors actively participated in and influenced the above discussed processes by resisting, negotiating, navigating, managing, and testing different strategies. More precisely, in a very general big picture, the Mongolian State has been trying different models to bargain between the State and the firms (Vernon 1971; Moran 1992; Wilson 2015). All of them seemed to prioritize and privilege not only the matters of the national economy, but also many other national matters and interests. It is usually the neoliberal reformers and the democrats who commit to the prioritizing and privileging of the national economy, while many others, such as the technocrats, scholars, protestors and some politicians, often privilege some other matters of the national importance. This is not what Appel finds in her discussion of the national economy in Equatorial Guinea. She writes that not only in Equatorial Guinea but also elsewhere, the economy is 'the privileged object' in official discourses (2017, 294). But, in the case of Mongolia, even official discourses suggest that I should not restrict my understanding

of the economy to the imagined concept of the national economy that officially presents the national scenario of the economy. This is the main reason why Appel (2017) warns not to be restricted to the generic and imagined concept of the national economy which tends to explain everything in the official discourses. To understand the whole scenario in detail, we should look at what is happening beyond the official, beyond the economic, and beyond the national. There can be diverse factors and agencies in each of the above laws I have presented. They can be cultural, historical, religious, or even personal, they may have to do with the interest and the agency of individual actors to promote, influence, or reject the above discussed laws. Plus, all of the above listed bills and laws can have individual reasons to be initiated, promoted, or rejected. For example, it is common in Mongolia to suspect that all the above processes to promote or to reject the above discussed bills and laws serve a particular interest of individual actors, such as politicians, protestors, and mining company owners. I do not completely reject such suspicions, but it was impossible for me to anthropologically discover, reveal and discuss the truthfulness of such suspicions. It should be something that can be done by some other expert investigations. What I can do as an anthropologist is to depart from the imagined official discourse of the national economy, as Appel suggests, and to shed light on other social, cultural and historical matters in the nation-building narrative.

Jeffrey Wilson (2015) underlines the importance of the political matter in the discussion of the national economy. Ganbold and Ali (2017) correctly identified some cultural aspect and the nomadic way of life and identity in the tendency to reject the mining economy. This section sheds light on two other contesting matters in the nation-building project. One of the two is the reconstruction of historical incidents to protect the land, natural resources, environment, locality, territory, and sovereignty. The second one is a conceptual continuity of the natural resource policy in the legal system. Both of them make major constructions to promote and justify laws, regulations and political decisions I demonstrated in Part Two of my paper. The consequences of the laws in Part Two are often identified as resource nationalism (Ganbold and Ali 2017, 10), resource curse, populism and myopic policy (Reeves 2011, 182). But, in fact, on the other side, I find prioritization and preservation of the indigenous culture, history and legal continuity, which are not expected to be undermined by the national Government. I argue that the 2006 *Minerals Law*, the *Windfall Profit Tax Law*, "the law with the long name", and the presidential moratorium were all by-products of the reconstruction of the historical experience and the continuity in the legal system.

Reconstruction of history

For organizing an armed protest against the State, Munkhbayar and four of his colleagues were sentenced and given one to ten years prison terms. The court found those environmental protestors guilty for blackmailing (Criminal Law, Article 149.3), terrorism (*zandalchlakh*) (Criminal Law, Article 177.1 and 177.2), and for illegally obtaining, as well as possessing guns and explosives (Criminal Law, Article 185.2).[3] Some sources in the media claim that, at the end of the court sentence, Munkhbayar said: "What is the need for gold if there is no water; What is the need for life, if there is no country?" When I asked Munkhbayar about this phrase, he told me that he had said something like this, but not exactly in the form of an aphorism. He thinks that it is some journalist and media who put it in a nice poetic structure. Yet, he also admits that he knows this phrase from the historian B. Baljinnyam who claims that this is what Genghis Khan said (cf. Shiirev 2017).[4] Munkhbayar also acknowledges two other historical phrases with a similar meaning, which he says he also learned from some historians and their works. One of them says *Gazar ulsyn ündes* (Land is the source of the State) which is claimed to be what a Xiongnu emperor Modu Chanyu (234–174 BC) once said. The other says *Minii nutgiin gazar shoroonoos burkhan guisan ch büü ög* (Do not give away my land even if god asks for it) which is claimed to be what an Oirat ruler Galdan Khan (1644–1697) said. Learning history was actually what Munkhbayar says he was doing in prison. He was imprisoned for two years and was released from prison on 5 November 2015, as a consequence of the new Law on Petition (*Örshööliin tukhai khuuli*). When I visited his home in the countryside in the winter of 2016, he showed me some of those books he was reading. It was two volumes of the teachings of Genghis Khan published by a famous Mongolian historian. Munkhbayar keeps them on the altar next to the portrait of Genghis Khan. Munkhbayar explains that the contents of all of these phrases are adopted and declared in the Constitution of Mongolia, and he and his colleagues only attempted to accomplish the duty of the Mongolian citizens to protect the country, as it is declared in the Constitution.

Besides Munkhbayar, many other movements acknowledge and popularize these phrases. For example, on 26 January 2015, the *Bosoo Höh Mongol* (Standing Blue Mongol) movement, in collaboration with some other movements, organized a mass strike to resist a gold mining operation in the sacred mountain Noyon, in

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3   Erüügiin khuuli (Criminal Law). *Legal Info*, accessed 27 March 2018, http://www.legalinfo.mn/law/details/11634.

4   http://unuudur.mn/article/94583.

the North of Mongolia. In the strike, the organizer printed and hoisted the phrase *Minii gazar shoroonoos Burhan guisan ch büü ög* (Do not give away my land even if god asks for it) on about three-meter-tall and 15-meter-long background.[5]

I do not intend to trace the historical roots of the above phrases. But what interests me is the historical construction of land, territory, sovereignty, nation and State in the use of these phrases. I must note that the consequence of neoliberalism popularizes these phrases and gives rise to the reconstruction of many other historical incidents. The reconstruction of history only appears in the case of phases referenced to Mongolian aristocratic rulers, but also in historical incidents. Environmental protestors, scholars and economists (Batsuuri 2016) often make analogies between situations in the contemporary Mongolia and some historical incidents. For example, Munkhbayar traces the history of his attempts to protect the environment to some the *altny haruul* gold patrols and resistance against mining in the times of Qing, on which I shall elaborate below.

From around the mid-eighteenth century, under the rule of the Qing Empire, aristocrats and nobles, such as Zasagt Khan and Sain Noyon Khan, established and organized *altan-u haragul*, which literally means 'a gold patrol'. This was to protect wild animals, herbs, gold and all other natural resources in general from illegal exploitation and smuggling of migrant Chinese and Russians (Nasanbaljir 1964; Banzragch 2004; Tuya and Battomor 2012). In contemporary Mongolia, the history of the gold patrols remains as a heroic duty to protect the sovereignty and well-being of Mongolia, which inspires members of the nationalistic environmental movements. They often present themselves and justify their actions by using the historical case of the gold patrols. Although, in contemporary Mongolia, it is often understood to have been established and organized by the *Ard* people of Mongolia under Qing; in fact, it was established and funded by the aristocratic rulers of Mongolia, and it was legitimized by the Qing authorities. Moreover, this was not only to protect the local environment and resources, but also the territory and sovereignty from foreign threats.

The duty to protect land, territory and natural resources expanded at the beginning of the twentieth century when Qing officials decided to transform Mongolia to a strategic buffer zone against the encroachment of the Russian Empire into a profitable region through a combination of agricultural land reclamation and mining. The term 'source of profit' (*li yuan*) was adopted to describe the Mongolian soil (Jackson and Dear 2016, 349; cf. Sneath 2001; Dear 2014, 245–247). The first large-scale multinational mine in Mongolia under the Qing was

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5   For photos, visit http://mass.mn/n/27208. Last accessed 22 March 2017.

known as Mongolor. Financed by the Russian, Belgian, and Qing capital, it was also staffed with French engineers, American hydrologists, Russian, Chinese and Mongolian miners, and it became operational in March 1900 (Tuya and Battomor 2012, 68–70; Jackson and Dear 2016, 350; cf. Dear 2014; Bonilla 2016). From the beginning, the company was facing fierce resistance of the Mongol aristocrats and the local population. Not only against this company but, in general, the Mongol aristocrats and civilians exposed strong resistance against mining operations and the policy of the Qing authorities to exploit natural resources in Mongolia. There were several issues regarding the complaints and resistance against mining. Ya. Sodbaatar (2013) published extensive archival documents on the resistance against mostly Russian and Chinese gold and coal mining operations and the operation of Mongolor. According to these materials, it was common to complain that mining is "incompatible with the way of living and the locality" (*aj törökh arga, oron nutagt kharshiltai*) (ibid., 31–33, 48, 53, 54, 55). Most of those documents reveal complaints which suggest that mining operations destroy land and pasture and violate the local people's belief in the land and water spirits. All of the complaints found mining operations as foreign to the Mongolian culture, not only in the sense that Russians, Chinese, and other foreigners operate it, but also in the sense of being destructive to the mobile pastoralist way of life, as well as the Buddhist and shamanic beliefs.

Continuity in the legal system

In Mongolia, historical constructions, such as the above, are not something that has suddenly emerged due to the resource economy boom. Such tendencies are largely adopted and constructed in the Law, regulations, and Constitutions. The first mining regulation, which was passed at the times of the theocratic government of Mongolia (1911–1921), banned mining operations in the sacrificial areas. Then, the first Constitution of the Mongolian People's Republic, passed in 1924, declared that "natural resources are the property of people" (*ard niitiin khöröngö*), and explained that this is the way how it had been since the past.[6] Most importantly, the Constitution explains that it is important to acknowledge, privilege and preserve the Mongolian traditional customs and teachings (*zan surgaali*) regarding natural resources. This historical and cultural construction was further reinforced and validated in the course of the development of the

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6   *Ankhdugaar ündsen khuuli* (The First Constitution), *Tüükh Niigem Blog*, accessed 27 March 2018, http://tuuh_niigem.blog.gogo.mn/read/entry361153.

Socialist system of State ownership. The constitutions of 1940[7] and 1960[8] of the MPR declared that natural resources are "*ulsyn ömch ard tümnii khöröngö*", which literally means the wealth of the nation or country and the property of the people. The Constitution of Mongolia of 1992 declares, except for being given to the citizens of Mongolia for private ownership, the land, as well as the subsoil with its mineral resources, forests, water resources and wildfowl, shall be the property of the State (*törtin ömch*). Moreover, the Constitution also states that natural resources should be under the authority of people (*ard tümnii medel*) or the public and the protection of the State (*töriin khamgaalalt*).[9] Although there is a small change from *uls* (country and nation) to *tor* (State) in 1992, during the Socialism years, the term *uls* often indicated the State. This is precisely what Munkhbayar proposed in his explanation. According to him, the State did not accomplish its duty to protect land and natural resources from mining destructions, and his movement repeatedly and fiercely demanded the Government to accomplish its duty. As I mentioned in the previous section, even the Supreme Court found that the Government had failed to accomplish its duty to protect. Munkhbayar also explained to me that this was exactly the same reason for the court not to sentence him and his colleagues when they first shot at mining company equipment on 2 September 2010. But, in the second incident of the armed protest against the State, the logic of the Law did not help. Munkhbayar thinks that this has to do with the difference between the mining company and the State, since the former was the target of the first incident, while the latter was the target in the second incident.

The above outlined articles, laws, and constitutions do not simply declare the State control and approve the national or people's ownership of land and natural resources. But this also protects people's belief, feelings and customs attached to the land and localities they inhabit. In other words, deep in the hearts, there is shared intimacy and feeling of people, not as individuals, but as a group or a nation. Therefore, it is about acknowledging and protecting the historically and culturally shared principles, rationale, belief and feeling, instead of undermining them. This also explains why all of the above listed laws that strangled the principles of neoliberalism were initiated, promoted and passed in Mongolia.

In brief, as it has been reconstructed, in the last two hundred years, Mongols intensely developed the sense of protecting not only the natural resources, but

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7   *BNMAU-iin ündsen khuuli 1940* (Constitution of the MPR 1940). *Gogo*, accessed 27 March 2018, http://tnus.blog.gogo.mn/read/entry378803.

8   *BNMAU-iin ündsen khuuli 1960* (Constitution of the MPR 1960), *Tüükh Niigem Blog*, accessed 27 March 2018, http://tuuh_niigem.blog.gogo.mn/read/entry363795.

9   *Mongol ulsyn ündsen khuuli* (Constitution of Mongolia), *Legal Info*, accessed 27 March 2018, http://www.legalinfo.mn/law/details/367.

also the environment, territory, locality, the pastoral way of life and religious beliefs during the occupation of Qing, and in the times of theocratic government, and then the sense of the State and people's ownership as well as the control of natural resources during the Socialist period. All of these were employed in the Communist construction of Mongolian history (cf. Kaplonski 2004, 7), where all the above were lumped in the understanding of the freedom, liberation, and independence movements. In Post-Socialism, this tendency was further employed in the discussion on protecting the country and its sovereignty and wealth from the domination of the global neoliberal economy. Clearly, this reconstruction of history, culture and legal concepts cannot suddenly change in the last two decades of the market economy; instead, it turns to a source of power to tame the extent of neoliberalism. For Mongolian policymakers and people, it is impossible to reject or even undermine those reconstructed historical experiences and legal practices and immediately establish an ultimately neoliberal market-oriented political institution that can generate the liberal economy.

Conclusion

Sara Jackson (2014) writes about the way how a transnational corporation builds the nation in Mongolia. Unlike her work, this chapter shows how the nation-state attempts to restrict the transnational corporation's building of the nation in Mongolia. To show this, the present chapter discusses some key processes of the development of the mining economy in Mongolia. The first part illustrates the rapid development of the liberal economy, the market and gold mining from about 1997 to 2006. The liberal *Minerals Law* approved in 1997 enabled rapid growth in the mining sector and the funding of the emerging nation. The law was called the *Black Law* by some technocrats who resisted the law. The main complaints against the law note that it was made by foreigners with the support of the *World Bank*, and that the law violated the Constitution of Mongolia. These technocrats and those who supported them achieved some political advantage towards the 2000s, and finally managed to amend the law by introducing more State control. From around the same time, some other bills were adopted and approved by the Parliament, such as the 68 percent *Windfall Tax Law*, "the law with the long name" to protect the environment and locality, and the presidential moratorium on mining licenses. Some identified these consequences as 'resource nationalist' and 'resource curse'. However, we can discover some other major historical, cultural and legal factors directly and indirectly conceptually supporting those consequences which were

given the names 'resource nationalist' and 'resource curse'. In the final part of my paper, I have demonstrated a reconstruction of history to protect land, natural resources, environment, territory and sovereignty, as well as continuity in the legal system on land and natural resources. I argue that those are alternative historical, cultural and legal consequences in the building of the nation-state which tames and indigenizes the neoliberal paradigms adopted in the nation-building.

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Social Anthropology in Lithuania: Challenges, Resilience, and Particularity of the Discipline

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Abstract. The discipline of sociocultural anthropology has particular connotations in Central and Eastern Europe. German scholarly contributions played a major role in setting the academic agendas for its development in this European region. Herder's "recognition of the unique spirit of each people, conceived of as a separate organism, developing according to its own specific trajectory" made a synonym of the terms *nation* and *folk* (Hann 2007) and laid the ground for 'studying peoples', first of all in Germany, defined differently, as just peoples (*Völkerkunde*) and as those peoples who do belong to a nation as folk (*Volkskunde*). Such a division had a lasting effect on scholarship in Central and Eastern Europe during the era of nationalist mobilization, which followed the collapse of the region's empires in the nineteenth century and the Soviet bloc at the end of twentieth century.

The aim of this paper is to try to unpack the influence of the dominant discourses and national identity politics on the research and teaching strategies of the discipline of anthropology in Lithuania. It is a participant informed reflection on the development and professional practicing (by teaching and doing research) of this discipline in the course of the ongoing social and institutional changes in the country during the last three decades.

Keywords: discipline of sociocultural anthropology, Lithuania, Baltic States, Vytautas Magnus University, identity politics, Vilnius University.

Introduction

The post-communist change of the Baltic States reflected in the re-establishment of both the old and the new academic disciplines, such as sociocultural anthropology, which started to appear immediately after the fall of the Berlin Wall and got on its way in the early 2000s.

I argue that sociocultural anthropology was almost unknown in the Soviet times when the niche of this people-studying discipline was occupied (at least in Lithuania) by physical or biological anthropology which is still represented in the public discourse as 'the proper' anthropology. Also, the field was occupied by the Soviet discipline called *etnografiya*.

Thus, social and cultural anthropology 'arrived' exactly during the time of change – in the early 1990s – as a novelty, and it was a rather political novelty which challenged ethnic nationalism and resisted methodological nationalism. Since the period of the 'spring of nations' at the end of the nineteenth century, and during the Singing Revolution of 1989–1990 Lithuanians as well as citizens of other countries in Central Eastern Europe were busy with the identity politics. The discipline of ethnology, understood in the Central-Eastern European sense as *Volkskunde*, or, in local terms, *tautotyra* (in the 1920s–1940s) and *etnokultūra* (since the late 1980s) fitted well with the public interest in creating a repository of national culture with material and symbolic goods that provided a semiotic ontology of the nation as a socio-political entity with its own history (Verdery 2007), or at least the folk cultural heritage reflecting historical political events and systems. In Lithuania, this 'home-brewed' ethnology is very different from the contemporary Anglo-Saxon or French meaning of the term. In Lithuania ethnology was serving the building of a national identity politics twice – once during the first Lithuanian independence period in the 1920s and 1930s, and secondly in the 1990s.

What was the development of this national ethnological discipline that occurred before the discipline of sociocultural anthropology 'arrived'?

Tautotyra (National Ethnology) of the 1920–1930s

In Ernest Gellner's terms, nationalism in Central Eastern Europe began in the nineteenth century with 'cultural engineering' and as a 'salvage operation', and the role of folklorists and ethnographers was instrumental, as he wrote:

> "The interest of folklorists and ethnographers lay in the description, collection, study, preservation, and often exaltation of their national (peasant) cultures. This holds true particularly for the countries of the 'third time zone' of Europe, [where] nationalism began with ethnography, half descriptive, half **normative**, a kind of **salvage operation and cultural engineering** combined" (Gellner 1996, 115–6; emphasis mine)

Such a 'salvage operation' and cultural 'engineering' has been attributed to the nineteenth century's 'spring of nations' period, but, in the case of Lithuania, it was also used in the 1918–1940 period, during the years of the first Lithuanian Republic, to build a 'normative' image of the traditional Lithuanian culture and heritage. It went through the shaping of *tautotyra* (the Lithuanian language

substitute for *Volkskunde*), which was predominantly descriptivist, and which aimed at documenting the 'local/regional culture' and using the cultural-historical paradigm in the analysis of the data.

Jonas Balys, the most prominent Lithuanian *Volkskunde* specialist of the period and later, after WWII, became a distinguished scholar of the Lithuanian diaspora in the U.S. He made a major step in developing *tautotyra* at Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, then the capital of Lithuania. He was the founder of the Study Program and the Department of *Etnika* (*Etnikos katedra*) in 1934. By explaining the term *etnika*, he incorporated both German terms – *Volkskunde* and *Völkerkunde* – in the Study Program. He attempted to invent Lithuanian substitutes for the naming of this double disciplinarity:

> "The very name [etnika] already shows that it is a science about the peoples (*tautamokslis*), – the part of *etnika* that studies ourselves and our closest neighbors is *t a u t o t y r a*. *Tautotyra* aspires to provide an accurate picture of the life of the European peoples." (Balys 1934, 16)

He thought that the purpose of this double-headed scientific and humanistic program was "to understand the external and internal essence of every nation as inherited from its historical development…" (ibid.).

Balys was a typical practitioner of Central-North European *Volkskunde*. In 1932, he defended his PhD at the University of Vienna under the supervision of Father Wilhelm Schmidt, one of the founders of the *Kulturgeschichte* school in anthropology. He tried to set a new epistemological standard for Lithuanian *ethnology* by criticizing evolutionism and promoting a cultural-historical perspective with a strong positivistic stance: "As there are no 'iron laws' in the spiritual sphere (nor are they absolute in the technical sphere), we therefore have to … first, collect facts, then evaluating them critically and only then making conclusions" (ibid). The polemics in between the epistemologies of evolutionism and cultural-historicism could be considered as a symptom of the scientific maturity of the discipline, although 'salvage ethnography' still was the main feature of the period dominated by descriptivism and museology.

Soviet *etnografiya* as epistemology of historical materialism

The term *etnografiya* itself has produced a labeling effect, as post-communist Russian anthropologists Bondarenko and Korotayev pointed out:

"The very fact that the discipline was invariably called '*etnografiya*' (ethnography) produced a 'labeling effect'. Indeed, it was mostly ethnography in its pristine sense – i.e., 'description of the peoples' – rather than sociocultural anthropology. Most ethnographers mainly studied topics related to material culture such as (ethnic) housing, food, clothing etc." (Bondarenko and Korotayev 2003, 235)

The officially accepted methodological framework for social science was historical materialism, based first of all on the Morgan-Marx schema of evolutionism.

The Soviet *ethnografiya* was defined as a "sub-field of history which studies peculiarities of development of the material, social and spiritual culture of the peoples" (Vyšniauskaitė 1964, 9). As Bondarenko and Korotayev note, "description of the peoples was focal and it aimed at 'establishing patterns of historic cultural evolution" (Bondarenko and Korotayev 2003, 235). Since the 1980s, the Soviet *etnografiya* found itself under the spell of positivist empiricism and eventually became heavily grounded in the 'Theory of Ethnos' of the Soviet ethnographer Yulian Bromley who was extremely influential throughout the 1980s. Here, studies of peoples were seen through the category of *ethnos* as a major systemic marker to deal with humanity by making ethnic categorization, even approaching whole nations as entities of *ethnos* (Bromley 1987; Bondarenko and Korotayev 2003).

Thus, *ethnos* referred to *narod* (people), and it was back to Herder equalizing a *nation* with a *folk*, whereas here it involved the equalization of tribes, nationalities and nations under one and the same label *ethnos*.

Post-Soviet epistemology of *ethnic culture* – ethnicization of the discipline

Ethnicization of the discipline of ethnology occurred in the late 1980s through the categorization of 'culture', through 'nativist' essentialization of one's 'own culture' when the politics of *ethnic culture* became part of ethnic nationalism and irredentism which took shape during the years of *Perestroika*, and especially during and after the *Singing Revolution*. At that time, the categories of 'folk culture' and 'tradition' in the epistemology of 'home-brewed' ethnology were extensively profiled through the episteme of *ethnicity*. This episteme was appropriate to use because of the popularity of Bromley's aforementioned definition and the

extrapolation of *ethnos* which suited well for multiple application of the term. It worked well for both assimilationist politics of the Soviet State as well as for the nationalist ideology of the stateless (existing as part of the Soviet State) populations, such as Lithuania, aiming to regain their nation-state.

In the late 1980s, there was an upheaval of nationalist ideologies resisting the communist ideology of assimilation known as Brezhnev's ideology of the 'fusion of nations' (*sblizenije-slijanije)* into one – the Soviet nation-state. Resistance against such 'melting-pot politics' paved the way for the essentialization of the term 'ethnicity' as an episteme in a slightly different way from that of Bromley. It was back to Balys, when, in the late 1980s, the category of *ethnic culture* was introduced by the leading folklorist of the period, Norbertas Vėlius. It was defined as a synonym of the term 'folk culture' or 'traditional culture', which meant a substantial part of the Lithuanian national culture. It was a step back to *Vokskunde* and the classic Herderian understanding of nation as folk, and politically it fitted well the stateless situation of the Lithuanian culture during the communist period.

Thus, the term 'Lithuanian ethnic culture' very soon became vogue as a new label for branding the idea of 'core nationhood'. It started to be used instead of 'traditional culture', and hinted at the 'spiritual culture', i.e. beliefs, mythology, rituals, folk art monuments, etc. that was neglected by the Soviet regime's *etnografiya* which predominantly devoted attention to the 'material' culture. As a result, due to this term, Lithuania became portrayed as a nation rooted in the ancient Lithuanian mythology, rituals, symbols, and traditions, and became singled out as 'genuine ethnic'.

Such ethnicization became legitimized after ten years when the 'Law on the Principles of State Protection of Ethnic Culture' (1999) was issued and *ethnic culture* institutions were springing up throughout the country. In this Law, the heritage culture of the ethnic majority was voiced and singled out at the expense of the silenced 'ethnic cultures' of the ethnic minorities. Here, the 'ethnic culture' was seen as both inherited in the sense of being "passed from generation to generation" as well as a living body that is continually changing by being "constantly renewed" (ibid.). Thus, the term 'culture' is portrayed as a set of ethno-national "cultural properties, created by the entire nation (*ethnos*)" (ibid.). Such categorization of nativism left no room in Lithuania for the minority cultures – such as Polish, Russian, or Jewish (Yiddish) – to prove themselves as 'unique' and ethnographically rooted. Through this judicial act, the notion of *ethnic culture* (used in the singular form only) became a model for the normative and politically framed culture (Gupta and Ferguson 1992; Fox and King 2002);

and, consequently, the understanding of 'tradition', 'heritage', and even 'national culture' was part of it. So, the term *ethnic culture* produced methodological tensions giving way to methodological nationalism. It was backed up by national identity politics and became a label for anything but foreign culture. So, in the early 1990s, it was a challenge to confront the *Lithuanian ethnic culture*, portrayed as the *marked* culture as denoted by reification (Appadurai 1996). Another challenge was to teach an *Introduction to anthropology* (at the time, I was teaching it at Vilnius University) with its comparative and constructivist perspectives on cultures and to insist on Fredrik Barth's conceptualization of ethnicity.

So, the 'arrival' of sociocultural anthropology was some sort of political challenge in Lithuania; it involved change from its ethnonationalist stance of the 1990s to opening-up to globalization and cosmopolitanism. It was an epistemological challenge as anthropology stood in opposition to the 'Lithuanian disciplines', such as ethnology (*ethnic culture studies*) or history.

Three attempts to establish the discipline of anthropology in Lithuania

Sociocultural anthropology as a discipline appeared in Lithuania through the postsocialist change in the late 1980s – early 1990s and brought studies of the global human condition in the comparative perspective. It was "untouched by Marxism or nationalism" (Buchowski 2004, 10), and it provided epistemology beyond methodological nationalism. It was also part of the Westernization of academia.

The Singing Revolution in the Baltics was an opening to the West. In higher education, this meant primarily the appearance of 'new' fields, which had been 'unknown' in the Soviet period, such as political science, religious studies, etc. Socio-cultural anthropology was one of those 'new fields' brought by the Lithuanian diaspora from North America where the main wave of refugees from the Baltic States, who had fled communism, moved in the late 1940s. They were now expected to return from the diaspora in a philanthropic spirit for "missionary work for independent Lithuania" by bringing social remittances (Čiubrinskas et al. 2023). Part of their missionary work was the founding of new academic programs and departments.

Anthropology was one of these, but it took more than a dozen of years to succeed. There were three attempts of its establishment, the first one was in 1989–1992 in Kaunas, the second trial followed in Vilnius in the mid-1990s to the early

2000s, whereas the third attempt was made in Kaunas again, thus eventually launching the Master's study program in Social Anthropology in 2004.

a) Beginnings of anthropology in Kaunas 1989–1992

In 1989, months before the fall of the Berlin Wall, the relaunch of Vytautas Magnus University (VMU) took place in Kaunas. The university had been closed in the early 1950s due to the Stalinist regime and was re-opened as a Western-type university with the support of the Lithuanian diaspora. Here, along with the other fields of study which were largely unknown in Soviet times (e.g., political science, theology, sociology, etc.). the discipline of anthropology appeared. The Department of Anthropology was founded in Kaunas immediately after the re-establishment of VMU. It was based on the American four-field anthropology and led by Lithuanian-American professors only. The emphasis was on teaching in English and on *Artes Liberales* as well as on a flexible system designed to accommodate visiting faculty professors (Vastokas 2005).

Professor Liucija Baskauskas (PhD from University of California, Los Angeles, *UCLA*) was the founder and head of the first anthropological department in the country (Ciubrinskas 2005). She, along with three other anthropologists of Lithuanian background, started to give lectures on cultural anthropology including an integrated (four-field anthropology) introductory course (Vastokas 2005). The field of anthropology at the 'diaspora University' was greatly appreciated by students, and even attracted students from Latvia. Aivita Putniņa (University of Latvia) and Klāvs Sedlenieks (Riga Stradiņš University) – who are now leading anthropologists in Latvia – were studying anthropology at VMU at that time.

In 1992, the Department of Anthropology was about to launch a study program in anthropology but, before it was fully established, after two years of effort, the department "was re-structured and integrated" (Apanavičius 2009). It became annexed into the newly-formed, but actually old-fashioned, *Volkskunde* type department of Ethnology and Folklore Studies. It was a step towards conformity with the predominantly 'ethno-nationalist' politics of education of the early 1990s. A renowned academic of the field commented on the decision, suggesting that:

> "We don't need to be taught about Africa: there is an urgent need to learn about our traditions instead. Even more so, we should learn more about our traditions because they are dying and the former, Soviet, regime was not in favor of studying those." (Sauka 1999)

It shows how socio-cultural anthropology in Lithuania was perceived as a foreign "product of Westernization." Some academic authorities called anthropology "an American concoction" (Vastokas 2005).

b) Anthropology in Vilnius (1992–2003) and Scandinavian cooperation

The second attempt to institutionalize anthropology was at Vilnius University in 1992–2003. As early as in 1992, the first introductory module of sociocultural anthropology (taught by the author) was introduced into the curriculum of History studies. In 1992–1996, due to the author's postdoctoral fellowships at Oslo, Lund and Copenhagen universities, contacts and cooperation with the Scandinavian anthropological schools were established. This provided a necessary platform for academic networking and cooperation with Scandinavian, and, later, with the Baltic colleagues representing Latvia and Estonia.

A remarkable example was the first Nordic-Baltic School of Anthropology for research students organized in 1996 by Melcher Ekströmer (Lund University), Åke Norborg (Copenhagen University) and the author. It was titled *Cultural Identity in Historical and Social Context*. It brought half a dozen doctoral students from each of the two Scandinavian universities eager to learn about the Baltics. The school also had a first-hand acquaintance with a previously barely known field – sociocultural anthropology – for two dozen Lithuanian doctoral students, mainly from the fields of ethnology, history, and political science. Lectures, seminars, and workshops given by the Scandinavian professors made a considerable impact. Some participants even rewrote the final drafts of their PhD theses (Ciubrinskas 2015; Čepaitienė 2016).

Cooperation further grew in the academic year 2000–2001 when Åke Norborg, Fin Nielsen (both from Copenhagen University), Steven Sampson (Lund University), Melcher Ekströmer (Lund University), Jonathan Friedman (Lund University) and the author established a mini network between Copenhagen, Lund, and Vilnius. Its activities included exchange of teachers and students. In 2001, credit courses for Vilnius University graduate students were given by the visiting professors Jonathan Friedman and Steven Sampson. At the same time, two groups of Scandinavian students, one from Copenhagen, and another from Lund, were joined by Lithuanian students for exploratory fieldwork training in Marcinkonys (in Dzūkija National Park) in Southeastern Lithuania, and in Vilnius (led by Melcher Ekströmer and the author). Later, ten students and two teachers from Vilnius visited Lund and Copenhagen. They gave workshops and presented the beginnings of their first anthropological research. The strengthening of cooperation with Lund and Copenhagen enabled two of

Lithuanian graduate students to enroll into the social anthropology graduate program at Lund University, where one of them – Kristina Šliavaitė – did her PhD studies under supervision of Steven Sampson. International teaching, including distance learning courses were given for Copenhagen and Vilnius students; these courses were also on their way to becoming established on a permanent basis. During the 2002 fall semester, an online course on the *Anthropology of Postsocialism* was taught by Fin Nielsen and Kristina Šliavaitė.

The cooperation with the Scandinavian anthropology schools made a crucial impact on curriculum development. As a result, the number of courses in anthropology at Vilnius University was growing. It became a highly attractive curricula addition for students in history. At that time (since 1993), anthropology was taught at the newly established Department of Theory of History and Cultural History. Eventually, this led to launching the BA Program in Cultural History and Anthropology in 2001. This study program was in the field of history, but the number of anthropology courses gradually increased up to six, and the profile in anthropology thus became suitable to provide, in American terms, a minor degree in Anthropology. There was hope that – one day – anthropology would separate from history. At the time, there were five faculty members representing anthropology – two Lithuanian diaspora professors who had switched from Kaunas: cultural anthropologist Romas Vaštokas (PhD from Trent University, Canada) and archeologist Raymond Sidrys (PhD from University of California, Los Angeles, *UCLA*), the author of this paper, and two graduates from Lund University: Aušra Simoniukštytė (MA degree) and Kristina Šliavaitė (PhD). Moreover, it was hoped that an informal research unit – the Center for Social Anthropology and Ethnology – which, since 1995, started developing the first collection of anthropological books in the country (donated mainly by the Scandinavian and British colleagues) would become a platform for research projects.

Unfortunately, in 2002, the staff teaching anthropology was accused by the Dean of the Faculty of History of 'competing' with the field of history by attracting an increasing number of students who were demanding more anthropology classes. In opposition to that accusation, the anthropology teachers emphasized the benefits of broadening international cooperation in the field of anthropology studies. I used to personally introduce all the visiting professors in anthropology to the Dean, but he was always reluctant to meet them because his English was not very good and he could not fully communicate with them. Eventually, the Dean's response became xenophobic; once he told me: "What's the use of those foreigners?! They are just bringing sand on their shoes to my office."

Although the anthropology classes were extremely popular and attracted some excellent students, the Dean of the Faculty of History decided to dramatically reduce the number of courses in anthropology. If, in 1998–2002, the number of anthropology courses varied from four to eight, in 2003, the discipline was reduced to a minimum and left with a single one – the introductory course. In fact, the discipline was eliminated, and the Anthropology Center was closed down. This serves as a second example of the 'manipulation' and power games that are part of academic politics, particularly in favoring established disciplines over new ones. At VMU, there was ethnology, a field which is important for the rebuilding of the nation-state and its national culture politics leaving no room for incorporating anthropology. At Vilnius University, the nationally powerful discipline of history rejected the idea of becoming a hybrid anthro-history program.

c) Anthropology back to Kaunas: Master's study program at VMU since 2004

A crucial point in regaining and expanding the field occurred in 2003 when the first Baltic Anthropology conference was organized in Vilnius, which was appropriately titled *Defining Ourselves: Establishing Anthropology in the Baltic States*. Participants were coming from nine countries, including the keynote speakers Jonathan Friedman (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales), Chris Hann (Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology), Finn Sivert Nielsen (University of Copenhagen) and Steven Sampson (Lund University). Twenty-seven papers were presented in total (Ivanauskas 2006, 141). At the concluding Roundtable, all the participants of the conference urged for the establishment of anthropology studies in the Baltic States by suggesting that Lithuania take the lead. Jolanta Kuznecovienė, representative of Vytautas Magnus University in Kaunas, and Chair of the Department of Sociology, invited the program of anthropology to be established at VMU within the Department of Sociology.

The Master's Program in Social Anthropology was designed and initiated at VMU with three members of the teaching staff: Kristina Šliavaitė, Romas Vaštokas, and the author of this paper. All three of them moved to VMU from Vilnius University. Later, they were joined by two visiting professors: Victor de Munck (State University of New York) and Ingo Schröder (University of Marburg, Germany).

The Program was developed by Romas Vaštokas and the author of this paper with support from sociologist Jolanta Kuznecovienė. It drew upon the elaboration of anthropology – the way it had been implemented in Vilnius – and was also based on ideas provided by our Scandinavian colleagues (Jonathan Friedman,

Finn Sivert Nielsen, and Steven Sampson) and some other colleagues, namely, participants of the Nordic-Baltic Anthropology Network group meeting held in December 2003 at the University of Latvia in Riga. Important contribution to the design of the program came from the author's Fulbright fellowship at Southern Illinois University in 2002–2003. Jonathan Hill, Chair of the Department of Anthropology at Southern Illinois University willingly shared his experience regarding the design of the new program.

Thematic focus of the program was given to transnational mobility, along with cultural practices of inclusion and exclusion, and the transformation of the state. The anthropology of post-socialism, with a regional emphasis on Central Eastern Europe stood as a prime example of the transformation of the states. It seemed important to study the impact of the fall of the Berlin Wall on the states and societies of the region as they were undergoing rapid social change from socialism to post-socialism. Eventually, these changes led to ethnic nationalism, neoliberalism and austerity.

In the spring of 2004, the Senate of Vytautas Magnus University and the Ministry of Science and Education of the Republic of Lithuania approved the program. The first year of the program enrolment was extremely promising as there were 98 applicants for 10 vacancies.

In 2009, the Program received international recognition through its American partnership. Due to its close academic partnership with the Department of Anthropology at Southern Illinois University, the Program students are given the opportunity to enroll in the Southern Illinois University (SIU) Certificate study program of *Intercultural Understanding*. This study option offers an opportunity for the program students to attain the *Certificate in Intercultural Understanding* (Southern Illinois University, USA) by completing the 18 ECTS credit Module of Study. Students are required to take three courses given by the visiting professors from SIU at VMU campus as part of their degree studies. The SIU Certificate is issued alongside their VMU Master's Diploma.

Since the year 2006 – which was the first year of the matriculation from this program – a number of graduates enrolled in doctoral study programs in Lithuania and abroad. Four of them have already defended their PhDs in Anthropology from the Queen's College in Belfast (Renatas Berniūnas), Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh (Vitalija Stepušaitytė), University of Birmingham (Eugenijus Liutkevičius), and Martin Luther University, Halle-Wittenberg, Germany (Lina Pranaitytė-Wergin). Three more students are doing their doctoral studies at the Ludwig-Maximillian University in Munich, the City University of New York, and the University of Tartu.

For several years, the strategic focus of the anthropological research conducted in Lithuania was on political anthropology and post-socialism studies. Here, the research is mainly carried out in the form of doctoral dissertation projects by conducting ethnographic fieldwork in Lithuania and in other post-socialist countries. In the period from 1997 to 2017, eight doctoral dissertations in anthropology, based on fieldwork in Lithuania, were defended by Kristina Šliavaitė (Lund University, Sweden), Neringa Klumbytė (University of Pittsburgh, USA), Pernille Hohnen (Copenhagen University, Denmark), Asta Vonderau (Humboldt University, Berlin), Ida Harboe Knudsen (Max Planck Institute of Social Anthropology, Halle, Germany), Gediminas Lankauskas (University of Toronto, Canada), Rima Praspaliauskienė (University of California at Davis, USA), and Lina Pranaitytė-Wergin (Martin Luther University, Halle-Wittenberg, Germany).

Center for Social Anthropology at VMU

The Center for Social Anthropology (CSA), an anthropological research unit established at VMU in 2005, has been unique in this field in the country since that time. From the very beginning, it has been building an anthropological library, running interdisciplinary research projects, conducting a series of research seminars, and affiliating with visiting doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows. In 2009–2019 three doctoral students came on a Fulbright program from the US, and there were two visitors from the UK and India.

In 2005, the second Baltic Anthropology conference was organized at Klaipeda University in collaboration with CSA. Thirty-one papers were presented by scholars coming from ten countries. The keynote presentations were given by Thomas Schippers (CNRS, Aix-en-Provence), Reginald Byron (University of Wales), Mairead Nic Craith (University of Ulster), Ullrich Kockel (University of West England) (Minnich 2006; Pocytė and Sliužinskas 2006). In 2009, the third Baltic Anthropology conference also took place at Klaipeda University. It involved twenty-eight scholars representing twelve countries. The keynote presenters included Thomas Hylland Eriksen (Oslo University), Laura Assmuth (Helsinki University) and Christian Giordano (University of Fribourg) (Sliužinskas 2010). Since 2006, anthropological research at CSA has been carried out in two main directions. First, by exploring 'anthropology at home' from the perspective of identity politics, (trans)nationalism, and the anthropology of post-socialism.

Secondly, diaspora and migration studies have been implemented, which mainly focus on Central East European (re)migration to North America and Western Europe as well as on the (re)migration patterns in Punjab, India.

During the period of 2007–2009, research was focused on identifying models of belonging among East European labor migrants in response to assimilation and identity politics in the host countries: UK, Ireland, Norway, Spain, and the USA (Čiubrinskas 2011).

Another project conducted from 2012–2014 investigated the impact of globalization and transnationalism as marked processes of fragmentation of the state in reshaping the national loyalties of belonging of ethnic minorities (Russians in Lithuania), borderlands (the Polish population in Lithuania) and diaspora (Lithuanians in London and Chicago) (Čiubrinskas et al. 2014). All three cases were taken as a point of departure to understand the process of de-territorialization, state and trans-state relations, as well as the fragmentation of national belonging. Ethnic minority research focuses on Russians in the cities of the country having sizable Russian populations, and it unfolds regarding the issue of civic and ethnic belonging to the national narrative. The border area case of research covers the Lithuanian minority residing close to the Polish-Lithuanian border and the Polish minority in Vilnius area, which is supposed to be a historical border area of these two countries. This case focused on the problem of non-territorial loyalties in terms of the kin-state, etc. The third case explores transnational Lithuanians in global cities, such as London and Chicago, and aims to understand their ways of adherence to ethnicity, nation-state(s), and/or cosmopolitan sentiment and difference making.

Since 2020, two research projects have been conducted in migration and memory studies. One project is focused on re-emigration and social remittances by exploring the cases of Croatia, Poland, and Lithuania in a comparative perspective (Čiubrinskas et al. 2023), whereas the other project focuses on the social memory studies of forced migration-derived diasporas in Kazakhstan and Trans-Volga, Russia (Ciubrinskas 2023).

In line with the research direction in 2009–2016, six doctoral research projects were hosted at the Center based on ethnographic fieldwork by exploring the patterns of East European labor migration in Northern Ireland (Neringa Liubinienė), Norway (Darius Daukšas), the USA (Ieva Kripienė); and also on Asian-African refugees in Lithuania and Latvia from the anthropology of medicine perspective (Daiva Bartušienė), and on caste discrimination (Dalits) and social movements in India (Kristina Garalytė). All the six dissertations used an anthropological perspective, but they were defended in the field of sociology

(at VMU) as anthropology was (and still is) not recognized in Lithuania as a separate discipline for doctoral studies.

Baltic Anthropology Graduate School

The most remarkable attempt aiming to establish doctoral studies in anthropology was undertaken in 2014–2018 due to systematic cooperation among the anthropologists of the Baltic States since the late 1990s. Funded by the *Wenner-Gren Foundation*, a joint doctoral program in social anthropology has been under development by the five universities in the Baltic States running MA study programs in anthropology and ethnology. Framed as the Baltic Anthropology Graduate School (BAGs), which, besides VMU, included the University of Latvia, Riga Stradiņš University, Tallinn University and Tartu University in cooperation with Manchester University, Southern Illinois University and Copenhagen University, it became involved in the framework of two-to-three day sessions or 'schools' organized at each of the partner universities. In 2015, BAGs began as a winter school in Tallinn, with Riga soon following, and, finally, in the fall of 2017, it came to VMU in Kaunas. Here, it was attended by more than a dozen PhD students who shared their research experiences in using the anthropological approach and fieldwork methodology. Lectures and seminars were given by speakers from the institutions cooperating with BAGs – Jonathan Hill (Southern Illinois University), Jeanette Edwards (Manchester University), Robin Cohen (University of Oxford), Christian Giordano (University of Fribourg), and Steven Sampson (Lund University). BAGs schools as well as workshops provided a significant impact on the graduate students of anthropology in Kaunas, with some even enrolling in doctoral studies at Baltic universities, e.g. Daina Pupkevičiūtė at Tartu University.

Despite continuous efforts with the PhD program eventually getting fully prepared in 2018, it did not go into full operation due to it being neither approved nor recognized by the higher education authorities of all the three Baltic States. Another aspect of the significant differences in the accommodation of PhD studies in all the three Baltic states has been the non-recognition of the field of anthropology as a separate field for doctoral studies.

Current situation of the field

After fairly successful institutionalization of anthropology at VMU in 2004, currently, six anthropologists are employed there to serve the Master's program in Social Anthropology and the BA program in Sociology and Anthropology. The field is slowly gaining in terms of specialists and academic popularity around the country as well. First, it is noticeable by the growing number of newly created PhDs returning to the country after defending their theses abroad. Since 2005, there have been at least thirteen PhD dissertations defended in the field of anthropology at Western universities by university graduates of the Lithuanian background. Five of them have returned to Lithuania and are teaching and doing research at VMU and/or at VU.

The fields of engagement where the dissertations of Lithuanian anthropologists have recently been defended are: anthropology of religion: Donatas Brandišauskas (University of Aberdeen), Kristina Jonutytė (Max Planck Institute of Social Anthropology), Eugenijus Liutkevičius (University of Birmingham), Lina Pranaitytė-Wergin (Martin Luther University, Halle-Wittenberg); cognitive and psychological anthropology: Renatas Berniūnas (Queen's University, Belfast); anthropology of migration and refugee studies: Ieva Jusionytė (Brandeis University), Vitalija Stepušaitytė (Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh); indigenous studies: Jurgita Saltanavičiūtė (University of Oklahoma); anthropology of post-socialism: Kristina Šliavaitė (Lund University), Neringa Klumbytė (University of Pittsburgh), Asta Vonderau (Humboldt University, Berlin), Gediminas Lankauskas (University of Toronto), Rima Praspaliauskienė (University of California, Davis).

The academic popularity of anthropology has been growing. In 2015, the BA study program in Sociology titled *Sociology and Anthropology* was developed at VMU in close cooperation with the already implemented Master's programs in Social Anthropology and in Applied Sociology. It offers six to seven obligatory courses in social anthropology, and could almost be seen as a double degree program or as a program providing a Minor Degree in Anthropology in addition to a Major in Sociology.

In comparison to that, the aforementioned BA Program in Cultural History and Anthropology, launched at VU in 2001 in the field of history studies, was similar in shape (offering four to six courses in anthropology), but it lasted for only two years. Since 2003, this study program has served a clear example of opportunism as it continues to use the label of 'anthropology' by offering only one or two introductory courses in social anthropology by attempting to attract new students to increase enrollment in the field of history studies.

The label of 'anthropology' is fashionable elsewhere in Lithuania as well. According to Slovenian anthropologist Vesna Godina who did research on the development and politics of the discipline of anthropology in Central Eastern Europe and Balkans, the most common way to add the label of 'anthropology' in this European region is to add this label to the name of any *Volkskundian* institution. In the era of post-socialism, quite a few East/Central European ethnological (former ethnographic) institutions changed their names into *ethnology and cultural anthropology* (Godina 2002, 13). This practice is marked with the tendency to equate the 'reclassified' ethnology with anthropology. It also happened in 2016 at the Lithuanian Institute of History, where the Department of Ethnology was renamed into the Department of Ethnology and Anthropology.

According to Godina and many other researchers investigating the development of anthropology in Central Eastern Europe (Geana 2002; Skalník 2002; Buchowski 2004; Hann, Sarkany, and Skalník 2005; Hann 2007) anthropology has become not only fashionable along with other trends of Western scholarship, but it was also a profitable "brand" as its use enhances the prestige of grant applications and expands the possibility for funding research projects. Thus, folklorists, along with ethnographers, gave up their identities overnight, and started calling themselves 'anthropologists' (Godina 2002, 13). One can now find anthropologists at such Lithuanian institutions as the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore and other institutions, where doctoral programs in the field of ethnology are operating.

Anthropological research in Lithuania is in close interdisciplinary cooperation with representatives from the field of sociology. A good example is the field of ethnic studies developed at the Institute of Ethnic Studies of the Lithuanian Center for Social Sciences. Its research profile mainly focuses on ethnic minorities in Lithuania and borderland areas. During the period of 2003–2015, an interdisciplinary journal *Ethnicity Studies* was issued there, and, for most of the period, its editor-in-chief was Vita Petrušauskaitė, a VMU graduate in Social anthropology and a PhD in Sociology.

One way that interdisciplinary cooperation of anthropology has been successful is in the field of ethnology by publishing the interdisciplinary journal *Lithuanian Ethnology: Studies in Social Anthropology and Ethnology.* Founded in 2001 by the author and colleagues from the Lithuanian Institute of History – Auksuolė Čepaitienė and Žilvytis Šaknys – it is an example of bridging these two fields. It is a two-in-one Lithuanian journal that embraces both disciplines, and the editorial board involves internationally acclaimed anthropologists including Jonathan Friedman (University of California, San Diego), Chris

Hann (Max Planck Institute of Social Anthropology), Jonathan Hill (Southern Illinois University) as well as ethnologists, to name a few: Orvar Löfgren (Lund University) and Ullrich Kockel (Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh).

Recently, a promising trend of anthropology development in Lithuania has been observed in VU in the field of Asian studies. Since 2018, due to the new leader Kristina Garalytė (PhD from Vytautas Magnus University) and two new professorship positions, taken by Victor de Munck and Donatas Brandišauskas, the Institute of Asian and Transcultural Studies (IATS) of VU has become the main place for anthropology at Vilnius University. In its study and research programs, the Institute is focusing on social anthropology more and more, the most prominent area for fieldwork is in Asia. Currently, five anthropologists are teaching anthropology courses at VU and the number of anthropology courses has been growing. Since 2020, IATS has provided five positions for postdoctoral fellowship holders doing research in anthropology of religion (Kristina Jonutytė and Eugenijus Liutkevičius), migration (Vladas Bartochevis), love, family, and gender relations (Hyunhee Lee), performative traditions (Kristina Dolinina).

Despite the evident success in the institutionalization of the field of anthropology at VMU almost twenty years ago, the recently growing interest in anthropology at VU, and a dozen anthropologists currently teaching anthropology courses at both universities, there is still a lack of confidence in sociocultural anthropology as a discipline within the Lithuanian academia. Moreover, public understanding of the present-day social problems in Lithuania relies, to a large extent, on sources which have not examined these problems at the grass-roots level. Sociological surveys are still predominant in the field as well as in the public commentaries on major social problems. Anthropologists, despite their powerful analytical instruments of fieldwork, holism, and global comparison, are not prominently visible.

Nevertheless, the most optimistic news is that two new anthropological establishments have entered the Lithuanian public sphere. The first of these is the NGO *Anthropos*, which is engaged in applied anthropology. It was founded in 2019 by Kornelija Čepytė, Indra Lukošienė and Ugnė Starkutė (all VMU graduates in Social Anthropology). The second one is the *Lithuanian Anthropological Association*, initiated by Kristina Jonutytė and founded in 2021. *Anthropos* focuses its attention on the problems with methodological nationalism which is fairly noticeable in K-12 education programs. Workshops on urgent issues of public interest have been initiated (see the website of *Anthropos* at https://anthropos.lt/). In 2021, Jonutytė and Starkutė released their review on the Lithuanian National Museum of Art exhibition *Indigenous Stories* with criticism

of the usage of 'indigeneity' and 'colonialism' as thematic descriptions that were used to refer to the traditional Lithuanian folk culture (Jonutytė and Starkutė 2021). Also, recently, the Lithuanian National Radio program *Klasika* released a series of interviews with Lithuanian anthropologists conducted by Jonutytė (Jonutytė 2022). All in all, it gives strong hope for a promising future of the field as it is gaining public visibility.

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Engaging New Diachronic and Synchronic Methods for Ethnographic Research

Science and Social Anthropology: Resolving Hierarchical and Horizontal Knowledge Structures

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Abstract. The relationship between social anthropology and the so-called 'natural' sciences has a long and fraught history, beginning with the field's inception in the 1870s. Despite periodic attempts at thematic reinvention, social anthropology consequently remains trapped in what has been termed a 'pre-paradigmatic' state, without consensus among social anthropologists on either a self-consistent object of study for their field, parameters of study, or a causal model for explaining that object. Pedagogic sociology offers a causal explanation for this lack of integration, by describing how formal education systems define and segregate 'natural' and 'social' sciences, and by further describing a mechanism for achieving desegregation. Corroborating observations made by both natural scientists and social anthropologists, this chapter uses a pedagogic sociological model to describe the lack of integration between natural and social science generally, and between natural science and social anthropology in particular. This pedagogic sociological model is then used to describe a potential pathway towards a resolving integration between social anthropology and natural science, with reference to incipient formal empirical methods and to *Cultural Model Theory*.

Keywords: Social Anthropology; Cultural Anthropology; Pedagogic Sociology; Social Semiotics; Philosophy of Science.

Introduction

In 1962, the physicist and philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn noted that the so-called 'social' sciences seemed incapable of the self-consistent integration that forms a foundational characteristic of the 'natural' sciences (Kuhn 1962). Whereas physics, chemistry and biology, as the three key disciplines of natural science, each integrate at their respectively most elementary and complex levels (with physics forming the basis for chemistry and chemistry forming the basis for biology), social scientific fields such as linguistics, psychology, and social anthropology appear not only unintegrated, but also contradictory both within

and between fields.[1] Kuhn (1962) observed that such a lack of integration is not unknown in the natural sciences, but rather that it is restricted to an early developmental stage, when founding researchers disagree about their object of study, its parameters, and about causal models for effectively explaining that object. In the natural sciences, such disagreement resolves as increasingly detailed and comprehensive data becomes available over the course of continuing investigation, as the relevant parameters of study become apparent, and as causal models become increasingly accurate in response. This process of incipient consensus generates what Kuhn (1962) refers to as an emergent disciplinary 'paradigm'. Unlike the natural sciences however, the social sciences appear trapped in a persistent 'pre-paradigmatic' state of self-contradiction and conflict (Kuhn 1962), despite a wealth of data (Wilson 1998), despite well-established formal techniques for modelling and analysing that data (Dengah et al. 2020; Hamberger, Houseman, and White 2011), and despite an inherent predisposition towards the formulation of a paradigm (de Munck and Bennardo 2019; Leaf and Read 2012).

Pedagogic sociology provides a causal model for explaining this developmental bifurcation between the natural and social sciences. Bernstein (1999) points out that formal education systems progressively segregate the distribution and acquisition of expert knowledge regarding the 'natural' and 'social' worlds over the course of primary and secondary education, culminating with university-level qualification. Instead of developing through progressively integrated 'discoveries' of new knowledge as in the natural sciences, social scientific knowledge is presented to students as developing through successive instances of 'contestation' between different authors. Development in the field is thus construed in the form of newly changing perspectives or themes, rather than in the discovery of substantively new information. As a key field of the social sciences, the developmental history of social anthropology presents an illustrative case study, with successive authors introducing ostensibly new and distinct themes and perspectives, which replace rather than integrate older knowledge. As in other social sciences, this gives rise to an intellectual genealogy of social anthropological authors, rather than a substantive history of discoveries.

Social anthropology's first generation of proponents appropriated themes from then-novel discoveries in biology in an attempt to characterise the nascent

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1   The distinction between the terms 'discipline' and 'field' reflects the distinction between general areas of expert knowledge sharing generally common objects of study, generally common parameters of study, and generally common causal models on the one hand, and, on the other hand, more specific branches of knowledge that do not share in common one or more combinations of these three defined features (see Rose 2022, 30).

field as a science of pseudo-evolutionary cultural and ethnic hierarchies (Morgan 1871; Tylor 1871). Subsequent generations, including some of the inaugural chairs of newly-founded social anthropology university departments, sought to characterise their field as a science of human social 'structure', akin to what they perceived to be the objective of other sciences, and searching for what they misunderstood to be the 'structures' of chemistry and biology (Boas 1936; Malinowski 1936; Lévi-Strauss 1949; Radcliffe-Brown 1940). This effort reached its zenith in the 1960s, driven primarily by increasingly formal empirical work on kinship terminologies (Lee and DeVore 1968), before collapsing in the 1970s. At this point, another new generation of social anthropologists sought to detach the field completely from any aspiration to scientific empiricism or formalism, and to convert it instead into a branch of literary philosophy (Geertz 1973; Leach 1989). The content of major contemporary social anthropological journals suggests that literary philosophy remains the predominant form of social anthropological research today.

This chapter draws on a pedagogic sociological model of the teaching and learning of natural and social sciences in the academy (Bernstein 1999) to illustrate why social anthropology was not able to be properly formalised as a natural science during the 20th century (despite the aspirations of its early proponents), and why the field's mainstream practice continues to manifest as a form of literary philosophy rather than as an evidence-based natural science. The paper draws attention to the underlying structures and functions of pedagogic culture in the academy, which actively reinforce the segregation of natural science and social science in general, and the segregation of natural science and social anthropology in particular.

The chapter is organised into six parts. The first part introduces a pedagogic sociological model of social anthropology, as it has been taught in the academy since its inception more than a century ago. The second, third and fourth parts elaborate each key element of this model and their specific implications for the teaching and learning of social anthropology. The fifth part of the chapter illustrates how certain specialised branches of social anthropological expert knowledge have persistently bucked the downward pressure of pedagogic culture, rendering them resistant to appropriation by literary philosophy, and amenable to a consilient scientific formalisation. Finally, building on Kuhn (1962), the sixth part of the chapter describes how the theoretical scaffolding provided by Wilson (1998), writing from the perspective of natural science, and Leaf and Read (2012) and de Munck and Bennardo (2019), writing from perspectives within social anthropology, sketch the contours of an emergent paradigmatic coherence for social anthropology.

Social anthropology from a pedagogic sociological perspective

As elaborated below, pedagogic sociological theory differentiates expert knowledge from 'everyday' or 'common sense' knowledge, as necessary for engaging in specialised activities and as transmissible only within the regulated social settings of education institutions, particularly universities (Bernstein 1999). Social anthropology comprises such a form of expert knowledge (Bernstein 1999, 164). In this model, expert knowledge exhibits three features: a 'discourse', a 'knowledge structure', and a 'grammar'. As elaborated over the following three sections of this chapter with reference to Bernstein (1999), Maton and Muller (2009), Moore (2009), Moore and Muller (2002), and Muller (2009), each of these three features either constitutes or realizes the other. While a field's discourse is constituted by its knowledge structure, its knowledge structure is realized by its grammar. When exhibited together in the context of institutional education, these three features give rise to what is termed the 'pedagogic code', used by both teachers and students to enable transmission of expert knowledge.

Depending on the variable combinations of each feature, as elaborated below, the pedagogic code may function to either 'integrate' or 'segment' expert knowledge. In its integrating configuration, the pedagogic code organises knowledge into a vertically ordered 'stack', with each elemental 'layer' of knowledge forming a more specific 'lower' logical base for successively more generalised and 'higher' logical layers. By contrast, in its segmenting configuration, the pedagogic code does not integrate elements of knowledge but rather separates them into specific and discrete 'packets', organised side-by-side in an 'unintegrated series'. The vertical and horizontal axes of this model are analogic insofar as any given system of measurement comprises a means for construing self-consistent comparison between otherwise unrelated entities. In this sense, each of the three features exhibited by a form of expert knowledge may be distributed along 'vertical' and 'horizontal' axes, according to their contribution to either integration or segmentation of that expert knowledge (Bernstein 1999). In what follows, the field of social anthropology is modeled using this pedagogic sociological theory, and shown to be caught in a persistent tension between a segmenting pedagogic code maintained by education institutions on the one hand, and, on the other hand, an inexorable propensity towards a vertically integrating logic, as observed by natural science philosophers (Kuhn 1962; Wilson 1998), by social anthropologists (de Munck and Bennardo 2019; Leaf and Read 2012), and by pedagogic sociologists (Bernstein 1999; Maton and Muller 2009; Moore 2009; Moore and Muller 2002; Muller 2009).

The analogic vertical and horizontal axes of discourse, knowledge structure, and grammar are visualised in Figure 1. The most elementary pedagogic sociological feature of any form of knowledge is its discourse, which, as described in the following section, is constituted by the aggregate of all forms of knowledge held by a given population. As illustrated in Figure 1(a), discourse is differentiated as either vertical or horizontal, where vertical discourse is dependent on institutional teaching and learning, but where horizontal discourse is independent of such institutions (Bernstein 1999). Subsidiary to discourse is knowledge structure, which is constituted by the combination of both ideas and logical relations between ideas comprising a form of expert knowledge. As illustrated in Figure 1(b), knowledge structure can be differentiated as either hierarchical, as in the case of the natural sciences, or horizontal, as in the case of the social sciences. Finally, subsidiary to knowledge structure is grammar, which constitutes the degree of self-consistent formality of linguistic features through which the ideas and logical relations comprising an expert form of knowledge are realized. As illustrated in Figure 1(c), grammar can be differentiated as either 'strong' or 'weak' according to the relative degree of its self-consistent formality (Bernstein 1999; Maton and Muller 2009; Moore 2009; Moore and Muller 2002; Muller 2009).

As elaborated below, from a pedagogic sociological perspective, both natural and social scientific forms of expert knowledge, including social anthropology, exhibit a vertical discourse but otherwise differentiate in terms of knowledge structure and grammar. Whereas all forms of natural scientific knowledge exhibit a hierarchical knowledge structure and strong grammar, all forms of social scientific knowledge exhibit a horizontal knowledge structure and either a strong or weak grammar.

The vertical and horizontal axes across which these three features are distributed are expressed by the manner in which expert knowledge is taught and learned. In the language of pedagogic sociology, teaching and learning are described respectively as the 'distribution' and 'acquisition' of knowledge, which together give rise to patterned instances of knowledge transmission and ultimately to the circulation of all knowledge across a population. As noted above, the pedagogic code is used by distributors and acquirers to organise instances of knowledge transmission by one of two modes, either 'integrating', or 'segmenting'. In both modes, the pedagogic code "selects and integrates meanings, forms of realization, and evoking contexts" (Bernstein 1999, 101; Maton and Muller 2009, 14). However, the effects of each mode on the discourse, knowledge structure, and grammar are different. The effects of an integrating, hierarchical code are

measured across an analogic vertical axis, while the effects of a segmenting, serial code are measured across an analogic horizontal axis. Figure 1 illustrates vertical and horizontal distributions for each of the three features in this model, as an outcome of these two types of pedagogic code.[2]
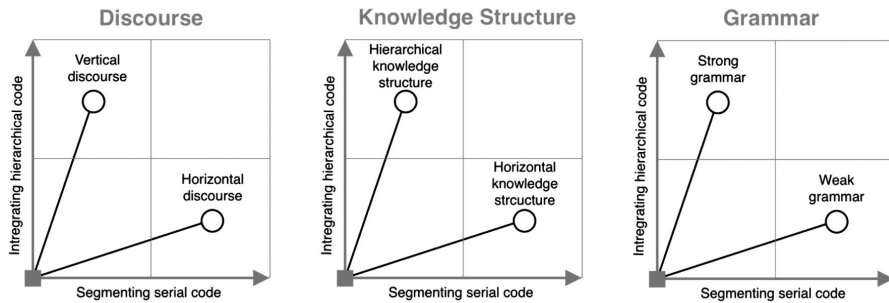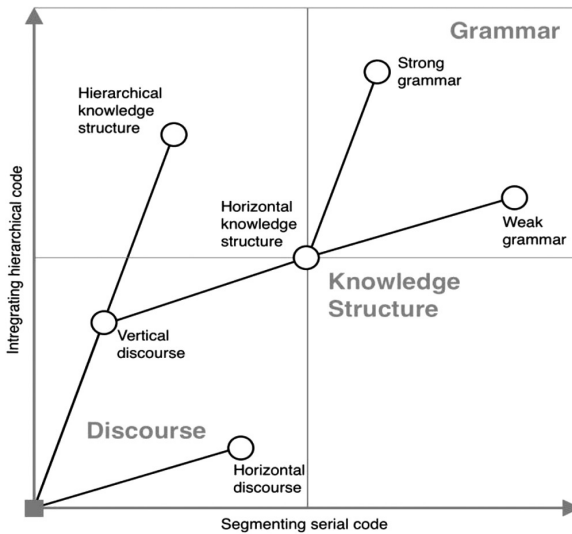

Figure 1. Analogic vertical and horizontal distributions of knowledge features – (a) discourse, (b) knowledge structure, and (c) grammar.

Following Bernstein (1999) and Moore and Muller (2009), the integration of these three features and their distribution on vertical and horizontal axes may be construed as a collection of sets and subsets, and graphed as nodes and ties in a cladistic network tree, as shown in Figure 2. The logical relations between discourse and knowledge structure are described as 'constitutive' and 'realizing', such that a discourse is described as constituted by one of two types of knowledge structure, and a knowledge structure is described as realized by one of two types of grammar (Maton and Muller 2009; Moore 2009; Muller 2009). In Figure 2, the three separate features shown in Figure 1 are integrated into a single elaborated model, illustrating the differential effects of a vertical integrating code, and a horizontal segmenting code upon them. For any given form of knowledge, an integrating code has the effect of 'pushing' each of its features 'upward' into more self-consistent, formal, and integrated states, while a segmenting code has the differential effect of pushing each of its features 'sideways' into more disintegrated, contested, and segmented states. In the case of discourse, shown in the lower left quadrant, vertical discourse is situated in a greater vertical and lesser horizontal position, while horizontal discourse is situated in a greater horizontal and lesser vertical position. In the case

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2   Although the contrasting adjectives 'strong' and 'weak' do not convey a spatial distribution in the way that the adjectives 'vertical', 'hierarchical', 'horizontal', and 'segmental' do, they may nevertheless be aligned on the same axes without disrupting the consistency of the model's schema.

of the subsidiary feature of knowledge structure, shown in the upper-left quadrant, hierarchical knowledge structure is situated in a greater vertical and lesser horizontal position, while horizontal knowledge structure is situated in a greater horizontal and lesser vertical position. Finally, in the case of the subsidiary feature of grammar, shown in the upper-right quadrant, strong grammar is situated in a greater vertical and lesser horizontal position, while weak grammar is situated in a greater horizontal and lesser vertical position. At each subsidiary bifurcation in the network model, the respective effects of either an integrating or a segmenting pedagogic code push the features of expert knowledge by variable degrees in either vertically integrated or horizontally segmented directions.

Figure 2. An integrated cladistic network model of discourse, knowledge structure, and grammar distributed along vertical and horizontal axes according to the effects of integrating and segmenting pedagogic codes.

Historically, from a pedagogic sociological perspective, social anthropology has been characterised as reflecting several distinctive combinations of features from among those available in this cladistic network model of optional branches. Specifically, the field is said to constitute a vertical discourse, which is, in turn, constituted by a horizontal knowledge structure, and which is itself, in turn, realized by a weak grammar (Bernstein 1999, 164). Figure 3 reconstrues the network model shown in Figure 2, emphasising the cladistic signature of social anthropological expert knowledge. Here, social anthropological knowledge is shown to comprise a vertical discourse and horizontal knowledge structure, realized by a weak grammar.
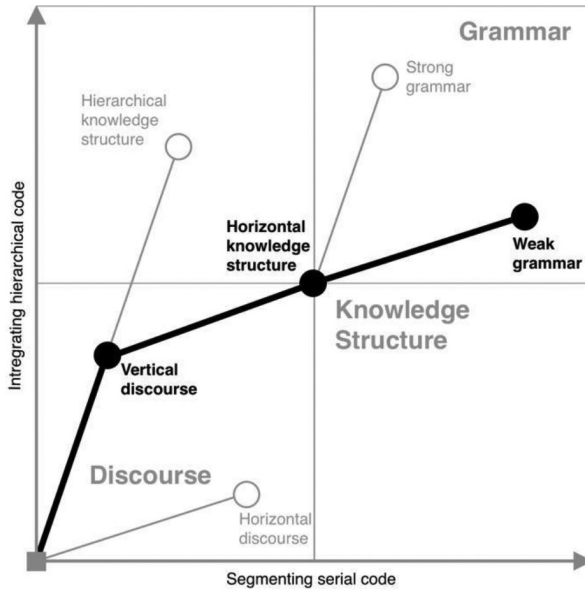
Figure 3. Social anthropology's location in an integrated cladistic network model of discourse, knowledge structure, and grammar.

Throughout its history, social anthropological knowledge has remained distinguishable both from natural scientific disciplines such as chemistry, biology, and physics, and from other social scientific fields such as linguistics and psychology. At various points in the historical development of social anthropological knowledge, favoured authors have attempted to claim that the field is more or less scientific, yet the field as a whole has remained steadfastly pre-paradigmatic in Kuhn's (1962) terms. Social anthropology has thus continued to be taught and learned without any widely agreed or formally defined object of study, parameters of study, model of causality for explaining and predicting that object of study, or any widely agreed or formally defined technical methods for collecting and modelling data in order to test such a model were it to be developed.

Despite 20th century aspirations to natural scientific formalisation of their expert knowledge, social anthropologists themselves have intuited this differential configuration of their field.

As early as 1940, Radcliffe-Brown (1940) noted that, despite its secure status within the academy, social anthropological knowledge exhibited neither a coherently integrated knowledge structure nor a consistent grammar. Referring to the perspectival theme of 'social structure', which he had attempted to define as social anthropology's object of study, Radcliffe-Brown observes:

I am aware, of course, that the term 'social structure' is used in a number of different senses, some of them very vague. This is unfortunately true of many other terms commonly used by [social] anthropologists. The choice of terms and their definitions is a matter of scientific convenience, but one of the characteristics of a science as soon as it has passed the first formative period is the existence of technical terms which are used in the same precise meaning by all the students of that science. By this test, I regret to say, social anthropology reveals itself as not yet a formed science. (Radcliffe-Brown 1940, 3)

Discourse: the internal principles and social bases of expert knowledge

From a pedagogic sociological perspective, distinct areas of knowledge that are held by a given population, collectively constitute that population's 'reservoir' of knowledge. Each member of the population acquires over the course of their life distinctive repertoires of knowledge, which are drawn from this reservoir. Within the frame of this perspective, discourse comprises the complete system of transmission in which distinct areas of knowledge move from reservoir to repertoire via distinctive modes of distribution and acquisition. As noted above, two distinct types of pedagogic code – integrating and segmenting – determine the form of this transmission, such that discourse takes on either horizontal or vertical characteristics. Bernstein describes horizontal discourse as follows:

[W]e are all aware and use a form of knowledge, usually typified as everyday or 'common-sense' knowledge. Common because all, potentially or actually, have access to it, common because it applies to all, and common because it has a common history in the sense of arising out of common problems of living and dying. This form has a group of well-known features: it is likely to be oral, local, context dependent and specific, tacit, multi-layered, and contradictory across but not within contexts. However, from the point of view to be taken here, the crucial feature is that it is segmentally organised. By segmental, I am referring to the sites of realization of this discourse. The realization of this discourse varies with the way [any given social] culture segments and specialises activities and practices. The knowledge is 'segmentally differentiated'. (Bernstein 1999, 159)

Figure 4 highlights the bifurcation of horizontal and vertical discourse in the pedagogic sociological model illustrated in Figure 2 and Figure 3. In the lower-left, Figure 4 illustrates the effect of an integrating pedagogic code in pushing the discourse of expert knowledge towards the more vertical position of integrated organisation. Meanwhile, the effect of a segmenting pedagogic code is to push the discourse of everyday knowledge towards the more horizontal position of segmental organisation (Bernstein 1999, 159).
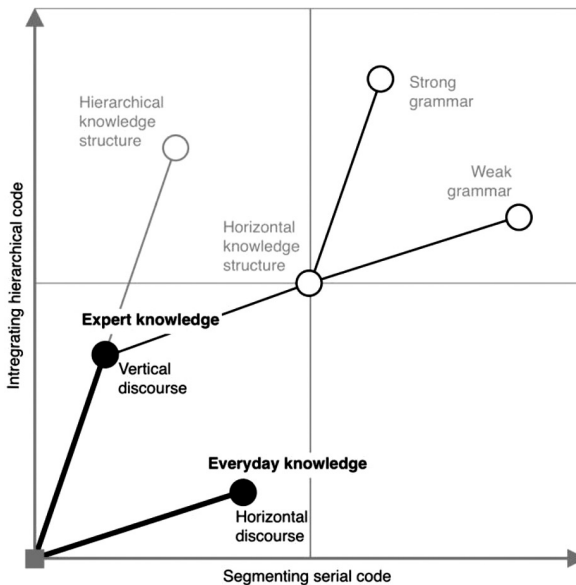
Figure 4. Horizontal and vertical distribution of expert knowledge and everyday knowledge, distinguished by, respectively, vertical and horizontal discourse.

In Bernstein's (1999) example of horizontal discourse, comprising knowledge about tying shoelaces and using toilets, the internal principles and social bases of this knowledge are expressed in two ways. Firstly, with regard to internal principles, knowledge about tying shoelaces and using toilets is not interrelated in pedagogic sociological terms. This is illustrated by the self-evident fact that the ability to tie shoe-laces is not required in order to use a toilet, and vice versa. The internal principles of the knowledge are thus said to be segmental.

Secondly, in relation to social bases, segmentation of the internal principles of horizontal discourse also extends to the mode of its transmission. Knowledge about tying shoelaces and about using toilets requires face-to-face demonstration until the knowledge is successfully acquired. This means that both the distributor and the acquirer have to be present in the same place and

time.[3] However, it also means that contexts themselves are segmented, insofar as the context for transmitting knowledge about tying shoelaces does not need to be the same context as that for transmitting knowledge about using toilets. Social cultures associated with the transmission of such knowledge therefore tend to be tacit rather than overt, such as in family households, where elder relatives typically teach young children to tie their shoelaces and to use the toilet, whenever and however necessary, without reference to any manuals or timetables.

In contrast to horizontal discourse, vertical discourse encodes forms of what may be termed 'expert' knowledge, where internal principles and social bases must be integrated in order for the knowledge to be produced and reproduced effectively. Bernstein (1999) describes the features of vertical discourse as follows:

> [A] vertical discourse takes the form of a coherent, explicit, and systematically principled structure, hierarchically organised, as in the [natural] sciences, or it takes the form of a series of specialised languages with specialised modes of interrogation and specialised criteria for the production and circulation of texts, as in the social sciences and humanities. (Bernstein 1999, 159)

With regard to the social bases of vertical discourse, integration is extended to the organisation of education institutions. Not only is institutional education the remit of government and business because of the complex and standardised organisation of the discourse, but the degree of its formalisation and the social standing of its evaluative principles are overtly hierarchical. Primary and high school education are generally considered a basic condition of universal human rights, while tertiary education of any type is considered essential for individual financial autonomy, and postgraduate university education tends to be associated with upper-middle-class socio-economic status and political influence. The relative cultural authority of the corresponding institutions is reflected in the requirement for their successful evaluation in a hierarchy of employment types. Unskilled labouring work generally requires basic literacy and numeracy, whereas surgery requires a doctorate in medicine. Accordingly, primary schools are regarded as less socially and economically important than university medical faculties, which is in turn reflected in the remuneration of the staff employed in each.

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3   Notwithstanding the function of video as a medium for synthesising co-location of teacher and student.

Social anthropology, like all fields of expert knowledge taught in the academy, forms part of a vertical discourse. Acquirers of social anthropological knowledge are vetted from among other prospective students by their preparatory study of social science and humanities subjects in senior high school, such as geography, history, literature and so on. These fields of knowledge introduce principles that are common to social anthropology, including explanation by rhetorical argument and narrative sequence, writing genres that make heavy use of metaphor, and evaluation by recital of favoured idiolects and their originating authors. Absent are formal and empirical modelling skills such as those used to collect data and build causal models, or to develop self-consistent causal models by using reproduceable methods, such as in physics, chemistry and biology. Once at university, students of social anthropology are introduced to a special subset of the former features, including rhetorical devices for further rationalising the distinction between the social sciences and the humanities on the one hand, and the natural sciences on the other. The latter are often presented in social anthropological texts as 'oppressive' and 'hegemonic' (Smagorinsky 2007), and tend to be represented by examples drawn from literature and philosophy, rather than from science itself (Scholte 1987).

Hierarchical and horizontal knowledge structures

In this pedagogic sociological model, the forms of knowledge comprising vertical discourse may be further distinguished into two types of knowledge structure, one hierarchical, and the other horizontal. As with the distinction between types of discourse, the distinction between types of knowledge structure is an outcome of the interaction between internal principles of the expert knowledge in question, and the social bases from which that knowledge arises. Also as with the distinction between discourses, the distinction between knowledge structures utilises analogic vertical and horizontal axes, as illustrated in Figure 1 and Figure 2. In this model, the term 'knowledge structure' corresponds with what linguists refer to as 'ideational meaning' (Halliday and Matthiessen 2006), or, in other words, both ideas themselves and their organisation in relation to one another. Bernstein explains the distinction between vertical and horizontal knowledge structures this way:

> [A hierarchical knowledge structure] attempts to create general propositions and theories, which integrate knowledge at lower levels, and in this way shows

underlying uniformities across an expanding range of apparently different phenomena. Hierarchical knowledge structures appear, by their users, to be motivated towards greater and greater integrating propositions, operating at more and more abstract levels. Thus, it could be said that hierarchical knowledge structures are produced by an 'integrating' code.
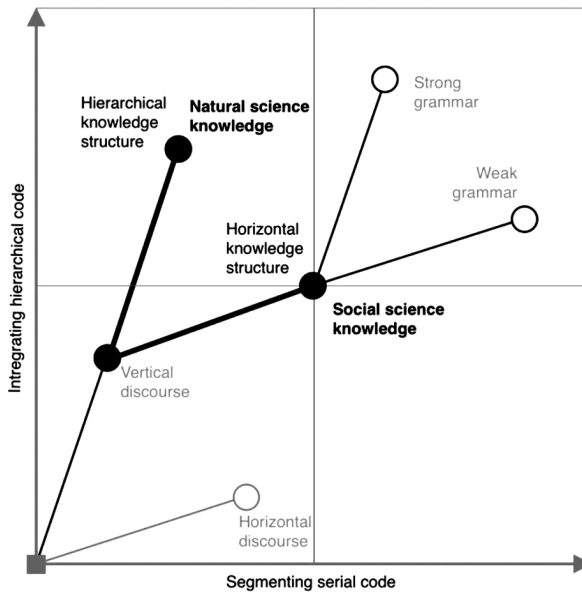
In contrast, horizontal knowledge structures consist of a series of specialised languages with specialised modes of interrogation and criteria for the construction and circulation of texts. Thus, anyone of the specialised disciplines within the form of a horizontal knowledge structure found within the humanities and social sciences can be portrayed as [an unintegrated series].

Thus, in the case of English literature, the languages would be the specialised languages of criticism; in Philosophy, the various languages of this mode of inquiry; and in Sociology the languages refer, for example, to functionalism, post-structuralism, post-modernism, Marxism, etc. The latter are the broad linguistic categories and within them are the idiolects (theories) of particular favoured or originating speakers. Horizontal knowledge structures, unlike hierarchical knowledge structures, which are based on integrating codes, are based upon collection or serial codes; integration of language in one case and accumulation of languages in the other. (Bernstein 1999, 162)

Figure 5 highlights the bifurcation of hierarchical and horizontal knowledge structures illustrated in the pedagogic sociological model in Figure 2 and Figure 3. In the upper-left and centre, Figure 5 illustrates the effect of an integrating pedagogic code in pushing the knowledge structure of natural scientific knowledge towards the more vertical position of integrated organisation. Meanwhile, the effect of a segmenting pedagogic code is to push the knowledge structure of social scientific knowledge towards the more horizontal position of segmental organisation (Bernstein 1999, 164).

Enrolment in university-level social anthropology and other social science and humanities degrees does not conventionally require any prior training in mathematics or natural science. Conversely, enrolment in such degrees does conventionally require study of subjects such as history and geography in senior high school. These social science and humanities pre-requisites are not only distinguished from science and mathematics, they also prepare university students of social anthropology to accept that the authority of this field's expert knowledge is conferred not by pervasive integrating principles, empirical evidence, or the formal mathematical language used to model them, but by the value attributed to what Bernstein (1999) terms "favoured or originating speakers" of associated idiolects (162). Currently,

in social anthropology, a useful example would be Geertz (1973; 1988; 2005) who remains especially favoured for having introduced the idiolect of 'thick description' some 50 years ago. This idiolect is literary in perspective, construing the work of social anthropologists as similar to that of editorializing journalists (Leach 1989). From an historical perspective, the idiolect of thick description has in turn replaced that of previous generations of favoured or originating speakers, such as Boas, Malinowski, Lévi-Strauss, Radcliffe-Brown, and others, who advanced scientifically themed idiolects rather than literarily themed idiolects, albeit using a grammar not significantly more formal or empirical than that of Geertz.

Figure 5. Horizontal and vertical distribution of natural scientific knowledge and social scientific knowledge, distinguished by, respectively, vertical and horizontal knowledge structures.

This transition, also known as social anthropology's 'literary turn' (Scholte 1987) represents an instance of what in pedagogic sociology is termed the 'development of knowledge', which, as outlined above, follows distinct patterns in the natural sciences and in the social sciences and humanities. Bernstein describes the development of knowledge in the social sciences and humanities as follows:

> Development, in the case of a horizontal knowledge structure, cannot be a function of the greater generality and integrating property of the knowledge because, as has been shown, such developments simply are not possible in the case of a horizontal knowledge structure. So what counts as development?

I suggest that what counts as development is the introduction of a new language. A new language offers the possibility of a fresh perspective, a new set of questions, a new set of connections, and an apparently new problematic, and most importantly, a new set of speakers. This new language is likely to be taken up by the younger speakers of the particular horizontal knowledge structure. This new language can then be used to challenge the hegemony and legitimacy of more senior speakers. The latter may be cut off from acquiring the new language because of trained incapacity arising out of previous language acquisition, and a reduced incentive, arising out of the loss of their own position. (Bernstein 1999, 163)

As Maton and Muller (2009) explain, "Horizontal knowledge structures legitimate themselves in terms of who knows rather than what is known. They authorize themselves through the 'voice' of those whose experiences they claim to represent" (Maton and Muller 2009, 27). As Bernstein (1999) corroborates, production of new knowledge in the social sciences and humanities is thus typically construed as the introduction of new idiolects. Such introduction usually follows a pattern of alternately opposing epistemological and ideological assumptions, which can take no form other than critique: "Each [new] specialised language, or rather their sponsors and authors, may accuse the other of failures of omission and or epistemological/ideological/social inadequacies" (Bernstein 1999, 171).

Grammars: strong and weak

Grammar, in this pedagogic sociological model, forms the organizing mechanism for realizing horizontal knowledge structures. Just as both hierarchical and horizontal knowledge structures constitute only vertical discourse, so too do both strong and weak grammars realize only horizontal knowledge structures in the model. In other words, hierarchical knowledge structures are always realized by a strong grammar and never a weak grammar, and both hierarchical and horizontal knowledge structures always constitute a vertical discourse, and never a horizontal discourse. Bernstein's explanation of the realizing function of grammar is concise:

It might be useful here to make a distinction within horizontal knowledge structures, distinguishing those whose languages have an explicit conceptual syntax capable of 'relatively' precise empirical descriptions and/or of generat-

ing formal modelling of empirical relations, from those languages where these powers are much weaker. The former I will call strong grammars and the latter weak grammars. It is important to add here that 'strong' and 'weak' must be understood as relative within horizontal knowledge structures. From this point of view, economics, linguistics and parts of psychology would be examples of strong grammar. … Examples of weak grammars would be sociology, social anthropology, and cultural studies. (Bernstein 1999, 164)

Figure 6 highlights the bifurcation of strong and weak grammars illustrated in the pedagogic sociological model in Figure 2 and Figure 3. In the upper-right, Figure 6 illustrates the effect of an integrating pedagogic code in pushing the strong grammar of linguistics, economics and psychology towards the more vertical position of integrated organisation. Meanwhile, the effect of a segmenting pedagogic code is to push the weak grammar of sociology, social anthropology, and cultural studies towards the more horizontal position of segmental organisation (Bernstein 1999, 164).
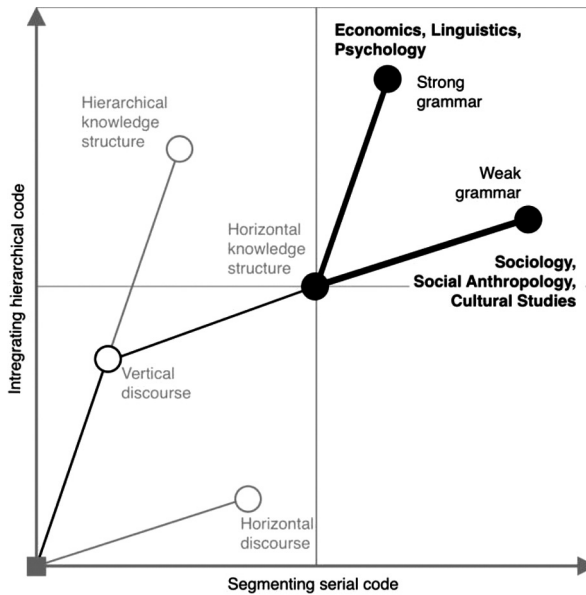
Figure 6. Horizontal and vertical distribution of fields of social science and humanities, distinguished by, respectively, strong and weak grammars.

While strong grammars are those that develop over time with emerging consensus on relevant repertoires of terms and associated definitions, weak grammars are those in which few if any terms and definitions are agreed (Maton

and Muller 2009). Taking as examples those provided above, in economics, terms such as 'asset', 'investment', 'capital', interest', 'stock', etc., all have settled definitions, and the logical relations linking these terms and definitions together are equally agreed. Disagreement within the field thus tends to occur at the level of higher-order theory, such as the origin of profit, or relative utility of fiscal and monetary policy in the management of inflation. Similarly, in linguistics, terms such as 'noun', verb', 'adjective', 'preposition', 'conjugation', 'nominalisation', and their accompanying definitions are all agreed, as are the logical syntactic and grammatical relations between phoneme, clause, and text. What is disagreed in linguistics is the origin of meaning, and the relative contributions of social context and lexicogrammatical function to semogenesis. In psychology, terms such as 'affect', 'mood', 'emotion', 'cognition', and 'behaviour' are all agreed, whereas the relative contributions of neurology, social context, culture, and language to individual behaviour remain uncertain.

In contrast to these strong-grammar social sciences, in weak-grammar social sciences and humanities fields, such as sociology, social anthropology and cultural studies, definitions of even the most elementary terms like 'culture' remain hotly contested, as do the fields' objects of study themselves. The result tends to be statements of extreme ambiguity, such as the following, from a 21st century *Encyclopedia of Anthropology*:

> [T]he concept of culture itself has obstinately resisted final definition ... It is clear that throughout the history of [social] anthropology, scholars have adapted their notions of culture to suit the dominant concerns of the day, and they will no doubt continue to do so. Little is to be gained, therefore, from attempts to legislate on the proper meaning of the term. (Ingold 2002, 330)

Not only do such statements avoid consensus on critical elementary terms and definitions, but they actively discourage any expectation that agreed terms and definitions should be sought at all. Weak grammar construes as logical the otherwise inexplicable assertion that a concept can 'resist definition' even though it is acknowledged in the same statement as *being* a concept. Given the central status of social culture for the field of social anthropology, a comparably inexplicable claim in biology, for example, might be that 'the concept of the cell' resists definition, in linguistics that 'the concept of grammar' resists definition, or in psychology that 'the concept of emotion' resists definition. Weak grammar thus tacitly distracts attention away from the incoherence of what is being claimed, and focuses it instead on the author as the only coherent element in the text, just as

Bernstein (1999) and Maton and Muller (2009) predict. Despite Radcliffe-Brown's (1940) concern regarding social anthropology's weak grammar, the grammar was never thought to be so weak that the very object of social anthropological expert knowledge, social culture, would have been considered beyond definition. That such a claim could be made 60 years later may well illustrate the tenacious effect of the segmenting code described by Bernstein, highlighted by the fact that the latter quote is taken from an *Encyclopedia of Anthropology* in the 21st century. The distinction between the striking effects of such a profoundly weak grammar is captured by Kuhn (1962), who observes:

> What scientists never do when confronted by even severe and prolonged anomalies[,] though they may begin to lose faith and then to consider alternatives, [is to] renounce the paradigm that has led them into crisis. (Kuhn 1962, 77)

Integrative specializations in social anthropology: kinship, language, religion, and economy

Despite the tenacious effects of weak grammar on the development of social anthropology as a whole, the pervasiveness of these effects is not so total as to have prevented the development of coherence among more specialised branches of the field. In 1949, Lévi-Strauss made the over-arching discovery that systems of ideas maintained by all of the world's peoples seemed to conform to a common pattern of dyadic classification (Lévi-Strauss 1949). In this model, distinct domains of social activity appeared to be identifiable according to self-reportedly discrete sets of terms and definitions used by society members to describe their social activity. Each set of terms and definitions appeared to be constituted by elementary pairs of opposing terms, linked together by logical relations consisting of oppositional steps. This discovery marked a breakthrough in a – then – 80-year-long effort, which had commenced with Morgan (1871) and Tylor (1871), to detect and classify specific instances of patterned human thought and its instantiation in patterned social interaction, which could in turn be integrated into generalised unifying principles of a range of forms of human social culture. By the time of Lévi-Strauss' discovery, this range had developed across four approximately discrete research specialisations, in which progressively more coherent forms of 'puzzle-solving' (Kuhn 1962) had developed, and which have continued to develop subsequently.

Today, kinship, language, religion, and economy comprise four specialised branches of social anthropology, in which there have been, during one period or another in the field's developmental history, distinct efforts to create stronger grammars, to the extent even of pushing the field's knowledge structure to the brink of hierarchical integration. The integrative consistency in empirical description and formal explanation, both within and between each of these research specialisations, reflect not only Kuhn's (1962) generalised account of an emergent scientific paradigm, but also Bernstein's (1999) account of integrative, hierarchical knowledge structures.

With specific regard to kinship, there was recognition by the mid-20th century that the world's kinship terminologies conform to a limited set of common organising principles, with a limited number of distinct regional variations (Boas 1913, 1920; Kroeber 1909; Lévi-Strauss 1949; Morgan 1871; Radcliffe-Brown 1918, 1929; Rivers 1914, 1924; Tylor 1871). Lévi-Strauss's breakthrough in modelling these principles was formalised by the mathematician Weil (1949), and subsequently elaborated by Boyd (1969), giving rise to the highly formal empirical social anthropological specialisation of kinship network analysis (Hamberger, Houseman, and White 2014).

With regard specifically to language, by the mid-20th century, there was widely accepted recognition that the world's languages similarly conform to a common set of lexical and syntactic principles for the generation of socially relevant meaning (Boas 1920; Sapir 1929; Voegelin and Harris 1947, 1952). Sapir's insights went on to form the basis for further recognition that the distinctive semantic characteristics of identifiably discrete languages give rise to distinctive individual construal of sociality from the perspective of language speakers (Bernstein 1965; Trager 1959).

With specific regard to religion, there was a recognition by the mid-20th century that interrelated mythology and ritual form the primary vehicles by which associated populations maintain and reproduce social cohesion over space and time (Astuti and Bloch 2016; Evans-Pritchard 1956; Firth 1939; Frazer 1890; Malinowski 1922, 1936). Malinowski's work was foundational in illustrating that commonly-held models of cosmogenesis and social structure are a key function of religion (Malinowski 1922). This hypothesis has subsequently been demonstrated using large empirical data sets and formal modelling (Whitehouse 2022).

With specific regard to economy, by the mid-20th century, there was widespread recognition that the sustainability of a population's productive capacity is directly tied to the regulation of material accumulation and distribution among that population's members (Firth 1939; Godelier 1978; Malinowski 1922; Mauss 1925;

Polanyi 1968). Malinowski's insights here too formed the basis for a generalised model of relative exchange value, delimited by material constraints, which motivates populations to cooperate systematically in the generation of essential products. Proof of this hypothesis has also subsequently been formally and empirically demonstrated (Hann 2017).

As elaborated in the following section, these discoveries are broadly 'consilient', to use Wilson's (1998) term. The idea systems that were, by the mid-20th century, shown by Lévi-Strauss (1949) to comprise distinct but interrelated sets of terms and definitions, and which were subsequently shown to divide up broadly into domains identifiable as kinship, language, religion, and economy, can be modelled using a common set of logical principles. Furthermore, the systemic characteristics and effects of these idea systems can be demonstrated using relatively standardised classes of research data. Such standardisation in turn permits self-consistent causal modelling that can be used to predict commensurate and interdependent influences on population dynamics, where a perturbation in one system of ideas causes flow-on effects in both other systems of ideas, and the instantiation of those ideas in measurable, real-world social interactions.

From segmentation to integration in social anthropology

Although pedagogic sociology construes the segregation of social and natural sciences as an inherent feature of institutional education, it does not proscribe the re-organisation of specific fields in such a manner that they might traverse this segregation. With respect to social anthropology's specialisations in kinship, language, religion, and economy, the emergence of integrative consensus in terms of both empirical descriptive data and formal causal models is construed by Kuhn (1962) as indicative of an emerging paradigm for any given incipient discipline or field of natural science. Why then has no such paradigm apparently yet emerged for social anthropology, and what threshold remains to be crossed in order for that emergence to be complete? The integrative consensus described in the previous section is reflected in the perspectives of both natural scientists (Kuhn 1962; Wilson 1998), and social anthropologists (de Munck and Bennardo 2019; Leaf and Read 2012), with regard to the current formal empirical capacity and future potential of the field.

As confirmed by Bernstein (1999), Moore (2009) and others, Wilson (1998) locates the origins of this segregation in the social context of social science's foundation and reproduction within the academy, where the authors and

speakers of new idiolects vie for supremacy, rather than explanatory integration of their respective fields. However, unlike Bernstein (1999), who portrays this inequality as an intractable feature of pedagogic culture, Wilson (1998) advocates for what he calls 'consilience' between the natural and social sciences:

> [T]he social sciences are intrinsically compatible with the natural sciences. The two great branches of learning will benefit to the extent that their modes of causal explanation are made consistent. The first step in the approach to consilience is to recognize that while the social sciences are truly science, when pursued descriptively and analytically, social theory is not yet true theory. The social sciences possess the same general traits as the natural sciences in the early, natural-history or mostly descriptive period of their historical development. From a rich data base they have ordered and classified social phenomena. They have discovered unsuspected patterns of communal behavior and successfully traced interactions of history and cultural evolution. But they have not yet crafted a web of causal explanation that successfully cuts down through the levels of organization from society to mind and brain. Failing to probe this far, they lack what can be called a true scientific theory. Consequently, even though they often speak of 'theory' and, moreover, address the same species and the same level of organization, they remain disunited. (Wilson 1998, 205)

From the perspective of contributors to social anthropological knowledge, and experienced readers and speakers of its idiolects, Leaf and Read (2012) go further than Wilson (1998) and argue that, for social science generally, and, for social anthropology in particular, the absence of a paradigm requires the complete reorganization of the way in which human sociality is defined. Referring to Kuhn's assessment of the social sciences as pre-paradigmatic, as noted above, Leaf and Read (2012) observe:

> Of course, saying 'pre-paradigmatic' rather than simply 'non-paradigmatic' implies a judgment about the future. There are indeed [social] anthropologists who believe that [social] anthropology will one day engage in scientific practice as sound, powerful, and widely accepted as those in the physical sciences. But there are others who say this never can be, and indeed never should be. We are among those that say that we [the field of social anthropology] are a science – and not just at some point in an unknown future. It can be done now.
> [...]

> Human beings have two outstanding characteristics compared to all other spe-
> cies: the apparently enormous elaboration of our thought through language
> and symbolism and the elaboration of our forms of social organization. …
> [Thought and social organization] are, however, two sides of one problem: we
> cannot understand what social organization is without recognizing that it is
> an ongoing construction involving thought, and we cannot understand what
> thought is without recognizing that its foundation and primary functions lie in
> developing and implementing social organization. (Leaf and Read 2012, 16–17)

As Leaf and Read (2012) highlight, multiple domains of human life, together
with their corollary systems of ideas, are interdependent in distinct combinatorial
permutations. These combinations give rise to what we recognise as distinctive
social cultures characteristic of populations distributed in certain regions of space
and time, recognisable as certain populations resident in certain parts of the
world over certain periods of history. In this chapter I have focused on four such
systems of ideas: kinship, language, religion, and economy. This is because they
are the most well-developed in the expert knowledge of social anthropology, and
certainly the most integrated in terms of the pedagogic sociological model used
to analyse their knowledge structures and grammars. By comparison, Leaf and
Read (2012) range more widely in their account of social anthropology's capacity
for formally and empirically modelling social organisation. In their analysis of
idea systems and associated instantiations of social interaction, Leaf and Read
(2012) reason that there are likely to be as many as seven distinct idea systems
operating in distinct combinations within any given social culture. These include
both the canonical social anthropological specializations of kinship, language,
religion, and economy, as described here, as well as what Leaf and Read (2012)
term 'factions', 'management', and 'technical systems' (324). Whereas Leaf and
Read (2012) suggest that this upper limit may be tied to the cognitive capacity
of human neurology, an interesting and fruitful collaboration between social
anthropology and pedagogic sociology may detect an intermediate boundary in
the semiotic potential of human language, which is in turn bounded by the limits
of neurologically-based human cognition (Halliday and Matthiessen 2006).

Taking up the question of how the boundary layer between cognition and social
culture may be modelled and analysed, de Munck and Bennardo (2019) propose
Cultural Model Theory (CMT) as an answer. CMT construes the observable
patterns of human social culture as an outcome of autochthonously shared
representations, not only of self-consistent idea systems, but of shared intentions
or joint commitments (de Munck and Bennardo 2019). CMT specifies a model of

shared systems of ideas and their instantiation as a precursor to organised social activity. Models of roles and relations need not be 'believed' as self-evidently true by individual members of a cultural community, but rather treated as providing cognitive scaffolds for reaching shared objectives, independent of motivation. A key distinguishing analytical function of CMT is its specification that idea systems are neither necessarily axiomatic for culture bearers, nor necessarily discretionary. Social anthropological models of normative 'laws and customs' (Morgan 1871; Tylor 1871) tend to represent them as either one or the other, with perspectival and thematic trends in social anthropology valuing either one or the other at different times in the field's developmental history.

Until social anthropology's literary turn (Scholte 1987), axiomatic models of idea systems were more highly valued, especially in the so-called structural-functionalist approach to predicting the normative potency of such systems. In this 'strongly axiomatic' configuration, idea systems were construed as variably prescriptive and proscriptive sets of laws and customs communally held by discrete populations (Lévi-Strauss 1949). After the field's literary turn, favoured theories tended to construe all laws and customs as fundamentally discretionary, with hardly any predictable normative function of any kind (Geertz 1973, 1975; Ingold 2002). CMT resolves this contradiction first, by acknowledging what White and Denham (2008) refer to as the 'weakly axiomatic' normativity of idea systems, and secondly by introducing 'commitment' as a feature of all human social activity, where individual representations of such models must correspond in order to be rendered functional for the purposes of reaching a common social goal, irrespective of their normative potential (de Munck and Bennardo 2019). This specification neutralises the so-called 'structure-vs-agency' debate that has crippled social anthropology since the 1970s, and instead construes structure as an emergent property of systemic agency. As de Munck and Bennardo (2019) explain:

> The collective representation of culture is actually an individual representation of a collective representation shaped through the constraints of experiences, interactions, and secondary information about the 'culture'. The collective representation (i.e., our individual representation of the collective representation) works to the degree it matches the representations of others, and this matching emerges through seeing how it works in social interactions, noting and experiencing the expressions of the coercive force of members of one's group (e.g., parents, teachers, peers, fellow drivers, etc.). (de Munck and Bennardo 2019, 174)

The pedagogic sociological explanation for the persistent segregation of the so-called 'natural' and 'social' sciences (Bernstein 1999) is convincingly reflected in the four expert accounts presented in this section, from the perspectives of both natural scientists and social anthropologists. From the perspective of natural scientists, this reflection includes the pre-paradigmatic or 'descriptive' developmental stage of social anthropology as consistent with the early development of any given scientific field (Kuhn 1962). This is a stage that is in turn followed by the development of a field's consilience with other extant or concurrently developing fields (Wilson 1998). From the perspective of social anthropologists, this reflection includes the incipient emergence of a paradigmatic object of social anthropological study, comprised of culturally specific idea systems and their instantiation in patterned social activity, supported by empirical data-based evidence and formal causal models (Leaf and Read 2012). This feedback between idea systems and predictable social activity is further elaborated and integrated by the specific role of individual cognition of those idea systems and their selective instantiation according to cognised context and shared commitment (de Munck and Bennardo 2019).

Conclusion

This chapter has described the production and reproduction of the expert knowledge of social anthropology from the perspective of pedagogic sociology, as one among a number of other potentially innumerable forms of expert knowledge distributed and acquired within the academy. This includes both the natural sciences and other forms of social science and humanities knowledge. The purpose of taking this perspective has been to illustrate the origins and persistence of the distinction between the natural and social sciences on the one hand, and, on the other hand, a prospective pathway to the dissolution of this distinction, for those working within the academy who may be interested in such an endeavour. While the currently popular literary idiolect of 'thick description' may persist indefinitely for the reasons elaborated above, there remains possible the option of forming a new school of social anthropology, based not only on an aspiration to a scientific idiolect, but on a formal modelling of the production and reproduction of expert knowledge within the academy.

More specifically, it has been suggested here that where scientifically-oriented social anthropologists have focused their attention on particular, clearly defined domains of human thought and social organisation, such as kinship, language,

religion, and economy, the grammars that we have developed are not weak, but strong. As a consequence, and notwithstanding the countervailing effects of the 1970s segmentation induced by social anthropology's so-called 'literary turn' (Scholte 1987), the knowledge structures that have been realized by using these strong grammars since the early 20th century, have bypassed the segmentally organised, unintegrated idiolects of other fields of the social sciences and the humanities. They have instead formed the foundation for social anthropology's hierarchical integration into a consilient science.

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An Easy Framework to Organize Complex Data

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Abstract. The holistic and multidimensional nature of anthropological research results in an enormous amount of data, but the problem is how to organize it in such a way as to be useful for identifying complex patterns across different fields. This paper proposes a basic Framework for organizing metadata into categories: Space (where), Time (when), Matter (who and what), and Energy (how), and then separates these into two categories: empirical data and ideational data. This method reduces preconceptions by separating out the tangible evidence from the intangible and allows evidence to be understood and tested from different perspectives.
Keywords: cross-cultural comparison, cognitive framework, data analysis, scientific method, social science, etic and emic perspectives.

Problem

Anthropology is the study of humans, and our closest primate relatives, from all times and places. It is an expansive subject because everything we know has a human component to it, from how we understand 'science' and the workings of the natural world to the programming of computers because these are all rooted in culture. Humans also vary in their biology and as individuals; but our primary aim in this chapter is cultural variation. There are features which everyone shares and there are those which seem to be unique. The amount of variation produces a great deal of information or data, but the problem lies in how to best use these data across disciplines.

The holistic and multidimensional nature of anthropological research results in an enormous amount of data, but the problem is how to organize the evidence in such a way as to be useful for identifying complex patterns across different fields. The lack of a systematic approach to organizing data into testable evidence in archaeology has been argued since the 1980's (Dunnell 1980), but this problem spans all the sciences (Munafò et al. 2017). O'Brian and Lyman (2000) give three reasons for this lack of a systematic approach: 1) it is tedious to teach, 2) it requires learning precise terminology, and 3) it addresses theoretical issues of ontology, epistemol-

ogy, and the nature of metadata. The need for a method of data collection that is transparent, compatible, comparable, expandable, and that inherently allows for different approaches is necessary to move the discipline forward.

In 1979 Carl Sagan wrote an essay titled *Can We Know the Universe?* in which he asks what limitations Nature plays on what is knowable and what is not. A similar argument can be made about the ability of humans to really understand or define 'humanity'. Nevertheless, the extent that the Universe can be 'known' has not stopped scientists from exploring, and anthropology is the same. "The search for rules, the only possible way to understand such a vast and complex universe, is called Science" (Sagan 1997). All science has inherent biases, and complete objectivity is a noble but impossible goal, yet steps can be taken to mitigate its negative effects. The standard way of reducing bias is to use the *Scientific Method*. "The real purpose of the Scientific Method is to make sure Nature hasn't misled you into thinking you know something you don't actually know" (Pirsig 1974).

Science is a way of knowing, and knowledge is culturally dependent. Even after a cursory investigation into cognitive anthropology and what people 'know', it is obvious that what is 'logical' or rational to one group of people can be the opposite for another group: Are bugs pests or food? When a person chooses what to eat, is it the physical appearance of the food that matters or the process that went into its production that is more important to the decision-making process? The idea that humans are so very different from other biological species is more a reflection of cultural beliefs rather than 'nature'. The problem with this focus on differences is that it does not allow comparisons with other natural phenomena, and it hinders the identification of 'rules' that may or may not apply to other phenomena as well.

The need to use a scientific approach and apply the Scientific Method is stressed in anthropological research, and numerous publications outline various methods and approaches. For instance, there is H. Russell Bernard's (2011) comprehensive book *Research Methods in Anthropology*, and Ember and Ember's book *Cross-Cultural Research* (2009) for more specific research methods for cross-cultural comparisons. The scientific method is the process of repeatedly creating and testing hypotheses and theories against observable data. Like other sciences, "Modern anthropology is built on the work of earlier generations of researchers" (McGee and Warms 2020, 1). Much groundbreaking research had been conducted in the past, which has led to insight into the variety of human cultures. Just as Darwin and Wallace's travel across the world and their observation of different species and habitats led to the development of the *Theory of Natural Selection*, anthropologists travelling the world observed how different cultures adapted to their surroundings, both natural and socially constructed environments. However, unlike in the Natural Sciences, some anthropological research seems to place a larger emphasis on

the creator of the theory, almost a cult of personality, rather than the evidence or the theory itself. The theory of Natural Selection has undergone revisions since the times of Darwin and Wallace, but this does not take away from their original insight. Furthermore, scientific research does not use the creator of the theory as 'evidence' for the theory's validity, but this does seem to creep into some anthropological research. Perhaps, the reason for this deserves some anthropological research of its own, but it simply may be due to the way the discipline has been taught. Regardless of the historical reasons for the current state of the discipline, there is room for new methods and perspectives. It must be remembered that "Science is based on experiment, a willingness to challenge old dogma, on an openness to see the universe as it really is […] the courage to question the conventional wisdom" (Sagan 1997). While it is important to acknowledge past research, it is equally important to reassess the work of earlier generations when new information and methods become available. However, it is also important to be able to separate the data and conclusions from the personality of the researcher – because the researcher might have had manifest or latent prejudices; this does not automatically invalidate their contributions to the subject.

Theories are inherently rooted in an 'etic' perspective, that is, the perspective of the researcher. Consequently, anthropological research stresses a deductive approach and begins with a theory, and then data is collected and analyzed, often with statistical methods, to determine if the theory is valid (McGee and Warms 2020; Ember and Ember 2009). This method is particularly useful when the researcher has a specific aim or question in mind and at least some prior knowledge of the culture. The downside of this deductive approach is twofold. Firstly, there is the risk of inherent bias because theories are preconceived beliefs. Secondly, two other levels of subjectivity are included as the researcher chooses their sampling methods and the type of data to be collected. Our culture, education, life experiences and the academic discipline we are a part of are filters which we use for all stages of any research project.

Some of these issues were addressed in an earlier paper outlining a version of 'the Framework', which was aimed at facilitating the study of material culture and technology (Feuerbach 2013).

Methodology and framework

The purpose of the Framework is to help researchers think about anthropological issues in new ways and make better use, and reuse, of diverse types of data. It is not intended to replace the current research methods but rather to complement

the already existing ones, particularly cross-cultural research methods. This is because "Human experience – the way real people experience real events – is endlessly interesting because it is endlessly unique, and so, in a way, the study of human experience is always exploratory, and is best done inductively. On the other hand, we also know that human experience is patterned" (Bernand 2011, 7). This method begins with an inductive approach by reassessing the testable evidence in search for patterns and is intended to help narrow down the variables to find those which are most useful for the particular research question. Beginning with data collection, rather than a theory, is not free from problems and biases, but these can be mitigated by using the proposed Framework. "A hallmark of scientific creativity is the ability to see novel and unexpected patterns in data" (Munafo et al. 2012). But, when using data without an initial theory, there is the danger of apophenia (seeing patterns in random data), so deductive methods are then needed to test if the observed patterns support or refute a theory.

The Framework provides a 'home' for data in a way intended to be a more objective way of classifying and analyzing data. This method is for thinking around a subject and exploring different possible paths to help answer questions. It is primarily aimed at two types of researchers: those who are new to the subject and want to conduct exploratory research; those who are well familiar with their subject but want to look at questions from different perspectives or to test a theory. The Framework was initially developed for exploring archaeological topics using inductive reasoning, utilizing different databases, for testing some already existing theories, and reducing the observer expectancy bias and preconceptions, but it can be adapted for other types of anthropological research. It merges the quantitative and qualitative measurements to get a fuller picture of the observed phenomena.

Framework for Classifying Data			
Questions	**Laws of Nature**	**Tangible/Empirical Measurement**	**Intangible/Ideational 'Rules of Culture'**	
Variations	$E= mc^2$ Physical Reality	*'Objective' Measurements = Data*	***Etic perspective** (Researchers' Cultures)*	***Emic perspective** (Target Cultures')*
Where?	**Space**	Latitude/Longitude Inclination/ Declination	Nation-states Cultural /Ethnic Borders	Spatial Orientation Place
When?	**Time**	Chronometric Dating	'Ages'; Years; BCE/ CE	Solar/lunar/ seasonal
What?	**Matter:** 'Things' Ecofacts Artifacts Buildings	Material Characterization Stylistic Classification Textual Analysis	Current 'scientific' understanding and classification of 'things'	Target populations understanding and classification of 'things'

Framework for Classifying Data				
Who?	**Matter**: 'People' Groups Individuals	Genotypes (DNA) Phenotypes (observable)	How we classify people People's relationships	How they classify people People's relationships
How?	**Energy** Behaviors Actions	**Life History of Matter** • Conception • Production • Distribution • Consumption • Elimination	Researcher's rational *(Cosmology, Worldview, knowledge)*	Target's rational *(Cosmology, worldview, knowledge)*

Methods which detectives use to solve crimes can also be applied to solving questions about human behavior. This is because archaeological science uses the same methods that forensic scientists use to solve crimes (Heron and Pollard 1996). The process begins by gathering the primary evidence whenever possible or extracting information from secondary sources if primary evidence is not available or accessible. Depending on the research question, anthropologists have additional methods at their disposal, such as textual analysis, visual analysis, archaeology, ethnographic methods, and primatology. There are many strategies and methods for deciding on sampling, including methods for data collection that can be found elsewhere, as suggested by Russell Bernard (2011). Physical evidence can be determined and characterized by using comparatively objective methods, such as morphological characteristics, including the type of material used, shapes, form, and decoration. Material characterization can offer objective evidence of the exploitation of resources and the methods used to process the raw materials into finished objects.

The research method begins by brainstorming all the possible evidence that could potentially be used, and it includes all the 'things' and actions that the researcher can think of which relates to the problem, whereas the data that is gathered will depend on the research question. The Framework considers all provenanced primary evidence as archival testimony without judgement to its accuracy. Whether the primary evidence is an object, textual account, first-hand observation, or human biological remains, it is considered to be archival testimony of someone's creation at a specific time and place and for a 'reason'. Historical documents are also treated as archival testimony and mined for their data by using textual analysis (Belsey 2013). They also serve for extraction of cultural information (Carley 1994).

Some evidence is stationary, such as buildings and features, yet some evidence is portable, such as artefacts (things) and documents, while other evidence is contained within individuals. Biology can tell us information about the life of a person, including how different people are related to each other. Other evidence recorded in the bodies includes information regarding disease, how far they travelled, the physical activities they engaged in, the age at death, for example. What we cannot tell with certainty is the ideas that were in their mind, their worldview and the knowledge they gained over their lifetime. But people do not live in isolation, and while the thoughts of the individual can escape us, the likely reason for certain decisions can be deduced when looking at society as a whole. For example, we might not know the beliefs or what was important to an individual, but we do have evidence of what others deemed important to give the deceased, what rituals were performed, and this can give insight into the practices at that time and place. Furthermore, ethnographic research and cross-cultural studies can also suggest why certain actions may have been performed, but it is important to note whose perspective it is.

After the primary evidence has been collected, it needs to be 'mined' for information that can be converted into data. The Framework provides a place for the data but is flexible enough to allow for different types of data depending on the problem. For example, the time period when an activity took place could be recorded as the millennia or to the second, or the place could be a large ecological area (a natural environment), a nation (cultural construction), or as small as a particular spot in a room (latitude/longitude/inclination/declination). What data should be used is one of the most important questions a researcher needs to ask because the quality of the research and outcomes are wholly dependent on the quality and appropriateness of the data.

The Framework divides evidence (data) into those factors that are tangible from those that are intangible. Tangible evidence, also called empirical or phenomenological, follows the Laws of Nature. These Laws put us on an equal footing with people from another place and time. While time can change things, their properties can often be deduced by methods of material characterization. These are the same for everyone, in the past, the present, and for the foreseeable future; the sun rises and sets, the moon affects the tides, and water is wet. A gold coin is still a gold coin, and a ceramic vessel does not change into an iron sword. While time does change the physical world, the original characteristics can usually be deduced with a reasonable amount of certainty. The intangible aspects, also called ideational or cognitive, are the way things are conceived of in our minds. The ways something is perceived by the researcher (the emic perspective)

versus that of the target individual or culture (the etic perspective), can be very different, and this must always be kept in mind.

The information that is 'mined' is placed into one of four categories; the Space (Where), the Time (When), Matter (Who and What), and Energy (How), can be determined from the tangible evidence. This leaves the intangible question of 'Why' as the fundamental anthropological research question. If the 'Why' is not solely due to our understanding of the Laws of Nature, then it is because of the Rules of Culture, and this allows us to study the question from different perspectives. Cultures are synchronistic, building upon earlier entities, so the data is sorted following the 'life history' of an object, person or people.

The first category is Space, defined here as a tangible place on Earth. Space can be objectively recorded using latitude and longitude points, and ecological environments can also lineate space. The physical places on the earth also have intangible components, including the delineation of Nation-States, sacred spaces, and places that only certain people have access to for cultural reasons. The same physical space can be understood or conceived of differently depending on the culture. Who can or cannot access or occupy a particular space is a cultural construction and the reasons differ. Some places are public and shared by the group, while some are sacred and only for religious practitioners, and some areas are strictly for males, females, or people of a particular age. These allowances and prohibitions can reveal information about the culture's concepts of inclusion and exclusion, endogamy and exogamy, in addition to their spatial orientation and their understanding of their place in the world, their cosmology or worldview.

The next category is Time, defined here as when an action occurred. People have been tracking time for millennia and different cultures have their own particular temporal orientation. There are many ways people track time, from water clocks to the atomic clock and calendars. Some cultures use a lunar calendar and others use the sun, while others use seasons or a combination of methods for different purposes. Whether the new day starts at midnight, sunrise, or sunset, is also culturally dependent. There are also different concepts of time, such as the Aztecs needing to help the time pass. For archaeological artefacts, two methods can be used to assign a date, Relative and Absolute dating; however, they are placed into different categories in the Framework. Absolute or Chronometric dating methods, such as dendrochronology and radio-carbon dating, can date material using scientific methods. In contrast, Relative dating relies on a classification system developed by a researcher; therefore, it is considered an intangible factor from the etic perspective.

The next category is Matter. Science defines Matter as a physical material that has mass and occupies space. The matter has measurable Attributes, and whether an Attribute is considered favorable or not is culturally dependent (Feuerbach 2013). For the purpose of the Framework, Matter is divided into 'people' and 'things'. People can be represented as individuals and as groups. While groups are composed of individuals, everyone is unique and might not be representative of the population, but they will still share certain requirements based on the Laws of Nature. From individuals, it is often possible to deduce elements of their Lifestyle. Lifestyle can be defined as what someone has and what they do, and these can be observed from ethnographic research or deduced from evidence in the archaeological record.

People need access to resources, whether they collect them directly from nature, through trade or other means. Food is needed for life, and the primary subsistence strategy can often be deduced from various sources, including environmental studies, human bodies, texts, or observations. Since there are correlations between adaptive strategies, theoretically, the subsistence strategy may be the factor that most influence the form of other adaptive strategies. The technology people use to make 'things' from natural resources can also be deduced because the materials and the processes leave traces either within the artefacts, in the by-products, or indirectly from use. Things can also tell us what people value and their knowledge of the workings of the physical world.

The last category is Energy. Whether it is the conversion of food for energy, life requires the exchange of energy in one form or another. Energy is also needed for the conversion of natural resources into useful products. Actions are defined here as changes that produce and affect (Feuerbach 2013) the transfer of Energy. Each Action overlaps with the other categories. Actions are undertaken by individuals and groups, they take place at a location (Space) during a period of Time, with the use of certain things. For example, a Priest (individual) speaks (Action) to the parishioners (people) at a Church (space/thing) on Sunday morning (time). This systematic method allows for gathering data that is objective, reliable, transparent, and testable.

These Actions are subdivided into groups that can be compared to the 'Product' life history and also a person's life history. The first of the group is 'Conception' and this can be an idea, the beginning of a person, or a product. The way in which a new idea occurs to an 'inventor' mirrors their worldview. In Western culture, ideas are often said to "just appear out of thin air", mirroring the Abrahamic belief of humans being created out of nothing by an invisible all-powerful creator. Just as a new life form is created from a preexisting life

form, a new idea originates from the knowledge of the innovator. The second group is Production. In a person's life history, this relates to the time between initial conception to becoming an adult. For a product, it is the steps needed to transform an object from natural resources to the end product. The third group is Distribution. This is when an adult 'leaves the nest' to go out in the world. For a product, it is how the product gets from the producer to the consumer. The fourth group is Consumption, this is the use of the product but it can also be the 'purpose' of the individual, such as their occupation. The final group is Elimination. This group includes how a person is treated after death and how products are disposed of when they are thought to no longer be of use.

Data analysis and theory

After converting the primary evidence into data, the data is repeatedly filtered and sorted, and then Cluster Analysis and Venn Diagrams are created to see if any patterns are observed. There are many other methods of data analysis, but these are the easiest to start with. The purpose of data mining is to obtain new knowledge and it achieves this by analyzing data to identify patterns and correlations. These patterns are then visualized to assist with the interpretation of the evidence and to identify the underlying mechanisms that are responsible for the observed phenomena. Then we asked if the observations could be explained by any known theories or do they suggest another explanation. Using this method, the data 'speaks' before the theory (inductive research), and then the theory is tested against a new set of evidence (deductive research).

Many studies focus on how humans differ from other life forms and each other, but understanding the reasons for the similarities is more useful in determining if there are particular 'Rules or Laws' of Culture. By focusing on similarities, any outliers and differences can become apparent. This can also help identify mistakes or misinformation because these could form their own group. Ideally, patterns in the evidence will be observed, with or without the use of a computer, and these can be used to construct new hypotheses or test existing theories. Three anthropological premises are that cultures are holistic, synchronistic, and there are positive correlations between adaptive strategies. If these premises are true, they are a powerful yet underutilized theory for understanding cultural dynamics. Cross-cultural comparisons that span different places and times, can help to determine aspects of culture that do not leave clear remains in the archaeological record. This means that, at least in theory, if one of

the adaptive strategies is known, the others can be deduced. Research can then focus on the presumed correlated strategies to see if there is evidence for them in the archaeological record. This information can be used to better understand the 'black box' of the past, such as religious, economic and kinship systems.

Examples of the application of the framework

The Framework was used to explore archaeological artefacts to discover what cultural information could be gained from them and to test existing theories regarding the nature of these artefacts. The first example is the 'Anglo-Saxon' Mappa Mundi, and the second is a group of 'Viking' period swords called 'Ulfberht'. The full research has been published elsewhere, so a summary of the findings is presented below.

The so-called Anglo-Saxon Mappa Mundi is the earliest known map of the Old World from England and the map's provenance and authenticity are secure. The date of the map's creation is firmly placed prior to the Norman conquest of 1066 CE. Rather than understanding the map as an imaginative view of the world as many scholars have previously assumed, it was viewed as archival testimony, without judgement of its accuracy, but as a tool to help us learn about people who lived in past times. The map is very detailed, with written descriptions of places, sketches of buildings, green mountain ranges, red rivers, and straight lines that are strategically placed on the map. All map makers have the challenge of representing a 3-dimensional earth in 2 dimensions and this can cause a map to look 'wrong' to some viewers when an unfamiliar projection is used. However, a different projection does not make a map inaccurate. Map-making was an expensive and time-consuming activity. Manuscripts were created in monasteries and were the 'textbooks' of the time, used to educate the clergy and aristocracy, including future kings, knights and noblemen. It was not a frivolous pastime for bored, drunk monks, as some publications would lead the reader to believe.

The research began by examining the places mentioned on the map and comparing them with historical and geological information and archaeological sites. There are approximately 150 places designated on it. Some of the text is difficult to read and others are based on biblical information and would be the topic of future research, but it quickly became apparent that the buildings had physical counterparts that existed in the 10th-11th century. The cities mentioned on the map, such as London in England and Armagh in Ireland, would be expected on a map associated with the Anglo-Saxon court, but it also recorded

places much further afield. The location and descriptions accompanying the text show that specific information about these places was known to the map makers. Rome and other religious places in Italy are listed, which is not particularly surprising, but there are other places depicted that give us some idea of the extent of their knowledge of the 'known' world. For example, in the location of China, there is an accurate sketch of a Tang period lion with the words, 'here abundant lions'. The sketch resembles 10th-century artefacts, commonly made of copper alloys, that are often associated with Buddhist temples. Another example can be found in southern India, where the text reads 'Golden Mountain'. During the 10-11th century, the Chola temples of southern India were covered with gold, thus appearing as a golden mountain. In the region of south-western Africa, there is a sketch of a building and the words, 'stone or volcano'. Even today, the stone ruins of Great Zimbabwe resemble the shape of a volcano. Other places do not have a known physical counterpart but rely on biblical history, such as the location of Noah's Ark. Other descriptions are tantalizing, such as the mention of dog-headed people in a location in Africa where people practiced cranial deformation. Thus, the conclusion was that the map was not a figment of monks' imagination but an accurate and usable map of the known world (Feuerbach 2020).

The research then looked further afield to find out what other information is known about the people from this time period. There is a clear religious component of the map, not only because of its presumed place of creation, in a monastery, but because of the biblical references and the religious places depicted on the map. By the 10th century, Christianity had already spread and was known in India as well as in China. There were many Christian sects and the Benedictine movement sought to unite the different versions of Christianity. In the ruins of an early Medieval Benedictine church in Greenland, a disk was discovered for navigation via the sun (Bernáth et al. 2013). When taken together with the Mappa Mundi, it became clear that the map uses the sun for navigation (Feuerbach 2020) and that these places were known to people who were affiliated in some way with the church.

During the research, it became apparent that previous researchers' etic perspective, including latent biases and prejudices, clouded their view of the accuracy and educational value of the map. The use of this Framework reduced these biases because it treated the artefact as archival testimony. By populating the Framework with evidence-based information: the description of buildings (Matter: Things), the location (Space), during that period (Time), we can gain more information about the person (Matter: People) who created the map (Emic perspective), and the knowledge that was available to some groups of people,

1000 years ago. The evidence is presented in a transparent way so that the claims can be easily tested by other scholars. The result is a greater appreciation of the extent of their knowledge of the 'known' world. While this does not in any way prove they travelled to all of these places, it does show that they knew more about these places and people than has been previously considered by many scholars.

The second example is the study of a group of 'Viking' swords called 'Ulfberht'. In Europe, the sword is strongly associated with the Medieval period, the time when the Roman occupation ended (around 700 CE) and before the formation of Nation-states around the 11th -12th century. It is one of the most tantalizing periods of history because the rationale for the events, such as the so-called Anglo-Saxon migrations and Viking attacks, is debatable. While there is a wide range of artefacts and burials, there is less written documentation about everyday life than from the earlier Roman or later Medieval Periods. From an anthropological view, it is particularly interesting because it witnesses a major shift in adaptive strategies that still resonates today. Monotheism, particularly Christianity, replaced polytheism, the creation of Nation-states replaced kinship loyalties, coins for the market economy replaced methods of redistribution as the primary sources of trade, and the other correlating changes can be seen to increase during this time until the 'old ways' virtually disappear. The problem seems to be that many scholars of history are unaware of anthropological theories that could help explain events and other phenomena from that time.

Perhaps the most representative artefact from this period of time is the sword. The production of swords requires specialized knowledge and access to resources, so they have the potential to elucidate a variety of social relationships and organizations because they can link people through both peaceful and forceful means. From the miners of the ore to the smelters, the sword producers, the distributors, the eventual end users, and the final burial place, a sword can travel over long distances via merchant and military action and, thus, can shed light on the movements of people and ideas that are the core of understanding culture change.

There is a group of about 200 swords that are referred to as 'Ulfberht'. The Attributes, or characteristics of the swords vary in the type of steel used, the characters that 'spell' 'Ulfberht', the inlay method, the material and shape of the pommel and hilt, in addition to the context and the location of the finds. These observable characteristics provide data that could be used to understand various Actions that occurred during the sword's 'Life history'. The variations make these particular swords well-suited for understanding this period of time because their overlapping similarities and differences allow for data mining, analysis and visualization.

Common questions asked about these swords include the meaning of 'Ulfberht' and the reason why the swords are found in so many places across Europe and into Western Asia. At the start of the study, the researchers had only fundamental knowledge about the history of these cultures, not about particular swords from the area. Rather than a disadvantage, this reduced expectancy bias and preconceived ideas. Some current theories claim that Ulfberht was a superior blacksmith who worked along the Rhine in Germany, that the swords were produced over centuries, and the variations in spelling and steel quality are due to some being fakes and forgeries or made by illiterate smiths. The explanation for their high frequency in Norway is that 'Vikings' took them as booty during raids. There are problems with these existing theories, primarily the lack of supporting evidence and the anachronistic nature of some claims, such as the desire of a blacksmith to imitate a blade for the purpose of financial gains.

The Framework helped to identify additional issues. The first problem was the proposed time period of production, typically between the 10th and 12th centuries, based on pommel typology. The dating of the swords by typology is misleading because typology (groups of a similar type) is not the same as the relative dating method of typological seriation (the use of a diagnostic type to give a relative date to associated material). At this stage, pommel styles are an unreliable method of dating unless the style is supported by methods of Absolute or Chronometric dating. Looking at the distribution pattern of where the swords were found, together with the different types of inlay designs and the discovery that some of the swords were made of crucible steel (Williams 2009), we concluded that the Ulfberht swords found in Norway should be associated with the reign of Hakon 'the Good' (920-961 CE, *aka* Hakon Haroldsson) during the mid-10th century (Feuerbach and Hanley 2017). This controversial theory needed to be further tested by using different data and from different perspectives to determine its validity.

Using the Framework as a guide, the majority of data was mined from Stalsberg's (2008) published research on Ulfberht swords. She had undertaken the monumental task of tabulating the characteristics of the swords from museum collections. She recorded the variations of the 'spelling' of Ulfberht on the Obverse side of the sword, the marks on the Reverse, the country where the sword was found, and the Pommel type. This data was filtered to include only those with known data points and sorted according to the presumed 'Life History' of the sword. The inlay would have been applied during the swords production and the find location would have been the last place travelled to in the 'Life' of the blade. During its 'life', a pommel and guard will have been added before the

sword travelled to its final resting place. Due to the variations, the data formed different groups, and these groups were then examined alongside historical evidence from the time period. The historical documents were translations of the Icelandic Sagas, Anglo-Saxon Chronicles, and other manuscripts, as well as contemporary and related artwork and artefacts. They provided information that was then used to link the various groups of people and the events that occurred, and then the anthropological theory was used to better understand the various ideologies and cultural practices from that period. For example, in Christian areas, swords were to be returned to the church, but in regions where people practiced other religions, they could accompany the dead. This would account for the high frequency of swords in pagan burials.

The Framework facilitated pattern identification, and then the historical evidence and anthropological theory helped to explain the observations. During this time in Europe, swords were not purchased but rather, kings and nobles distributed swords to their supporters. The organization of these supporters varied from the clan-based aett of the Norse, the Anglo-Saxon land-owning thegns, to tribal households in Ireland, and the Ottonian tripartite system consisting of professional military, clergy, and layman. The swords distribution patterns and the intended recipients should be linked by one or more of these documented social networks and this had the potential to be identified. All of these are rooted in land, family, and social responsibilities, so the research began with the assumption that the data visualized groups linked by different forms of social organization.

The research concluded that there are positive correlations between the swords obverse marks that 'spell' out a version of 'Ulfberht', the runes or knot reverse marks, burial locations, and the order in which the saga's document Hakon 'the Good's' sequence of eliciting allies as was recorded in the sagas (Feuerbach, 2023). The saga reports that Hakon first went to his homeland, then to his uncle-in-law, and then visited his nephews. The correlation between the reverse mark and people is remarkable because the 'reverse marks' are runes or knots that can now be linked with specific family groups. Furthermore, the frequency of uncle/nephew relationships and fostering in the saga is apparent. Avuncular fostering is common in cultures where the men are away for extended periods of time, trading, hunting or raiding, all common activities of so-called 'Vikings'. Hakon 'the Good' is often mentioned as King Athelstan's foster son, and it has been claimed that his father sent him to Athelstan's court to keep him out of harm's way, but it is just as likely it is because King Athelstan was his matrilineal uncle. This information has been erased from history, but it fits the kinship pattern and

there is further support for this discovery. The other members who accompanied Hakon at the court when he was growing up were the future kings Louis the IV of France, and Olaf III Sigtryggson of Scotland and Ireland, who are documented as being paternal nephews of Athelstan. Thus, by using the Framework to investigate these kings' parents (Conception), where they grew up (Production), where they travelled to (Distribution), where they ruled (Consumption) and eventually were buried (Elimination), it was easy to see that they all were brought up together (Time) in their uncle's court in England (Space). Athelstan was known as the 'giver of swords', and that he sent the young men off with weapons when they set out to be kings. The ability to link the swords with specific people, events, and places clarifies personal connections between previously legendary and known historical figures and begins to increase our understanding of the social, biological, economic, religious, and military connections with a new theory that stands up to the physical and documentary evidence.

Conclusion

To conclude, the simple Framework has shown to be useful for organizing complex data, reevaluating previous theories, and discovering new patterns of behavior. The method reduces bias and preconceptions by separating out the data that is tangible and measurable from that which is intangible or cognitive. While the Framework was developed for archaeological questions, it can be adapted for other anthropological questions.

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Historical Legacies of the Pre-industrial Family Systems: Cohabitation

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Abstract. This paper discusses a cultural explanation for the rise of cohabitation in the last decades in Europe. For doing so, I approach this phenomenon from the field of historical legacies of pre-industrial family systems. The literature regarding the history of marriage and cohabitation points that, before the institutionalization of marriage, different characteristics of family systems and family norms (such as co-residence of parents with their adult children, dowry, or inheritance) were relevant to explain why some regions in Europe had a higher use of cohabitation (called back then informal marriage). Regarding the current rise of this practice, the *Second Demographic Transition* theory (SDT) points to the ideational change toward individualism and anti-conformism as the main cause of the rise of cohabitation. And, not surprisingly, the literature about legacies of historical family systems recently connected preindustrial family features (such as the number of generations living in the same household) with the persistence of the values and attitudes that seem to be linked to the recent changes in family formation. These 3 bodies of literature highlight the potential of the field of historical legacies of the family to explain the current family behavior, such as cohabitation.

Keywords: Cultural legacies, historical family systems, historical demography, Second Demographic Transition, cohabitation.

Introduction

The practice of cohabitation has increased dramatically in the last decades in Europe, either as a temporary solution (the *trial period*) before marriage, or as a substitute for marriage. Cohabitation is understood as a marriage-like relationship in which partners live together without having passed through a ceremony of marriage. The *Second Demographic Transition* theory (SDT) explains this change in the process of family formation as a consequence of the ongoing process of ideational change (Lesthaeghe 1995). But even if cohabitation looks like a recent phenomenon, when we look at the history of marriage, we notice that marriage as a generalized path to family formation in Europe was only institutionalized after the Council of Trent (1563). Before that moment, cohabitation seems to have been a fairly common practice. Research on the history of marriage has

pointed out that, in Europe, both formal and informal marriage (cohabitation) coexisted in the late middle ages, and that the preference for one practice over the other seems to be linked with one characteristic of the family system, namely, dowry (Sperling 2004).

Several authors have attended to the differences in family practices in medieval and modern Europe by pointing out that different types of families (in terms of the structure and practices) could be found across Europe at the time. Those historical family systems have been argued to have been quite stable over time, and only changed in response to the process of industrialization. The availability of historical data regarding these family differences across pre-industrial Europe has enabled scholars to argue about possible legacies that those family systems have left in our current society. This field has recently connected the pre-industrial family features with the persistence of the current values and attitudes (Henrich 2020; Schulz et al. 2019), economic development (Baten et al. 2017; Le Bris 2016; Van Zanden et al. 2019), democracy (Dilli 2016), violence (Sánchez-Cuenca 2019). Based on this research, the question that this study aims to answer is: Can the different historical family systems in Europe help us explain the current behavior toward family formation?

This chapter aims to set the grounds for an approach to current cohabitation as a historical legacy from the pre-industrial family systems rather than merely as a new phenomenon. A legacy is understood as a current outcome that cannot be fully explained by contemporary factors, and that needs an antecedent to be better described (Wittenberg 2015). This means that I understand the current cohabitation as an outcome that can be explained (at least partially) by different characteristics of the pre-industrial family systems in Europe. I argue that the common sense[1] linked to these family structures has persisted till today and is still affecting our behavior even after these family systems have changed their historical structure.

This argument is challenging because cohabitation, as the other side of marriage, has a history marked by the criminalization of its practice for over 400 years. This long gap in its practice makes it very difficult to link the pre-Trento practice with the current one. But, if the family is the main agent in the process of the reproduction of culture, and the main characteristics of culture (more concretely, the common sense) are its persistence in society over time

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1   Common sense: defined as knowledge shared by ordinary people in daily situations, it is understood to be self-evident and rarely questioned by the members of the community (Taylor 1947; Watts 2014, 314); "the actor's conceptual schema for driving its behavior" (Thomas 1978, 2).

and the ability to guide the behavior of individuals (Strauss and Quinn 1993; Swidler 2001), it makes sense to think that the historical family systems can still be affecting our behaviors, even after the structures that characterized them are no longer in use.

As with any well-defined argument on historical legacies (Wittenberg 2015), the argument that I present in this paper counts with three components: 1) the *Outcome* (legacy), which is cohabitation, whose current changes cannot be fully explained by contemporary factors. The first part of this work is centered on providing the historical evolution of the practice of cohabitation in Europe; 2) the *Antecedent*, which is the element from the past that no longer operates but still affects the outcome and adds to its explanation – which is the pre-industrial family system in Europe. The second section of the paper describes the features and classification of these family systems; and 3) the *Mechanism*, which covers the reason why the antecedent still affects the outcome today. This refers to the cultural argument that I have briefly described above. I will cover it more in detail in the final discussion of the paper.

1. Cohabitation before and after the institution of marriage

Before marriage was an institution: cohabitation as informal marriage

In the Law of the Roman Empire, one of the three types of marriage contemplated by the Law of the Twelve Tables was the marriage 'per usum' or 'per usus' (Looper-Friedman 1987, 285). In this type of marriage, the couple was considered married when they lived together in the same house for at least a year. As a matter of fact, 'usus' or 'usum' means 'practice'; therefore, this marriage was a *marriage in practice*. Before the year lapsed, the union was not considered formal (therefore, their status was linked to *concubinage*) and, to dissolve the union, the spouses only had to spend three nights apart.

Under the ideology of the Christian world during the middle ages, as written in the *Decretum Gratiani*, the individuals had to be free to choose who to marry and only owe a responsibility to declare their union to God. This doctrine established that the consent of the parties alone was sufficient for a valid marriage (Wiesner 2020, 71), and that no formal or official ceremony was indeed needed to establish a marriage. Therefore, for a couple to be married, they only had to confess their

intentions to each other and God (Brugger 2017; Harrington 1992; Reynolds 2016; Sperling 2004). This type of marriage has been denoted as an 'informal' or 'clandestine' marriage. Of course, this practice was not the only path to family formation, and different formal marriage ceremonies and formal marriage contracts were also practiced, especially among the higher social classes. As Sperling (2004) highlights, the regions in Europe with strong dowry systems, such as Northern Italy, typically showed more formal marriages than informal ones when compared to the regions with weaker dowry systems, such as Spain. But, in the general lines, this type of informal marriage[2] was relatively common and widespread around Europe, Joel Harrington defined it as a "pandemic in Europe during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries" (Harrington 1992, 55).

Table 1 displays the work of Sperling (2004) comparing the prevalence of clandestine marriages in several European countries. She counts data from several dioceses of the countries of Catholic Europe which applied to the Holy Penitentiary. In other words, she counts data from several cities that were important at the time in those countries[3]. Therefore, the percentages are a generalization of the country based on the sample of these cities.

Table 1. Clandestine marriages per country in 1564 (source: Sperling 2004, 70)

Country	All Petitions	Clandestine Marriages	Clandestine Marriages per Country in Percent
Italy	646	100	15.48
Spain	398	272	68.34
Portugal	258	226	87.60
France	98	14	14.29
Belgium	16	8	50.00
Netherlands	37	19	51.35
Other	36	13	36.11
Unidentifiable	102	44	43.14
Total	1 591	696	43.75

2   It is referred to as informal as a way of differentiating them from the marriages that actually involved a public ceremony. Informal marriages were merely a cohabitating couple who – when asked – declared to have married in front of God (Donahue 1992).

3   Specifically: Braga, Brescia, Burgos, Cambria, Evora, Genoa, Haarlem, Lisbon, Lucca, Milan, Naples, Rouen, Seville, Toledo, Utrecht.

This informal process for family formation seems in a way somewhat similar to what we nowadays know as cohabitation. Cohabitation, or 'non-married but living together', has been considered a contemporary phenomenon framed within the exceptional demographic changes of the last decades. The *Second Demographic Transition* theory (SDT), presented by Lesthaeghe and Van de Kaa (1986), focuses its attention on providing an explanation for those changes (an increase of cohabitation, non-marital fertility, and divorce, and childbearing and marriage postponement). The core of their argument is that those changes are a result of the change of values in the population (Inglehart and Welzel 2005).

But, how come that cohabitation – which actually was normalized behavior in the Roman Law, and a 'pandemic' in some European countries in the 15th and 16th centuries – is now being considered a recent phenomenon?

The answer is linked to the process of the institutionalization of marriage, which occurred in Europe during the Counter-Reformation after the Council of Trent in 1563.

Marriage as an institution: the end of informal marriages

As Jutta Sperling (2004) describes, the main change in the Council of Trent is the legitimation of a new rite of union formation. This change is understood indeed as a shock which has been shaping the European family ever since. After the 17th century, the only legitimate path to family formation was marriage. And that constituted an agreement between the Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox worlds.

Protestants did not consider marriage as a sacrament, but they abolished the informal (or clandestine) marriage even before the Catholic Counter-Reformation and turned marriage into a secular institution in the hands of the State (Sperling 2004; Wiesner 2020, 65–118; Ch2). The Council of Trent (1545–1563) represented the crucial turning point in the process of marriage institutionalization. After the council, the Catholic Church applied the strictest reforms toward union formation. They made compulsory the religious ceremony and the payment of a fee for the legal formalization of the union in the Church registry; moreover, the Church became the authority which declared which couples could marry as well as who could get that marriage suspended (Brugger 2017; Reynolds 2016, 725; Schulz 2016; Sperling 2004). These reforms banned marriage among relatives, which was a regular practice at the time, and caused a change in the family structure, by promoting the nuclear family (Henrich 2020; Schulz 2016; Schulz et al. 2019). The Orthodox also applied some reforms in

the institutionalization of marriage, even if those were applied relatively later compared to Catholics or Protestants. The practice of the formal marriage was more generalized within this branch of Church than in the other two branches before the reforms. The Orthodox Church only recognized as married those couples which had passed the ritual of marriage in the Church with parental and societal approval (Wiesner 2020, 156–162; Ch3).

The literature regarding this reformation of marriage points out that, in different regions, some old traditions were preserved (such as southern Germany or Sweden) (Harrington 1992; Wiesner 2020; Ch2). That persistence was mostly due to the social acceptance of some practices, such as sex outside marriage, the non-required virginity for the first marriage, or the recognition of children born outside the wedlock. But the persistence of those practices did not interfere with the process of legitimization of marriage as the main path to family formation.

After centuries of reinforcing these practices, with cultural norms and formal Law, cohabitation became a rare practice. When occurred, it tended to be hidden due to the social stigma and legal punishment. We can say that, over that period, marriage became the social institution that was given not only the formal value over the Law, but also social value for legitimizing family formation. At the beginning of the 20th century, households conformed as non-married couples were not even registered in population censuses, and were still being commonly considered out of the norm (Kok and Leinarte 2015).

Due to a lack of data, it is difficult to determine exactly how common was cohabitation before and after the Council of Trent. Sperling (2004) uses records from dioceses (requests for dissolving marriages and local-priest reports of informal marriages) of towns in several countries to determine the popularity of informal marriages before the Council of Trent. But that data is not only hard to access (a formal request to the Vatican arcades is required), but it is also difficult to generalize to the overall population at the time. Another indicator to approach some estimated measurement of historical cohabitation is to consider the birth registry for births outside wedlock and illegitimate children. Yet, in that data, it is impossible to see how many of these births happened within cohabitating parents, or in single-parent households (Kok and Leinarte 2015, 6).

To approach these numbers, between 1896 and 1900, most European countries had less than 10% of births outside wedlock (Therborn 2004, 149), the countries that showed the highest proportions were: Iceland (16%), Austria (14%), Portugal (12%), and Sweden (11%). Whereas the countries that showed the lowest percentages of those births were the following: Bulgaria (0.4%), Greece (1%), the Netherlands (3%), Spain (5%), Switzerland (5%), and Italy (6%).

Cohabitation as a new phenomenon

Before the institutionalization of marriage, we only observed a change of this magnitude in the trend of cohabitation in Europe in the last decades. This change of behavior without closest precedents is what makes this phenomenon interesting and new. **Figure 1** shows the graph provided by Ron Lasthaeghe in his paper of 2020. As we can see, there has been a general increase in this practice all around Europe, but we can appreciate two separate trends. A rapid increase for the northern countries (Norway, France, United Kingdom, Austria, Netherlands, Estonia, Belgium, and Germany are positioned at the top of the graph), whereas Spain, Hungary, Georgia, Russia, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Italy, and Poland are found in the lower side of the graph.
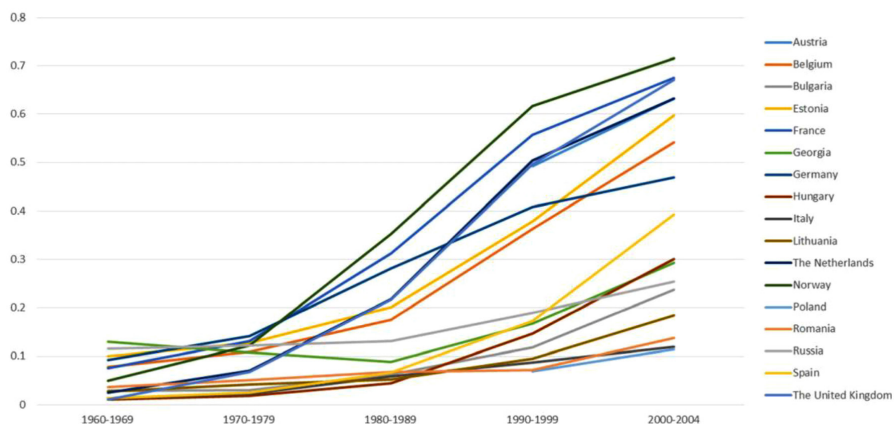
Image 1. Share of cohabitation between age 25 and 29 of those in a union (women) (Lesthaeghe 2020a, p. 16)4.

We can see how cohabitation, either as a temporary solution before marriage, or as a definitive choice for conforming to a new family unit, has shown a sudden and sharp increase in the last decades. The SDT theory argues that this change is a consequence of the increase in non-conformist, emancipatory, and autonomous values (Lesthaeghe 2010). Yet what is interesting about cohabitation is not

4   Expansion of cohabitation in selected European countries: Proportion of women aged 25–29 who cohabited for at least a year relative to all women aged 25–29 who were in a union (married+cohabiting) for at least 1 year; 1960–2004. Source: Courtesy of Jorik Vergauwen, Antwerp University. Data: Gender and Generations Survey harmonized data and national surveys (Lesthaeghe 2020a, 16, Fig. 5).

merely the change in the trend, but the fact that it was outside of the expectations considered in the field of demography.

Cohabitation as a path of family formation has been only included in the agenda of sociologists and demographers in the last decades, which indicates a significant break in the social institution of marriage. First, with the process of de-illegalization of cohabitation, which occurred in most European countries in 1960–1980 (Perelli-Harris and Gassen 2012, p. 437), most countries were no longer applying those laws by the time they abolished them, and the law reform was mostly due to the need of a legal alternative for the unmarried couples with children[5]. And, second, this reform was driven by the increase of its practice and by the gain of the popularity of the *Second Demographic Transition* theory (SDT).

2. Historical family features: explaining the old cohabitation

In these terms, we find that, before the Council of Trent, there was a factor which would explain the regional differences in the incidence of formal marriage. According to Sperling (2004), these differences were due to the practice of dowry.

On one hand, in the regions where dowry was a common practice, and it was linked to the parental approval of the union (linked also to the practice of arranged marriage), then, the formal marriage was more prevalent. This was due to the incentive of the new couple to receive the dowry. If the family did not approve the new union, the young couple would not receive the dowry, and even if they chose to marry clandestinely without a dowry, they would be socially recognized as with a lower status or as not-married. That would dissuade young couples from marrying clandestinely.

On the other hand, in the regions in which the dowry was not a common practice, or in which the dowry was not linked to parental approval, then, clandestine marriage was more common. Sperling especially compares Northern Italy and Northern France in terms of the strong dowry tradition which gave parents the right of choosing whether to give the dowry or not if they did not

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5   The legal change towards the symmetry of marriage and cohabitation is still taking place in Europe. Such countries as Sweden and Denmark were the ones starting earlier with the change in the legal status associated to cohabitation, and they were followed by the central European and Mediterranean countries. There are still major legal differences across Europe regarding how marriage and cohabitation are treated. Such countries as the Netherlands, Sweden, France or Norway treat them either equally or as an intermediate position (Perelli-Harris and Gassen 2012).

approve the marriage ('exclusio propter dotem' (Sperling 2004, 73)). For example, this was compared to central and southern Spain, where the law declared the obligation for the families of the spouses to exchange dowries, even if they were strangers to each other[6].

Sperling's argument is about how the level of authority which the parents had over their children shaped the practice of marriage. The control over the dowry can be understood as the control over the individuals and their will[7]. Sperling is arguing that the formal marriage existed in the regions where parents had a higher control over their children. And that links directly with the theory of Emmanuel Todd (1996) about the legacies of historical family systems. Todd classifies historical family systems based on two dimensions, one of which is *authority* (based on the co-residence of generations in the same household, where authority was manifested if more than two generations lived together, and which was liberal if nuclear households were the norm); and the second dimension was *equality* (based on the distribution of inheritance among the sons and daughters. Inequality was manifested if only one offspring inherited the family assets, whereas equality was observed if parents distributed the assets equally among brothers). Todd argues that these historical family systems left a persistent ideology on the population that not only can explain historical events in the development of European history, but also reflect the current ideological trends and voting nowadays.

But this connection that could be drawn from Sperling and Todd's argument is not the only link which we can find between the historical family and the current demographic behavior.

The SDT theory has already considered how the legacies from the past played a role in the development of the said changes. Lesthaeghe (2010) presents some examples of how some historical traditions, or 'strong' or 'weak' family networks (Reher 1998) could help to understand some irregularities in the phases of the SDT for some countries in Europe. And, in his latest paper (Lesthaeghe 2020b), Lesthaeghe proposes connections between some traditional kinship systems and the current cohabitation patterns worldwide (e.g. 'patriarchal' family by Le

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6   In the southern areas of Spain, Portugal and Italy, the dowry was considered an advance of the bride's parental inheritance, and the law stated that patrimony had to be equally distributed among sons and daughters (except for certain feudal titles and royal endowments reserved for aristocratic males). Parents therefore had a lower control over the marriage of their children (Mineo 2001; Sperling 2004, 73).

7   As an example of how the historical family structure can affect the marriage patterns, the study of de Munck et al. (2016) statistically shows the correlation between the lineage norms (matrilineality or patrilineality) and the contemporary resilience of love as the main reason of marriage (versus arranged marriage).

Play (1871)). He already tried to test his theory on cohabitation in 2016 when he edited (together with Albert Esteve) the book *Cohabitation and Marriage in the Americas: Geo-historical Legacies and New Trends* (2016). The main objective of that issue was to discuss and find the possible legacies affecting the trends of the *Second Demographic Transition* in the American continent. In that volume, they tested the argument of diffusion of SDT by looking at the rise of cohabitation in Latin America. They concluded that, even today, identifying clear legacies still remains a challenge, and, even more, if we move from specific case studies to the general legacies affecting cross-nationally. The book focuses on Latin America, which is far from where this work takes its interest, but yet it remains an interesting example of the gap of literature that my paper attempts to fill.

By using the approach of the legacies of historical families, some authors tried to find connections between the historical family regions and the trends of fertility. Micheli and Dalla Zuanna (2006) pointed to the paradoxical drop in fertility in the Mediterranean countries in the last decades (attending to the southern European 'familistic' characteristics (Banfield 1967; Reher 1998)); whereas Rotering (2019) tested if the areas with historical authoritarian family structures (as measured by Todd (1995)) showed higher rates of fertility than the liberal families during the first demographic transition. Meanwhile, Schulz et al. (2019) centered their research on how the Catholic Church shaped the structure of the family by promoting nuclear formations, which has affected the psychological characteristics of individuals nowadays. They found that nuclear families are linked with greater individualism, less conformity, and more impersonal pro-sociality, which are characteristic elements of western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic countries.

Origins of pre-industrial European families

So far, we have mentioned that some family practices are linked to cohabitation in the past, as well as to other characteristics, such as authority or inheritance. The fact is that pre-industrial Europe showed a variety of typologies of the family, and those differences have been used to explain the currently manifested phenomena. But, before entering into the discussion on these different family systems and the different categorizations or data sources, it is interesting to briefly discuss the reasons for these differences.

The truth is that the literature on the historical legacies of the family has never paid much attention to explaining how the different family systems originated in the first place. The earlier works lean on a functionalist approach to the family

change, as is evident in the work of Herbert Spencer (1975; 1873) who understood that the family changed its form to adapt to the economic system. This way, in the *Advanced Agrarian Society*, the logical family structure would be the extended family since the subsistence would be associated with the land and the lineage; but, in the *Modern Industrial World*, the efficient form is to reduce the household to the nuclear kinship[8]. This analysis got challenged when the Cambridge group led by Laslett pointed out that, in pre-industrial England, nuclear households were indeed relatively common (1987; 1983). By using this base, Emmanuel Todd sustained that the reason why Europe showed this variety of family systems was due to the different agrarian systems which dominated medieval and modern Europe. Nuclear families would appear in areas of restricting agrarian portions and large land exploitation (so, in areas where most people did not own the land); whereas multigenerational households were associated with family farms (a small-sized property) and share-cropping (a medium-sized property).

This means that, when using family characteristics, we are not only measuring the family traits, but also the societal attributes; this is why, the family is a good way to approach or measure the cultural persistence. Another point is that little work has pointed to the changes in the family structure. Meanwhile, demographers have focused on the changes in demographic behaviors, such as fertility or mortality, which is part of the literature on the first demographic transition.

Different ways to approach the pre-industrial European families

Several authors have provided a variety of classifications of family systems in the pre-industrial era. Even when looking at the same society, in other words, the same families, looking at different features makes their classification look like very different theories.

Table 2 below contains a summary of the most known classifications of the historical family systems by author and the characteristics of each of them. No previous work has combined their findings, but I will try to provide a consistent geographical pattern of their findings. For doing so, I provide **Figure 2** which shows the map of Europe according to Todd's classification of the family (as presented in the work of Duranton et al. (2009)).

We have argued that it seems to be the dowry, which is linked to the parental control and authority, what appears to predict cohabitation, and that Todd's theory

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8   I consulted (Turner and Machalek 2018, 49–51) for a review of Spencer's theory.

appears to use the argument of the authority linked to the co-residence of adult sons and their parents in the parental house. Indeed, the topic of the generational composition of the house is a common characteristic described by most of the authors. It is also the characteristic most used for describing the legacy arguments.

But we can go further if we want to define the differences of each family type. In terms of the parental control, we should identify gradients between all the sons living in the parental house (the *Communitarian family*) versus only one (the *Stem family*), to sons emancipating, but only after marriage (to form a new family unit which is the *Nuclear egalitarian family*), to the early emancipation in their teen ages (which is the *Absolute nuclear family*). What I have just described is based on the types described by Todd (as described in **Table 3**).

Communitarian and *stem* families appear as black and purple on the map, while the *nuclear egalitarian* family appears in green, and the *Absolute nuclear family* is shown in yellow. We see that the *Communitarian families* are the least common in Europe, as they are only predominant in Finland and central Italy. This family type is linked to the share-cropping arrangements. Sperling states that the same area in Italy had strong dowry systems, with strong parental control. Also, Putnam (1994) describes the area as a region of a high civic society and high social and impersonal trust. Hajnal describes this family as a *Joint household* characterized by marriage at an early age for women and high fertility.

In different terms, *Stem families* were the most common in Europe; we can see them in Northern Spain, South France, and central Europe. This family type was centered on lineage durability, and only the firstborn son inherited the parental property and lived in the house with his parents, thereby becoming the head of the house once his father passed away. From the works of Le Bris and Tallec and Szołtysek (Le Bris and Tallec 2020; Szołtysek 2016), we can see that these family types were associated with a later marriage, higher ages at marriage, and a lower fertility, i.e. the characteristics defined by Hajnal. It is also of importance to note that only the firstborn son (or the daughter, if the couple only had daughters) would preserve the family legacy, whereas daughters and second-born sons would leave the parental home at marriage. For the daughters, the marriage was typically arranged to find a similar or better status in comparison to the one of the family; therefore, ideally, they would be married to an heir, and provide the husband house with the assets of the dowry. This means that the *Stem family* should also be linked to Sperling's theory. On the other hand, the brothers of the heir could stay unmarried at the parental house, emancipate alone by joining the Church or the army, or get emancipated by forming a new household after marrying, but without the wealth of the inheritance which was bound to go to his elder brother.

Table 2. Summary of the main categorizations of the historical family (compiled by the author)

Author	Family type	Characteristics of family
Hajnal[9]	European marriage pattern (Northwest Europe)[10]	Late marriage, working on service before marriage, nuclear families, male headship of the household after marriage.
	Joint Household	Early marriage is the cohabitation of more than one couple in the household.
Le Play[11]	Patriarchal	Direct descendants in the same household, Headship leading the family-labor; Property undivided.
	Stem	Only the heir cohabits with his parents, and remaining siblings emancipate after marriage (High family support).
	Unstable	Nuclear family; Early emancipation of children.
Todd[12]	Nuclear vs Extended	One married couple vs more than one living in the same household.
	Egalitarian (or not) inheritance.	Equal distribution of inheritance vs a single heir.
	Woman's status	Patrilocal (the wife moves into the husband's family house); Matrilocal (the husband moves into the wife's family house).
	Late vs early emancipation	Age of emancipation; Temporary co-residence of young marriage.
Murdock[13]	Multi categories	Inheritance; Descent-line; Monogamy/ Polygamy/ Endogamy; Gender roles; Activity.
Reher[14]	Strong Family	Late emancipation; Duty of care of family members; Strong family network.
	Weak family	Early emancipation; Low duty of family care.
Bott[15]	Close vs Loose kinship networks	[Only for London[16], but applicable to strong-weak family types.]
Banfield[17]	Amoral family	Nuclear family with strong family ties.
Sperling	Strong vs weak dowry.	Contrasting marriage within the Catholic countries in Europe (not a general theory of family classification; focuses only on marriage).

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9   (Hajnal, 1982) as part of the Cambridge Group led by Laslett, as mentioned above in the text.

10   His hypothesis has been broadly tested, the most recent works point that Hajnal's division should be addressed more carefully, since there are strong geographical deviations in the combination of the 4 components of the Marriage Pattern (Szołtysek and Ogórek 2019; Szoltysek et al. 2019; Szołtysek et al. 2020).

11   (Play 1871)

12   (Todd 1995)

13   (Murdock 1967)

14   (Reher 1998)

15   (Bott 1957)

16   Replication of the validity of her work can be found at: (Aldous and Straus 1966).

17   (Banfield 1967) is linked to the concept of identity and basic priorities of the individual. In the familistic societies, individuals will set first the interest of the family, then the individual, and last the community. This will link to a higher control of the family members, with family members consisting mostly of the social network of the individual.
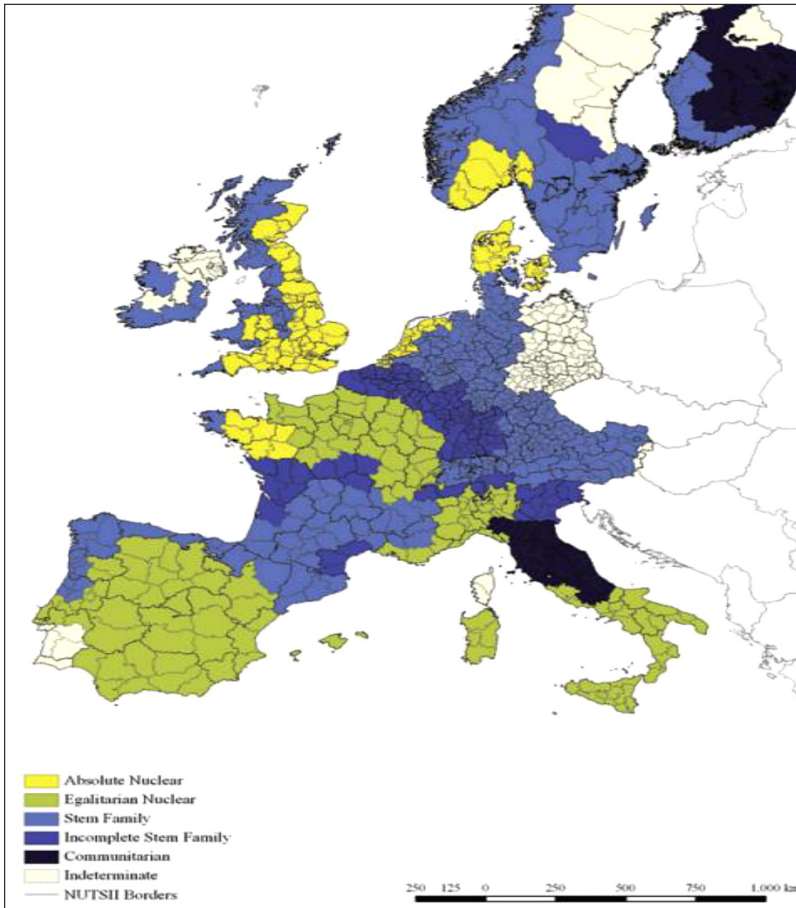
Image 2. Different family systems in Europe. Source:Duranton et al. (2009).

The *Nuclear egalitarian family* is the one associated with large agrarian exploitation in which the majority of people work the land for a minimum salary, with no property of the house that they live in or what they produce. This means that the 'family lineage' is not something that they could preserve. They are characterized by an equal distribution of the inheritance among brothers and sisters; most commonly, the daughters got their inheritance share as part of their dowry after marriage. This dowry system was weak, as Sperling explains, since parents could not deny their daughter the right to dowry if they did not approve of the partner. In this family type, emancipation only occurs after marriage, and, according to Hajnal's classification, they marry earlier and have a higher fertility. This family type is the one that Banfield describes as "amoral

familism" (a family-centered society in which individuals are subordinated to the family rather than the community needs), and with the strong family, as described by Reher.

Last but not least, there is the *absolute nuclear family* which is the least common in Europe, and also the most peculiar. This family type is the one that Hajnal described in the *European Marriage Pattern*, with early emancipation, late marriage, male headship of the house, and unequal inheritance. The inheritance in these regions was completely based on the person's will, where it was common to choose one child to give the parental property in exchange for care when the parent gets older. The level of authority of the parents in this family system is less strict than in the previous cases. Individuals are more independent from a younger age since there is a gap of time when living on their own before they form a new family. This family type is described as the one 'Weak Family' according to Reher's classification, and an 'Unstable Family' according to Le Play. Also, this family type appears in countries with the Protestant tradition, which formalized contractual marriages, rather than religious ones, even after the reform. Sperling only mention the Netherlands in her study by claiming that this family type and dowry system existed only there, but, similar to inheritance, it was subject to parental choice and control. Yet it also happens in such environments in which individuals had more agency and resources to confront this control.

Table 3. Family systems described by Todd

Family Type	Main Characteristics
Absolute nuclear	Total emancipation of children in adulthood to form independent families made simply of a couple and their children. Division of inheritance among children by testament or will, usually to a single individual, often the son. Brothers and sisters are treated as independent individuals (Todd 1990a, 37).
Egalitarian nuclear	Total emancipation of children in adulthood to form independent families made simply of a couple and their children. Equal division of inheritance among children. This system encourages the persistence of slightly stronger relations between parents and children until the inheritance is completely divided after the parents' death (Todd 1990a, 37–38).
Stem family	An extended family with several generations living under one roof. One child—generally, but not always, the eldest—marries and has children who remain in the household to preserve the lineage. The rest have the choice of remaining unmarried within the household or of marrying and leaving the home or becoming soldiers or priests. The house and the land are inherited by the son who stays at home. Others may receive some financial compensation. The inheriting son, who stays at home, remains under the formal authority of the father (Todd 1990a, 38).
Incomplete stem family	The same as the stem family, but with more egalitarian inheritance rules (in principle, but rarely in practice).
Communitarian family	An extended family in which all the sons can get married and bring their wives to the family home. Equality among children in inheritance, with family wealth and estates divided after the death of the parent (although a period of cohabitation between married brothers after the death of the parents is possible) (Todd 1990a, 39–40).

Due to the availability of data (Duranton et al. 2009a), Todd's classification seems to be the one which is more convenient for conducting statistical analysis and processing the European family differences. It is nevertheless a challenge to only attend to the dowry systems, as discussed above, also because the data is very limited if we want to approach the statistical test. In addition, the availability of other family theories enables researchers to define an argument with more nuances than when focusing only on a single characteristic.

The extensive databases available to conduct statistical tests on this theory are shown in **Table 4**.

The datasets listed above show that both cross-sectional and longitudinal analysis can be conducted. Datasets such as Fertility and Family or Gender and Generations are longitudinal surveys, which enables the life course analysis. Also, by linking the records in the census data available in *Eurostat*, we could derive the data in the longitudinal format, which would enable the study of the change in cohabitation trends over time, as well as the family structure or the emancipation age. Also, some historical databases, such as the BALL dataset (Pujadas-Mora et al. 2019) enable the study of the historical family since they include census records from as far back as the early 19th century.

Of course, qualitative analysis would be an interesting approach as well, which would enable us to find more nuances than the big datasets can, and refine the arguments of the mechanism that connects the antecedent with the legacy.

Discussion: what results should we expect from the historical family?

This section is meant for a reflection on the diverse ways in which we could interpret the effect of the family structure over cohabitation, in other words, to settle the mechanism.

As we have mentioned in the first section, cohabitation nowadays is rising as part of the diffusion of some new demographic practices that are argued to have originated in an ideational change by the population. This ideational change is argued to manifest itself due to the economic development, which changes the needs of the individuals and, therefore, their values. More specifically, we have observed that, among other factors included in SDT, cohabitation has a history linked to the legitimization (or institutionalization) of marriage. Thus, its current rising trends seem to be the result of a new process of legitimation (or re-legitimization) of cohabitation as a path to family formation. The values that

Table 4. Available datasets

	Databases	Indicators	Type	Level	Source
SDT	SDT	Indexes SDT1 & SDT2	Rates	National	Sobotka (2008)
	Eurostat & OECD Family database	Marriage, Cohabitation, age …	Rates	National	
	Fertility & Family	Fertility, cohabitation, childbearing, marriage, divorce, age …	Survey	National	(Me and Giovannelli 2004)
	Gender & Generations	Trends of: Fertility, cohabitation, childbearing, marriage, divorce, age …	Survey	National	(*Demographic Research, Volume 17*, 2008)
Values	WVS	Secular-Rational & Self Expression values		National	(World Values Survey Association 2010)
	EVS & ESS	Secular-Rational & Self Expression values	Survey	Sub-national	(Schulz et al. 2019)
	Psychological factors	Individualism – Independence – Impersonally prosocial – Conformity – Obedience (indexes)	Secondary data Ethnography	Sub-national	(Le Bris 2016; Duranton et al. 2009b)
His-torical family	Todd	Equality (Egalitarian vs Non. inheritance) Authority (Unitary vs Extended family)		Sub-national	
		Woman status		National	(Le Bris 2016)
	Murdock	Nuclear – Extended – Exogamy		Sub-nat.	(Murdock 1967)
		Women's status		Sub-national	(Carmichael and Rijpma 2017; Dilli 2015)
	Hybrid Data Todd & Murdock	This database combines and completes the indicators of Todd and Murdock.		National	(Rijpma and Carmichael 2016)
	Hajnal	Mosaic project	Census	Sub-national	(Mikołaj Szołtysek and Ogórek 2019)

SDT has tested to be associated with cohabitation, autonomy, and extreme non-conformist values (Lesthaeghe 2010) are very close to the dimension which is considered by Schwartz as the "openness toward change" (Schwartz 2003; 1994; 1992).

With a basic line, these pieces of literature are pointing in the same direction, an economic improvement propitiated the change of values, which eventually led to the rise of cohabitation, because societies became Ready, Willing, and Able to start those changes.

We have evidence in the literature which proves that the historical family systems affected the economic development of the countries (Baten et al. 2017; Baten and de Pleijt 2018; Carmichael et al. 2016; Dennison and Ogilvie 2016; Le Bris 2016; Moor and van Zanden 2006; van Zanden et al. 2019). This already suggests an indirect effect of the historical family over the current cohabitation mediated by economic performance. These studies argue that the European Marriage Pattern, the *Absolute nuclear* and the *Stem families* in Europe (Hanjal's and Todd's theories) positively affected the economic development. That happened because of the advantageous position which they gave to women – who made part of the labor force – but also due to the intergenerational investment of the inegalitarian systems.

Before drawing a complex model on the channels through which the historical family could affect cohabitation, which will always contain a fair amount of endogeneity since we could also understand economic development and values as legacies of family, I shall try to draw here the direct path based on the stable common sense transmitted over generations. This path relies on the assumption that people behave by following the main principles of the cultural schemas which are contained in the common sense. Also, this common sense is transmitted and reproduced in one generation over the next one, thereby ensuring its persistence over time.

We should not interpret this approach as the persistence of behaviors, but rather as the persistence of culture and how culture interplays with the changing environment. This means that this argument does not directly translate to assuming that the family systems which involved high use of cohabitation in the past should also have high cohabitation today. This relies on how culture, measured by the pre-industrial family structures, affects an individual's behavior in the current society. In other words, it depends on the roots settled in the historical family systems whether the current symbolism of cohabitation fits or does not fit as an acceptable path in the repertory of options in the strategies of action of members of a given society (Swidler 1986).

The basic mechanism of the argument on cohabitation as the historical legacy which I attempt to draw is based on the premise that culture is persistent, and that culture affects our behavior. Yet, culture needs to be properly drawn to become an argument; we can just say that the differences in cohabitation have cultural causes. I have defined how the four family systems had different profiles. And I have attempted to order them on base to this 'authority' line, by linking it to the dowry systems. If we understand this line as the main driver of the acceptance of cohabitation and therefore as an increase of its practice, then we should expect that the *Communitarian family* systems show the lowest cohabitation while the *Absolute nuclear family* has the most cohabitation.

Still, I am a bit reluctant to put this so straightforwardly, especially because *Nuclear egalitarian families* have been argued in the literature to be 'Familistic' and perceived as strong families. Even without the possibility of capital concentration, as in *Stem families*, Banfield, Reher, and other researchers, such as Micheli and Dalla Zuana (2006), have pointed out how the regions with this family type have societies in which the family is at the center. The component of equality makes – in a way – this family more alike to the communitarian systems than to the *Absolute nuclear family*.

One more point to note is that *Stem families* relied on primogeniture in the durability of the family lineage. This seems to reinforce the dowry system in a way that the household head can allocate the family resources in the most favorable way for its preservation. This relies upon only one heir and control over the other siblings to serve a solution which does not divide and break the family lineage. But, this inequality in inheritance makes this family look like the *Absolute nuclear family*. Rather than by a choice based on merits and formalized on a consensual contract as in the *Absolute nuclear family*, the *Stem family* has the same concept imposed over the first son. The remaining sons and daughters have similar characteristics. Also, both family systems come from agrarian systems which are associated with the small property and/or the ownership of what they produce, which may be relevant to settle differences.

This discussion attempts to put some light on the logic of the mechanism behind understanding cohabitation as a cultural legacy of the different family systems of Europe's agrarian past. The variety of approaches of the historical family and the data limitations makes this exercise challenging, yet interesting and promising.

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Conceptualizing 'Children' across Age Groups in Lithuania: A Preliminary Account Using Free List Tasks

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Abstract. A variety of economic, personal and social reasons may have influenced Lithuanians changing attitudes toward having children, which has been causing a significant fertility decline since the early 1990s. The conceptions one has about children may affect the decision to have or not to have children. By applying a bottom-up anthropological research design, this paper aims to examine the relationship between social contexts and cultural norms as they influence the way people of different generations conceptualize children. The results of the study reveal that the conceptions one has about children are subject to change. This change can be influenced either by real life experiences of raising one's own children, by observing others raising their children, or by other socially, culturally or psychologically motivated reasons. Hence, the shift in the perception of 'children' over the life cycle is the focus of this paper.

Keywords: demographic transition, fertility decline, attitudes toward having children, generational perspectives, social contexts and cultural norms.

Introduction

Since the early 1990s, Lithuania has been undergoing significant transformations in family life. The country has experienced a significant fertility decline. A variety of economic and social reasons may have influenced people's changing attitudes toward having children, such as socioeconomic transformations, economic difficulties faced by post-Soviet society, unemployment, low income, poverty, inadequate social and family policies, and the emigration of youth. Other determinants were inherited from the Soviet system, such as lack of dwelling, orientation towards the paternalistic state policy, the conflict between the patriarchal attitudes and emancipation, and the specifics of female employment. One also needs to consider value orientations and lifestyles, such as individualization, emancipation, an increasing freedom of choice, secularisation, and the modern methods of contraception (Stankūnienė and Jasilionienė 2008).

According to the Lithuanian Department of Statistics (2022), from 1990 to 2021, fertility was rapidly and steadily declining in Lithuania. In the year 1990, there were 56,868 new-borns, in 2000, 34,149 new-borns were registered, while, in 2010, 30,676 new-borns were recorded, and, in 2020, there were 25,144 births. Currently, the fertility level in Lithuania is one of the lowest in the European Union, and it is far below what is required for population replacement. Additionally, having children is usually postponed to later stages of life, with the mean age of women at the birth of their first child increasing. According to the Lithuanian Department of Statistics (2022), in the year 2001, the mean age of women at childbirth was 26.8 years, whereas, in 2010, this age reached 28.9 years, and, in 2020, it was already 30.4 years. The mean age of women at the birth of the first child in 2001 was 24.2 years, while, in 2010, this age increased to 26.4 years, and it further grew to 28.2 years in 2020.

Recently, there have been studies in Lithuania focusing on various aspects that may influence decisions (not) to have children. Several studies were done on the childlessness trends and experiences (i.e., Šumskaitė, Rapolienė, and Gedvilaitė-Kordušienė 2019; Šumskaitė and Rapolienė 2019; Gedvilaitė-Kordušienė, Tretjakova, and Ubarevičienė 2019), on reproductive expectations (Šumskaitė 2014; Ražauskienė and Šumskaitė 2021), and on the reproductive behaviour of Lithuanians (Tretjakova 2012). Additionally, there are several studies focusing on the evaluation of family-friendly policies, and the quality of life of adults who have children (Galdauskaitė 2018; Norgėlaitė 2021).

According to Vyšniauskienė and Brazienė's (2017) study, Lithuania's family-friendly policy is mostly focused on monetary payments. As a result, such aspects as family and work reconciliation, the development of the preschool education system, and the promotion of a favourable attitude by the State and employers towards workers with children are not getting enough attention. However, as Norgėlaitė (2021) points out, an individual's decision to have children is determined not only by objective reasons and circumstances but also by the subjective assessment of one's present and future. Thus, focusing on objective reasons when explaining the dynamic of fertility trends is not enough. In the fertility discourse, more authors are starting to talk about a certain social uncertainty which appears to be characteristic of modern societies. This uncertainty is partly caused by a lack of clarity and consistency in people's life trajectories, such as the increasing number of possible life choices and the concomitant increase in anxiety about the correctness of one's choice(s). Consequently, people can face difficulties when making decisions with long-term consequences, such as the decision to have children. Norgėlaitė's (2021) study – biographical interviews with representatives

of cohorts of 1970–1984 – revealed that features common to modern societies, such as the aforementioned high levels of uncertainty, are noticeable. However, Norgėlaitė concluded that, although these trends can influence decisions regarding childbearing, they are not dominant.

Gedvilaitė-Kordušienė, Tretjakova, and Ubarevičienė's (2019) analysis of cultural norms regarding childlessness revealed an ambivalence in Lithuanian attitudes. On the one hand, the study participants expressed support for individualistic attitudes by stating that an individual has the right to decide whether to have a child or not. On the other hand, there was substantial support for the familistic norm that children give meaning to life, especially to women. A study by Rijken and Merz (2014) comparing perceptions of voluntary childlessness by men and women found that they were quite similar. The only differences found were that men expressed slightly more disapproval for the decision to choose volitional childlessness than women did. The authors noted that parenthood generally affects men's lives less than women's. The authors also noted that women's decisions likely reflect their concern over the financial, time and energy costs for themselves if they were to raise children, while men chose to express disapproval in order not to seem self-centred and callous. Hence, it appears that men's decision bias was hypocritical, while that of women was pragmatic.

A study on the experience of childlessness by Šumskaitė, Rapolienė, and Gedvilaitė-Kordušienė (2019) revealed that childlessness can be positioned on three different levels: personal, interpersonal, and cultural. The personal level revealed the importance of individualistic values for decisions not to have children – freedom from the burden, taking care of oneself, and recognising the responsibility to raise children. On the interpersonal level, women of reproductive age expressed positions that either were agreed upon with their partners not to have children or stated how difficult it was to reach the agreement due to different attitudes toward having children. The narratives of women from older generations reveal more inert life scenarios, as they rarely openly discussed their expectations related to children with their partners. Additionally, the research showed that the impact of cultural and religious norms had a strong influence on not only women from older generations, but also on women of reproductive age: having children was believed to be a natural part of marriage, thus only if a woman was not married she would choose to remain childless.

Ražauskienė and Šumskaitė's (2021) research revealed that the procreation expectations and their fulfilment are not static or early determined: they change depending on the circumstances of the family creation, self-realisation in one's

occupation, and the reconciliation of the procreation expectations of the partners. Obstacles to the realisation of one's procreation expectations may be social, financial, and medical in nature, such as conflicts among partners, divorce, lack of financial stability, issues of reproductive health, etc.

These studies, although very helpful in understanding the impact of various individual, social, and cultural aspects on the decision (not) to have children, do not sufficiently explore the cultural domain. Rather, they develop causal relations in the factors affecting the decision-making about having children, but they leave unaddressed the temporal socio-cultural changes affecting ideas about having children. Additionally, these studies – although excellent in their analysis of the concerns people have regarding decisions to have children – provide only top-down explanations. These explanations show, on the one hand, that the government and the economy-ruling institutions need to pay more attention to the uncertainties which citizens (and, by default, employees) feel about their future and the ability to raise a family and, on the other hand, the studies suggest some of the core psychological responses to these uncertainties. The current study adds to this picture by applying a bottom-up, anthropological research design to examine the relationship between the social contexts and the cultural norms as they influence the way people of different generations conceptualise children. Thus, the paper aims to explore how 'children' are conceptualised across different age groups in Lithuania.

Methodology

Theoretical approach

The free list method was used for data collection and analysis. The free list method is typically used to identify the most common and culturally important terms revealing the cultural domain. Although cultural domains may vary in content and structure, they refer to all things, at the same level of abstraction, to which the members of a culture (or a group) claim to belong together (de Munck 2009). Free lists quickly and easily amass data that 1) identify items in the cultural domain, or an emic category; 2) indicate which of those things are most important, or salient within the culture; and 3) reveal how much variation there is in the knowledge or beliefs in question (Quinlan 2005). The free list method lies on three assumptions. First, when people free list, they tend to list terms in order of familiarity. When listing kinship terms, for example, people generally list

'mother before aunt', and 'aunt before great-aunt'. Second, individuals knowing a lot about a subject tend to list more terms than those people who know less. For instance, people who can look at an unlabelled map and correctly name many countries also make long free lists of country names. And third, the terms that most respondents mention indicate locally prominent items: Pennsylvanians list 'apple' and 'birch' trees more frequently and earlier than they do 'orange' or 'palm' trees (Quinlan 2019). This approach is very useful in revealing the conceptualisation dynamics of children among different age groups.

Research participants

20–30 people from four different age groups, specifically, 18–29, 30–39, 40–59, and 60 and older, were interviewed to illustrate the nuances of conceptualizing children better (see Table 1 for detailed sample characteristics).

Table 1. Sample characteristics

Age group	Number of participants	Participants' gender
18–29	25	5 male 20 female
30–39	44	13 male 31 female
40–59	47	13 male 34 female
60+	34	8 male 26 female

The 18–29-year-old age group can be seen as representative of young adults, some of whom have children, and most of whom have considered the possibility of having children in the near future. As mentioned above, Lithuanian women become mothers on average between 28–30 years old. Thus, the second age group – 30–39 years – can be representative of the age when adults are starting a family and having children. The 40–59-year age group can be representative of the age when adults have children reaching teenage years; whereas the children of adults aged above 60 years usually are already grown-ups who live independently. The data collected from the four age groups not only revealed the associations related to children across generations, but also enabled the researchers to compare how these associations changed over time.

Sample

The study employed a convenience sample. Potential research participants were approached in places where people usually are not in a rush and may be willing to take part in the study, i.e. in parks, on the streets, and in cafés in Vilnius, Lithuania. Additionally, an online questionnaire was prepared by using *Google Forms*, and the link was shared on the researchers' social media accounts and various communities (i.e., groups of students) via *Facebook*. 20–30 research participants are usually enough to reveal the cultural domain and reach the data saturation point (D'Andrade 2005). When studying cultural domains, a small sample size is acceptable since culture is a shared phenomenon, and the probability of two individuals mentioning the same thing diminishes significantly when the response pool is extensive (e.g., 1 in 10,000 for 100 responses, as per de Munck 2009). All four age groups reached data saturation, which means that any additional surveys were unlikely to change the established patterns.

Data collection and analysis

The research data was collected in June–December 2021. The research participants were asked to name all associations coming to their mind when they think about children. This question was chosen to obtain a variety of terms reflecting the range of thoughts about children. The raw free list data from each age group were very rich; however, it would have been excessive to include them verbatim in the free list analysis. Thus, as usual in this type of research (de Munck 2009), the data presented in this paper represent a cleaned-up version of the raw, chaotic, but rich data that one first elicits from the research participants.

After collecting the data, the next step was to clean up the data by reducing extended and elaborate descriptions while at the same time not losing the richness of the responses. This step was accomplished by the team of researchers[1] who discussed what terms could be used for further analysis separately and what terms were similar enough to be combined. All long answers (such as phrases, sentences, or longer explanations) were discussed and reduced to one or two key terms, that is, we reduced every phrase to its corresponding minimal meaning unit (de Munck 2009). If three or more research team members agreed on an interpretation, the term was kept in the final document for free list analysis.

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1   The research data was collected with the help of seven research assistants: Žygimantas Bučius, Ieva Kairienė, Indrė Bielevičiūtė, Dorotėja Sirvydytė, Kristupas Maksvytis, Edvinas Dovydaitis, and Emili-ja Krikštaponytė.

When an agreement about each term had been reached, the cleaned-up data were processed by using *Flame* which is software entirely dedicated to the analysis of free lists. Two measures were used for each age group: the average rank and *Smith's Index*. The average rank refers to the average place of a term in the lists of all informants who mentioned the term. A classic example is the terms in the domain of English colour terms – the term 'red' is more salient as it appears more often and earlier in free lists than the term 'maroon'. Smith's *S* (for saliency) *Index* is considered to be the more significant statistic as it combines frequency with the average rank of terms. Smith's S Index is a straightforward means to measure the salience of terms. In this paper, Smith's S is considered the more robust statistic as it combines frequency with the average rank of terms. Some terms may have slightly lower frequencies but higher average ranks, which is captured by Smith's S. Low frequencies, especially if the differences are small, are likely due to someone forgetting to mention a term or not having lived experience associated with it (i.e. a male is unlikely to mention terms related to giving birth or labour pains when talking about children). Smith's S weighs rank with the frequency thus dampening down the effect of small variations in frequency, particularly when there are many respondents (de Munck 2009; de Munck & Dapkūnaitė 2020). Only the top 5 terms in each of the age groups were analysed since they capture the main patterns as shown by the highest Smith's S Index.

Research ethics

All the participants were informed that they could refuse participation and/or leave at any time. They could also refuse to reveal anything they deemed uncomfortable. No personal data (such as names, addresses, phone numbers, etc.) were collected, except for the age, gender, type of residency (city or rural area), and relationship status (single, married, cohabiting). These data were only used in the research participant's code name, and were thus not saved in other research files. The fact of having children was also indicated (by writing 'Y' for *yes* or 'N' for *no* in the research participant's code name), but more details, such as the number of children, their age, or gender, were not indicated.

Results

All four age groups – 18–29, 30–39, 40–59, and 60 and older – shall be firstly discussed separately and then compared to demonstrate how the conceptions of

'children' change when moving from the younger (mostly, the pre-parent phase of life) to the parent (pre-teen) and teen/post-teen age group to the grandparent age group. Such a sequence reveals how Lithuanians' perceptions of children shift over the life cycle.

18–29 age group

Associations related to children in the 18–29 age group included various aspects related to positive experiences and outcomes of raising children, various disadvantages and strains coming with having children, and reflections or feelings on the decision to have children. Terms revealing positive outcomes and experiences were mostly associated with the perception that raising children is a continuous learning and personal growth experience. Consequently, such terms as games (*žaidimai*), joy (*džiaugsmas*), laughter (*juokas*), friendship (*draugystė*), discoveries (*atradimai*), achievements (*laimėjimai*) and children being the flowers of life (*gyvenimo gėlės*) were mentioned. Additionally, several terms reveal that children are valued as giving meaning to life and being a continuation of one's family: future (*ateitis*), meaning (*prasmė*), the new generation (*nauja karta*).

Among the perceived disadvantages and strains that come with having children, terms like expenses (*išlaidos*), burden (*našta*), fatigue (*nuovargis*), restricted freedom (*apribota laisvė*), self-sacrifice/devotion (*pasiaukojimas*), lack of time (*laiko stoka*), and loss of personal space (*asmeninės vietos praradimas*) were frequently mentioned. Adults in the 18–29 age group perceive having children as a rather 'noisy' experience, as revealed by the use of terms like buzz (*klegesys*), chaos (*chaosas*), and noise (*triukšmas*). Interestingly, both positive and negative words were used to describe the noise that children create – while words like *chaos* and *noise* can be interpreted as having negative connotations, the word *klegesys* 'buzz' does not involve any negative association in the Lithuanian language.

In the 18–29 age group, very few terms reveal any reflections or feelings related to the decision (not) to have children. The terms that were mentioned are mostly related to the personal choice (not) to have children while considering the social pressure as implied by the terms optional (*neprivaloma*), socially exalted (*socialiai aukštinama*), and dilemma (*dilema*). However, the study participants mentioned several emotions or feelings – both positive and negative – associated with children, such as love (*meilė*), fear (*baimė*), anger (*pyktis*), guilt (*kaltė*).

The five most frequently mentioned terms as indicated by the highest Smith's S Index (see Table 2 below) **reveal that adults in the 18–29 age group mostly**

perceive children as a challenging undertaking. Their choice of words is on a continuum between acknowledging the benefits and understanding the risks or challenges usually associated with having children.

Table 2. Associations about children in the 18–29 age group

Original Name	Translation	Average rank	Smith Index
Rūpinimasis	*Taking care of*	3.200	0.256
Atsakomybė	*Responsibility*	1.429	0.255
Išlaidos	*Expenses*	3.200	0.128
Meilė	*Love*	5.429	0.094
Auklėjimas	*Nurture*	6.833	0.052

30–39 age group

Similarly, to the 18–29 age group, associations related to children in the 30–39 age group included positive and negative aspects related to having children. Just like in the younger age group, positive associations revealed the positive emotions or personal growth potential which children offer as indicated by such terms as joy (*džiaugsmas*), happiness (*laimė*), self-realization (*savirealizacija*), constant learning (*nuolatinis mokymasis*), and new experiences (*nauji potyriai*).

Challenges associated with children were also similar to the younger age group, for example, expenses (*išlaidos*), burden (*našta*), fatigue (*nuovargis*), and self-sacrifice/devotion (*pasiaukojimas*). However, there were more terms related to the challenges of maintaining the work-life balance and managing the responsibilities of raising the children with the possibility to have some time for oneself. This is indicated by the terms insomnia (*nemiga*), not having time for oneself (*neturėjimas laiko sau*), a decrease of ambitions in career (*profesinių ambicijų mažinimas*), or rare moments of tranquillity (*retos ramybės akimirkos*).

Similarly to the younger age group, terms were mentioned indicating the inherent value of children not only to the personal identity, but also to the community or society: continuation of the family (*giminės pratęsimas*), usefulness to the society (*naudingumas visuomenei*), fulfilment (*pilnatvė*), meaning of life (*gyvenimo prasmė*), setting in one's roots (*įsišaknijimas*), priceless (*neįkainojama*), goal (*tikslas*), and future (*ateitis*). Additionally, such terms as child's needs (*vaiko poreikiai*), child's wellbeing (*vaiko gerovė*), giving up alcohol (*alkoholio atsisakymas*), and striving for a better world (*geresnio pasaulio siekimas*) reveal the need to prioritize the child.

Interestingly, this age group was the only one which showed associations related to the physical aspects of giving birth, such as giving birth (*gimdymas*) or labor pains (*gimdymo skausmai*). Additionally, this is also the only age group which mentioned terms indicating the social pressure to have children, such as peer pressure (*aplinkos spaudimas*), or tradition (*tradicija*). Compared to 18–29 age group, adults in the 30–39 age group mentioned more terms revealing the complexity of the decision (not) to have children, such as doubts (*abejonės*), a difficult decision (*sudėtingas sprendimas*), not necessary (*nebūtini*), by accident (*netyčia*), not worth it (*neverta*). This might be related to the perceived societal pressure to have children at a certain age and the personal reflections about the decision (not) to have children.

The five most frequently mentioned terms, as indicated by the highest Smith's S Index (see Table 3 below), **reveal that adults in the 30–39 age group are similar to the adults in the 18–29 age group in terms of perceiving children as a serious undertaking.**

Table 3. Associations about children in the 30–39 age group

Original Name	Translation	Average rank	Smith Index
Atsakomybė	*Responsibility*	1.571	0.274
Sunkumai	*Difficulties*	2.500	0.169
Džiaugsmas	*Joy*	3.625	0.106
Pasiaukojimas	*Sacrifice*	4.667	0.101
Išlaidos	*Expenses*	3.833	0.079

The associations of adults in the 30–39 age group seem to be related to the experience of raising children, that is, balancing the sacrifices and responsibilities with the positive outcomes of raising children.

40–59 age group

The pattern to acknowledge both the positive experiences and the challenges related to having children was also prevalent in the 40–59 age group. Similarly to the younger age groups, children were often associated with joy (*džiaugsmas*), and happiness (*laimė*). Children were also perceived as an extension of one's family (such terms as continuation of the family (*giminės pratęsimas*), fulfilment (*pilnatvė*), or meaning of life (*gyvenimo prasmė*) were mentioned), with many

terms indicating the inherent value of children, such as gift (*dovana*), or miracle (*stebuklas*). Interestingly, there were fewer terms pointing out the challenges or disadvantages of having children when compared to the younger age groups.

The five most frequently mentioned terms as indicated by the highest Smith's S Index (see Table 4 below) reveal that the associations of adults in the 40–59 age group are prominently similar to the 30–39 age group, as these terms encompass **balancing the worries and responsibilities with the love and joys of raising children.**

Table 4. Associations about children in the 40–59 age group

Original Name	Translation	Average rank	Smith Index
Atsakomybė	*Responsibility*	2.125	0.268
Džiaugsmas	*Joy*	2.545	0.178
Meilė	*Love*	2.500	0.161
Rūpesčiai	*Worries*	2.400	0.151
Įsipareigojimas	*Commitment*	2.600	0.081

60-and-older age group

Adults in the 60-and-older age group notably had the most positive associations related to children, such as children being joy (*džiaugsmas*), pride (*pasididžiavimas*), a gift (*dovana*) with very few terms involving negative connotations, such as loneliness (*vienatvė*) or expenses (*išlaidos*). Additionally, there were many more words revealing the inherent value of the children, such as children being the value/virtue (*vertybė*), the meaning of life or the meaning of marriage (*gyvenimo prasmė/ santuokos prasmė*), the meaning of family, or the objective of the family (*šeimos esmė/ šeimos tikslas*). Adults in this age group were also the only ones to mention the terms support (*pagalba*) or the assured old age (*užtikrinta senatvė*) when thinking of children.

The five most frequently mentioned terms as indicated by the highest Smith's S Index (see Table 5 below) reveal that the associations of adults in the 60-and-older age group are mostly related **to the positive outcomes of having children. It is plausible that this age group perceives themselves as reaping the benefits of having raised children.**

Table 5. Associations about children in the 60-and-older age group

Item	Translation	Average Rank	Salience
Džiaugsmas	*Joy*	2.3	0.219
Meilė	*Love*	1.67	0.152
Šeima	*Family*	1.6	0.123
Gyvenimo prasmė	*Meaning of life*	2	0.12
Auklėjimas	*Nurture*	2	0.12

Discussion and conclusions

Most European countries are experiencing a significant fertility decline, and Lithuania is not an exception. There are many studies focusing on why people are having fewer children or are deciding not to have children at all. Most studies in this field of research mainly focus on various aspects of the decisions (not) to have children, such as voluntary and involuntary childlessness and how the decision to remain childless is perceived considering the different social-economic backgrounds (such as gender equality, religion, social policy, etc.) (Koropeckyj-Cox and Pendell 2007; Rijken and Merz 2014). Consequently, people's decisions (not) to have children appear to be embedded in the social, economic, and cultural contexts with individual and psychological factors also being important.

While earlier works focused on the decisions (not) to have children, the current study aimed to examine the relationship between the social contexts and the cultural norms as they influence the way people of different age groups conceptualize children. This is (one of) the first studies to analyse the perceptions of 'children' in Lithuania. Considering the life cycle, it appears that a shift in the perception of 'children' can be identified three times.

First, there is the 18–29 age group. These are the young adults with relatively little real-life experience of what it means (not) to have children. Their free-list terms mostly reveal the expectations of what it means to have children, what challenges this decision encompasses, and what effect this decision might have on personal freedom, time, financial possibilities, and work/ family life commitments. Interestingly, although the five most frequent terms are generally positive, this age group had the highest number of negative terms related to children compared to the other age groups. Children are perceived as a serious undertaking. This may mean that adults in this age group are weighing the pros and

cons of (not) having children. Consequently, their associations were positioned on a continuum between acknowledging the benefits and understanding the risks or challenges usually associated with having children.

Second, there are two child-rearing groups (30–39 and 40–59) who have authentic experiences related to raising children. Having children is an experience with unique challenges and rewards, thus this might be the reason why the free-list terms of these two groups were different from the younger age groups. Associations of these two age groups reveal the real-life experiences and practices of balancing the worries and responsibilities of raising children in spite of the resulting love and joys associated with raising them. Although some terms have negative connotations, the majority of them are positive.

Lastly, there is the oldest age group of 60 years and older. Terms in the free list of this group are different from others as they are predominantly positive. More so, the associations were mostly related to the positive experiences and outcomes of having children and grandchildren as adults in this age group usually have grand-parenting experiences. It is plausible that this age group perceives themselves as reaping the benefits of having children. In addition to having mostly positive associations, this age group also perceived children as a continuation of one's family and oneself – having children was a way to leave one's mark on the world.

The conceptions one has about children can affect the decision to have or not to have children. The results of the study reveal that these conceptions are subject to change. The change can be influenced either by real life experiences of raising one's own children, by observing others raising their children, or by other socially, culturally or psychologically motivated reasons. Real-life Lithuanian experiences and perceptions about children will be investigated further in the upcoming stages of the project through the use of semi-structured interviews and surveys.

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What is Happening to 'Traditional' Forms of Marriage? A Preliminary Account Using the Free-list Method to Evaluate Changes across Age Groups in Lithuania

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Abstract. In this paper, I will present the results of data collected between April 2021 and January 2022 on how Lithuanians across four age grades (18–29; 30–39; 40–59 and 60+) perceive marriage. The data was collected by using the systematic emic method of free-listing, which is intended to determine the main concepts comprising a particular cultural domain. A cultural domain is any coherent cultural construct about which many members of a culture share a common understanding. Free-listing is a simple data-eliciting method in which you ask a sample (usually around 30 participants is sufficient) to list all the kinds of things (or concepts) you associate with some cultural domain. The domain may be a coherent set of things, such as kinds of healthy foods, contagious diseases, and prestigious jobs, or it can be more abstract, such as whatever you associate with social justice, Russia, or, in this particular case, marriage. Our research group decided to ask a sample of Lithuanians to "list all the things that come to their mind when they think of marriage." The instructions and questions were presented in the Lithuanian language. Given that researchers have shown that ideas of marriage have changed significantly in the recent times, we thought it would be interesting to conduct free-lists with four different age groups to compare both differences and similarities. While free-listing is only the first phase of a research project, it allows us to elicit terms reflecting the salient features of the concept of marriage and provides an extensive array of terms showing the distribution of ideas related to marriage. This report shows some of these results.

Keywords: free-list, romantic love, marriage, children, cultural domain, relationship.

Introduction

Marriage is a social institution which has been around for centuries. It is a union of two individuals who promise to love and cherish one another. The institution of marriage has evolved over time, and still continues to change with the times. Our research team have been studying marriage and seeking answers to the question of why there has been a significant decrease in marriage rates, and, with it, a decrease in children born in wedlock.

Our project covers cultural conceptions and practices questioning the traditional forms of love relationships, pair-bonding (i.e. marriage being the prototypical type of pair-bonding, being replaced by cohabitation) (Giddens 1992) and reasons for having children. The research is expected to go through four stages of data collection and analysis. The paper is organized as follows:

1. A brief introduction of why this study is needed;
2. An explanation of how the data was collected on what people think about marriage;
3. Analysis of the data;
4. A conclusion and a brief discussion of the next step.

Only about a half of Americans are married now, which is down from 72% in 1960, according to the census data. The age at which one first gets married has risen by six years since 1960, and now only 20% of Americans get married before the age of 30 (Wagner, Choi, and Cohen 2020). It is considered the most appropriate time to marry for females is between 23 to 27, and, for men, between the ages of 27 and 30 (Johnson, Krahn, and Galambos 2017).

In Europe, the situation is somewhat similar (Sánchez Gassen and Perelli-Harris 2015; Maslauskaitė 2009). Cohabitation for some people is a transitional state towards marriage – this is as if a prelude to marriage, but, contemporarily, cohabitation has become a norm, and, for some, it has even become an alternative to marriage, which means that cohabiting couples never intend to get married (Hiekel 2014). In Dirsytė's (2021) research, only 26% of cohabitant persons stated they were planning to marry, 27% were not planning to marry, whereas the remaining 47% were not sure of their plans for marriage. On the grounds of the data of *Statistics Lithuania*, we can see that both male and female age of the first marriage has risen.

In 2010, most first marriages per 1,000 males were in the following age groups: 20–24-year-olds: 30.2, 25–29-year-olds: 65.6, 30–34-year-olds: 30.2. In comparison, in 2020, for 20–24-year-olds: 16.1, 25–29-year-olds: 48.2, 30–34-year-olds: 32.3.

In 2010, most first marriages per 1,000 females were in the following age groups: 20–24-year-olds: 50.0, 25–30-year-olds: 60.7, 30–35-year-olds: 18.0. In 2020, for 20–24-year-olds: 34, 24–29-year-olds: 57.3, 30–35-year-olds: 25.5 (Lithuanian Department of Statistics 2022). We can see a trend here that the age for marrying has increased.

Table 1. Male first marriage rates by age group, 2010–2020

	First marriages per 1,000 males at the age specified						Total first marriage rate*	Mean age of males at first marriage*
	20–24	**25–29**	**30–34**	**35–39**	**40–44**	**45–49**		
2020	16.1	48.2	32.3	13.5	5.6	2.0	0.59	30.3
2019	19.8	60.4	43.1	18.7	8.2	3.4	0.77	30.7
2018	20.0	65.7	44.7	17.5	6.9	2.6	0.79	30.3
2017	22.6	70.6	47.9	18.7	6.9	2.5	0.85	30.2
2016	22.5	72.6	45.8	17.7	6.2	2.4	0.84	30.0
2015	25.2	77.3	46.0	16.9	5.6	2.0	0.90	29.7
2014	27.0	78.0	45.0	15.5	5.7	1.5	0.90	29.5
2013	26.4	75.2	40.1	14.0	4.3	1.4	0.81	29.3
2012	28.9	77.4	39.2	12.3	3.8	1.2	0.82	29.0
2011	27.8	71.7	33.0	11.1	3.3	1.3	0.75	28.8
2010	30.2	65.5	30.2	9.7	2.7	1.1	0.71	28.5

* For males aged under 50.

Table 2. Female first marriage rates by age group, 2010–2020

	First marriages per 1,000 females at the age specified						Total first marriage rate*	Mean age of females at first marriage*
	20–24	**25–29**	**30–34**	**35–39**	**40–44**	**45–49**		
2020	34	57.3	25.5	9.2	3.9	1.4	0.68	28.2
2019	43	71	33.1	12.3	4.3	1.8	0.85	28.3
2018	44.5	73.8	30.8	11.5	3.8	1.4	0.85	28.0
2017	47.0	78.6	32.4	11.1	3.8	1.3	0.90	27.8
2016	46.3	78.8	30.9	9.5	3.3	1.2	0.88	27.7
2015	50.9	80.5	30.0	8.8	2.9	1.0	0.90	27.4
2014	54.1	78.9	27.9	8.8	2.3	0.8	0.90	27.2
2013	51.4	73.2	24.8	7.5	2.0	0.7	0.83	27.0
2012	55.4	72.8	23.4	6.3	1.9	0.6	0.84	26.7
2011	51.9	66.4	19.5	5.5	1.1	0.6	0.76	26.6
2010	50.0	60.7	18.0	4.4	1.2	0.5	0.71	26.3

* For females aged under 50.

There have been many studies explaining the reduction in the marriage rates and a delay in marriage as a consequence of individualism (desire for autonomy), the costs of children, and the internet (Slater 2014). We may thus wonder: *But what of love?* This is the reason why Lithuanians marry and start a family. Has there been a significant change in the way people perceive the institution of marriage, and what are the reasons for this?

In the research literature on the Lithuanian marriage and family, Dirsytė (2021) noted that one of the defining features characterizing the transformations of the modern family is the people's attitudes toward the institution of marriage and the rise of a preference for cohabitation. The pattern of forming one or the other union (i.e. marriage versus cohabitation) depends quite significantly on socioeconomic and sociodemographic characteristics (Dirsytė 2021). The researcher points out two reasons: 1. The cultural value changes, which leads to 'fewer marriages'; 2. Economic restraints lead to postponing the marriage until economic stability has been achieved. A few authors have looked at the new forms of intimacy as a reason for the decline in the marriage and fertility rates. Yet, what other studies seem to lack is the humanistic perspective, notably, people's agency. It is of importance because these are not economic or some other 'constructed' factors, but these are the thoughts of people and how they perceive it. We are not extracting people's agency from their material circumstances. Economic factors have a very clear and immediate impact on agency, but, in this research, our focus is to find other, less visible factors of decisions to marry (or not to marry) besides the economic ones.

This perspective rests on the importance of autonomy, but also the rise of cultural norms and attitudes which consider marriage as 'not necessary' and 'a gilded cage', or an instrument of society and the urge to domesticate people to national and religious traditions. In this paper, we shall use new methods to inquire about the reasons Lithuanians give regarding their perceptions of marriage. It is about how intimate relationships are changing and how they are affecting fertility rates and the decisions to marry. The particular aim of this paper is to focus on the reasons why people decide to marry or not, and how this differs by age. This study is part of a larger project to understand how cultural models influence a statistically traceable decline in marriage and fertility. Lithuania is part of a global trend, which is most apparent in Europe and East Asia, toward fewer and later marriages, and of the trend of decisions taken by women and couples to be childless, or to have only one child (Stankūnienė, Jasilionis, and Baublytė 2014). Fertility rates in all the countries in these two regions are below replacement rates. This shift away from what has been called the 'Paradise curve'

(which means that the population is increasing exponentially) and our global food supply has kept pace with the ever more modern agricultural innovations and improvements. The purpose of this study is to discover, describe and analyze cultural models which are manifested among Lithuanians that can account for the national pattern. This global decline in marriage and children was noticed by Lesthaeghe and Surkyn (2008, 81–118) in the 1980s and was termed the *Second Demographic Transition*; the first being the exponential rise in population as a result of the *Industrial Revolution* at the end of the 18th Century.

Much of the research on these declines has centred around two reasons: one of these is an increase in women matriculating from secondary school, entering the workplace and putting their efforts into their careers (Stankūnienė and Jasilionienė 2008); whereas the second reason is the high costs of having children – starting already with the day care expense, and thus birth is seen as an outlay that keeps on costing rather than a gift (Jonkarytė 2002). This project focuses on the same consequences, but from a cultural and cognitive perspective. The concept 'Cultural' here refers to the observation that these national trends regarding marriage and decisions to have children must stem from a shared reasoning process, and thus this is a cultural phenomenon. Second, the ideas must be cognized, which is decided based on some emotional and rational conjunction of motives, experiences, and hypothesized projected risky or negative outcomes that correlate with marriage and children.

Talking about the changing love relations and marriage according to Illouz (2019) and Regnerus (2017), *Second Demographic Transition* is the key theory of visible transformation of relationships. There are many reasons for the *Second Demographic Transition* focus of this paper on marriage. We present the initial data from Lithuania to describe the contemporary cultural models across generations and to discover how they articulate, adapt, or oppose the traditional (western) models of love, marriage, and family.

In this paper, the results will be presented for data collected between June and December 2021 on how Lithuanians across four age grades (18–29; 30–39; 40–59, and 60+) perceive marriage. The data was collected by using the systematic emic method of free-listing, which is intended to find the main concepts comprising a particular cultural domain. A cultural domain is any coherent cultural construct that many members of a culture share a common understanding about (Robbins and Nolan 2019). Free-listing is a simple data-eliciting method in which you ask a sample (usually, around 30 participants are sufficient) (Dengah, Snodgrass, Polzer, and Nixon 2020) to list all the kinds of things (or concepts) you associate with some cultural domain. The domain may be a coherent set of things, such

as kinds of healthy foods, contagious diseases, and prestigious jobs, or it can be more abstract, such as what you associate with social justice, Russia, or, in this particular case, marriage. Our research group decided to ask a sample of Lithuanians to "list all the things that come to their mind when they think of marriage." The instructions and questions were all presented in the Lithuanian language. Given that researchers have shown that ideas of marriage have changed significantly in the recent times, we thought that it would be interesting to conduct free-lists with four different age groups to compare the differences as well as the similarities. While free-listing is merely the initial phase of this research project, it allows us to elicit terms which are expected to reflect the salient features of the concept of marriage and provides an extensive array of terms showing the distribution of ideas related to marriage. This report presents some of these results.

Methodology

Theoretical approach

Data collection and analysis were performed by employing the free-list method. Free-listing is a method which can be used to produce data that can then be developed for different arguments which can be aligned with a variety of different theoretical approaches. It is used to identify the most common and culturally important terms that reveal a cultural domain (de Munck and Dapkūnaitė 2020). Although cultural domains may vary in terms of content and structure, they refer to all things at the same level of abstraction about which the members of a culture (or a group) say that they belong together. In other words, they refer to the set of core features that constitute the domain (de Munck 2009). Freelists quickly and easily amass data which 1) identifies items in a cultural domain, or an emic category; 2) indicates which of those things are most important, or salient within the culture; and 3) reveals how much variation there is in the knowledge or beliefs in question (Quinlan 2016). The freelist method lies on three assumptions. First, when people free-list, they tend to list terms in order of familiarity. When listing kinship terms, for example, people generally list 'mother' before 'aunt', and 'aunt' before 'great-aunt'. Second, those individuals who know a lot about a subject tend to list more terms than the people who know less. For instance, people who can look at an unlabeled map and correctly name many countries also make long free-lists of country names. And third, the terms that get mentioned by most

respondents indicate the locally prominent items: Pennsylvanians list 'apple' and 'birch' trees more frequently and earlier than they mention 'orange' or 'palm' trees (Quinlan 2019). This approach is highly useful in revealing the conceptualization dynamics of 'marriage' among different age groups.

Research participants

To illustrate the nuances of conceptualizing 'marriage', the corresponding number of people were interviewed in the four age groups – 30 people from the 18–29-year-old age group, 47 people from the 30–39-year-old age group, 47 people from the 40–59-year-old age group, and 34 people from the 60+-year-old age group. According to literature, 20–30 research participants are sufficient (Weller and Romney 1988). The 18–29-year-old age group can be seen as representative of young adults who may begin to consider getting a partner and to marry. The second age group – those who are aged 30–39 – can be representative of the age when adults are starting a family and having children. The 40–59-year-old age group can be representative of the age when adults have their children reach teenage years, and adults above 60 years usually have their children grown up and living independently. Collecting the data from all the four age groups not only revealed the associations related to 'marriage' across generations, but also enabled the researchers to compare how these associations changed over time.

Sample

The convenience sample was used for sampling. Most of the potential research participants were approached online. An online questionnaire was prepared by using *Google Forms*, and the link was shared on the researchers' social media accounts and various communities (e.g. groups of students) on *Facebook*. 20–30 research participants usually are sufficient to reveal the cultural domain and reach data saturation (D'Andrade 2005). Additionally, when analyzing cultural domains, the sample can be small if dealing with cultural models that do not manifest much variation, because culture is shared, and the likelihood that two people mention the same thing when the variety of response number is 100 is very low (1 in 10000) (de Munck 2009). All the four age groups reached data saturation, which means that any additional surveys were unlikely to change the established patterns (François Dengah, Snodgrass, Polzer, and Nixon 2020). A small-sized sample was also made in person – in such places where people usually are not in the rush and may be willing to take part in the study, i.e. parks, streets, and cafés of Vilnius, Lithuania.

Data collection and analysis

The research data was collected during the period of June – December 2021. The research participants were asked to name all associations which come to their minds when they think about marriage. This question was chosen to obtain a variety of terms reflecting a range of thoughts about marriage. Raw free-list data from each age group was very rich; however, it would have been too extensive to include it verbatim in its entirety in the free-list analysis. Thus, as usual in this type of publication, the data presented in this paper represents a cleaned-up version of the raw, but rich data that one first elicits from the research participants (de Munck 2009). After collecting the data, the next step was to clean it up to equalize the words and establish synonyms, which essentially means the same thing. We did not create new words; we merely chose which ones to use and which adjectives to reject. Data cleaning was also done by reducing long and rich descriptions, while, at the same time, not losing the richness of the responses. This step was accomplished by a team of researchers[1] who discussed what/which terms would be used for further analysis separately and what terms are similar enough to be combined. All lengthy answers (such as phrases, sentences, or longer explanations) were discussed and reduced to one or two key terms, thereby reducing every phrase to its corresponding minimal 'meaning unit' (de Munck 2009). If three or more research team members voted for an interpretation, it was kept in the final document for free-list analysis.

As soon as an agreement about each term had been achieved, the cleaned-up data was processed by using *Anthropac*, which is software for collecting and analyzing data on cultural domains, or *Flame*, which is software entirely dedicated to the analysis of free-lists. Two measures were used for each age group: the average rank and Smith's Index. The average rank refers to the average place of a term in the lists of all informants who mentioned the term. A classic example is the lexis in the domain of the English color terms – the term 'red' is more salient as it appears more frequently and earlier in free-lists than the term 'maroon'. Smith's (*S* refers to saliency) Index is straightforward – it is meant to measure the salience of terms. Smith's Index is considered to be the more

significant statistic as it combines the frequency with the average rank of terms. Some terms may have slightly lower frequencies but higher average ranks, which will show up in Smith's Index (de Munck and Dapkūnaitė 2020). In this paper, only the preliminary top ten words are deemed to be most salient, and they are presented in terms of frequency in each of the age groups the way these words were observed; as a result, the main patterns were captured.

Research ethics

All participants were informed that they were free to refuse participation and/or were free to leave at any time. They could also refuse to reveal anything they deemed uncomfortable. No personal data (such as names, addresses, phone numbers, etc.) was collected, except for their age, gender, type of residency (city versus rural area), and the relationship status (single, married, or cohabiting). This data is only used in the research participant's code name, and it was not saved in other research files. The fact of having children was also indicated (by writing 'Y' for yes or 'N' for no in the research participant's code name), but more details, such as the number of children, their age, or gender were not indicated.

Results

All the four age groups – 18–29, 30–39, 40–59, and 60 and older – will be discussed separately, and later compared to show how the conceptions of marriage change when moving from the younger (mostly, the pre-parent phase of life) to the parent (pre-teen) and teen/post-teen age group to the grandparent age group. Such a structure reveals how the perceptions of marriage of Lithuanians shift over their life cycle. Not only the top 10 terms will be analyzed, but also the entire free-lists from each group will be explored. However, only top 10 terms per list will be shown because, otherwise, the lists would simply be too large.

18–29 y.o. age group

When discussing the youngest age group, the first thing to stand out from other groups is the term 'sex' [lt. seksas], which is a high energy (these are terms which are more associated with activities or some psychical action) term, and the only word representing vigorous terms. No other age group mentioned this term. However, other high-energy words can be found further down in the free-list.

Generally, low energy terms are quite salient and are found high up in terms of the frequency compared to low-energy terms. There were 9 low-energy words in comparison to only one high energy word, and thus the 9:1 ratio suggests that low energy positive features are more important than high-energy terms. This is fairly interesting because, in 2006, de Munck published a paper on love in Lithuania (de Munck 2006) by using free-list words, and the emphasis back then was being made more on high-energy states. The emphasis on comfort by Americans was found by de Munck in comparison with Russian and Lithuanian senses of love which saw it as a temporary state and a high-energy feature. None of the age groups in these samples mentioned that love was 'temporary', and most focused on low-energy states. This could be a consequence of the pandemic/post-pandemic period and/or a move toward the American model.

It seems that there are some necessary features for a relationship to have in order to progress to the next stage. There are the following stages: 1. Getting your life together: Studies, career, money; 2. Getting married; 3. Getting an environment suited for bringing up kids: house, feeling ready; 4. Having kids. In this case, for some young people, marriage was understood as not important as they were okay the way they were. Some answers were more associated with a negative view towards marriage. Some respondents of this age group pointed to not wanting to get married. This show a clear preference for the 'mainstream' social norm of being married, which signals that a person is a well-adjusted and functioning member of society. This could also be related to the above outlined ideas of 'stages' meaning that this is the natural progression, and anyone who does not follow it might be 'out-of-norm' personally as well.

Some people representing this group saw marriage as a festival, a wedding ceremony, a party but not something that alters one's life or relationship in a significant manner. Multiple answers about marriage were depicted as 'expenses'. This can be linked to another group of answers which can be generalized as 'do not see a meaning in marriage', where the very idea of marriage is equal to living together and having a long-term relationship, with the only difference being the externally manifested symbols and a symbolic ceremony. This suggests a move from a 'sacred' view of marriage to a secular and individual one. The next stage of the research involves the need for the collected data to be checked in interviews. Below are the top 10 most frequently used terms in the youngest age group:

Table 3. Associations about 'marriage' in the 18-29 y.o. age group

Number of Lists	30		
Average length of lists	5		
Number of cited items	65		
Total number of cited items	120		
Original Name	**Translated Name**	**Occurrence Number**	**Smith's Index**
šiluma	warmth	6	0.162
seksas	sex	5	0.086
draugystė	friendship	5	0.138
romantiška meilė	romantic love	4	0.150
pora	couple	4	0.107
buvimas kartu	being together	4	0.077
šeima	family	4	0.152
rūpinimasis	caring	4	0.084
pasitikėjimas	trust	4	0.127
artumas	closeness	3	0.051

This is the only group which singles out 'romantic love' [lt. romantiška meilė], whereas other groups mentioned only 'love' [lt. meilė]. A highly popular term among 18–29-year-olds was 'being together' [lt. buvimas kartu]. It refers to all of the instances where the informants were mentioning different activities or situations when the two partners would spend their time together. There is a lot of variation in the way this time can be spent, however, these kinds of things were mentioned fairly often, but this particular term is absent in all other age groups in the sense that they were more specific exactly in terms of what kind of activity it is.

30–39 y.o. age group

In this age group, there were many intrinsic terms, such as marriage, which are about forming a 'family' [lt. šeima]; marriage is about 'fidelity/faithfulness' [lt. pilnatvė]. Still, on top of that, there were also a high number of extrinsic terms, such as 'social status' [lt. socialinis statusas], 'respect' [lt. pagarba], 'financial stability' [lt. finansinis sabilumas], 'expensive services' [lt. brangios paslaugos], 'state' [lt. valstybė], 'public pressure' [lt. visuomenės spaudimas]. Here, we can see the aim of marriage being moved slightly towards more extrinsic things in comparison to those listed by the previous age group. At the same time, the terms in the 30–39-year-old age group are more 'practical'. What is similar to

the previous age group is that some people in both age groups see marriage as a wedding. There were words related to celebration: 'a white dress' [lt. balta suknelė], 'expensive services' [lt. brangios paslaugos], 'fanciness' [lt. prabanga], 'ritual' [lt. apeigos], 'wedding' [lt. vestuvės], 'tradition' [lt. tradicija], 'rings' [lt. žiedai], 'matching rings' [lt. tinkantys žiedai], 'church' [lt. bažnyčia], 'legitimize' [lt. įteisinti]. To 'legitimize' is an umbrella term which combines all words related to legal matters, e.g. "changing of the surname" [lt. pavardės keitimas], "the legal status of the family" [teisinis šeimos statusas], etc.

This list involved a higher share of negative terms than the other freelists: 'public pressure' [lt. visuomenės spaudimas], 'decrease in individual activity' [asmeninės veiklos sumažėjimas], 'difficulties/hardships' [lt. sunkumai], but then, there was no term 'divorce' – as observed in the 18–29 or in 40–59-year-old age group free-lists.

Among the more frequent terms, there were 'support' [lt. parama], 'stability' [lt. stabilumas], 'cooperation' [lt. kooperavimasis], 'trust' [lt. pasitikėjimas], 'self-determination' [lt. apsisprendimas], 'responsibility', [lt. atsakomybė], which means that the respondents see marriage as being less idyllic than love. It seems that marriage demands more hard work and cooperation in terms of maintaining this kind of relationship than what has been presented in the previous free-list.

Marriage is also perceived as the 'next' stage in relationship; there are terms such as 'buying a home' [lt. namo pirkimas], or 'matureness' [lt. brandumas] which were absent in the 18–29-year-old age group's free-list.

Table 4. Associations about 'marriage' in the 30-39 age group

Number of Lists	47		
Average length of lists	3		
Number of cited items	72		
Total number of cited items	134		
Original Name	**Translated Name**	**Occurrence Number**	**Smith's Index**
atsakomybė	responsibility	16	0.268
džiaugsmas	joy	11	0.178
meilė	love	10	0.161
rūpestis	care	10	0.151
įsipareigojimas	commitment	5	0.081
gyvenimo prasmė	purpose of life	3	0.060
pasiaukojimas	sacrifice	3	0.030
ateitis	future	3	0.046
pilnatvė	fidelity – fullness	3	0.035
šeima	family	3	0.050

In comparison to the other age groups regarding-marriage, the 30–39-year-old age group has the highest number of different terms describing marriage – 72 different terms were mentioned. In this age group, first of all, marriage is about 'commitment' [lt. įsipareigojimas]. In the top 10 terms, kids/children are absent; this term was actually ranked lower, although it was still included in the list. Likewise, it is still worth thinking about it and investigating more in the extensive interviews.

40–59 y.o. age group

In many of the answers, there was the wording 'long-term' [lt. ilgalaikis], or 'lifelong' [lt. visam gyvenimui] (this adjective was added to the word 'responsibility' [lt. įsipareigojimas], especially when noting it as something to be feared or avoided). It is interesting that, even when portraying responsibilities brought by marital commitment negatively, they are still regarded as 'lifelong'. Thus, they seem to be an intrinsic, necessary aspect of marriage as an institution. In a way, this understanding mirrors the 'old-school'-related understanding of being married-for-life; however, it seems to be perceived as a decision which is taken personally, rather than a cultural norm across the board.

Table 5. Associations about 'marriage' in the 40-59 y.o. age group

Number of Lists	47		
Average length of lists	3		
Number of cited items	68		
Total number of cited items	137		
Original Name	**Translated Name**	**Occurrence Number**	**Smith's Index**
vaikai	children	10	0.115
atsakomybė	responsibility	9	0.139
meilė	love	9	0.170
įsipareigojimas	commitment	9	0.181
ištikimybė	faithfulness	7	0.098
pagarba	respect	6	0.103
šeima	family	6	0.115
saugumas	safety	4	0.053
bendra buitis	shared household	3	0.048
kompromisai	compromises	3	0.038

While we do not observe the term 'children' [lt. vaikai] in the younger age groups, they are at the top of the list in the two oldest age groups, which might indicate a slightly more conservative attitude towards marriage. Especially in this age group, the term 'children' [lt. vaikai] is most commonly associated with marriage. This suggests that this particular age group sees marriage as a way to have children. There is a connection between marriage and kids. Kids are part of family life; one respondent wrote the full sentence: "Why should I marry if I don't plan to have kids?" [lt. kam man tuoktis, jei aš nežadu turėti vaikų?]. Although in the free-list there is no word 'kids', it can be related to the term 'family' [lt. šeima], while other respondents expressed themselves as: "Only by having kids, my marriage becomes important" [lt. santuoka svarbi tampa tik susilaukus vaikų] – which suggests that marriage brings people closer. There is a distinction between the family life and the personal aspirations. Family life impedes the individual freedom and self-development.

High in the free-list are the words related with devotion and maintaining the relationship – such as 'responsibility' [lt. atsakomybė], 'commitment' [lt. įsiprareigojimas], 'faithfulness' [lt. ištikimybė], 'compromises' [lt. kompromisai].

60 y.o. and older age group

Table 6. Associations about 'marriage' in the 60 y.o. and older age group

Number of Lists	34		
Average length of lists	7		
Number of cited items	69		
Total number of cited items	132		
Original Name	**Translated Name**	**Occurrence Number**	**Smith's Index**
meilė	love	13	0.275
vaikai	children	9	0.127
šeima	family	9	0.194
bendri namai, svajonės, planai	shared home, dreams, plans	5	0.114
pasitikėjimas	trust	5	0.031
pagalba	help	5	0.032
vyras	husband/man	3	0.087
atsakomybė	responsibility	3	0.067
saugumas	safety	3	0.083
stabilumas	stability	3	0.04

In the 60+ age group, one can see words linking marriage to the extension of one's family line: 'extension of family' [lt. giminės pratęsimas], 'grandchildren' [lt. anūkai]. Among the listed words, there were 'traditions' [lt. tradicijos], 'Christian values' [lt. krikščioniškos vertybės], stereotypes: 'legitimization of relationships' [lt. santykių įteisinimas], 'a man and a woman' [lt. vyras ir moteris], 'marriage among young people is not popular' [lt. santuoka jaunimo tarpe nepopuliari], 'to spend the whole life together' [lt. kartu praleisti visa gyvenimą].

The most common association with marriage for the oldest age group is 'love' [lt. meilė], whereas 'children' [lt. vaikai] is in the second position. Interestingly, the term 'husband/man' [lt. vyras] was the seventh most frequently mentioned term, but 'wife' [lt. žmona] did not get into this list at all.

Children are fairly high on the list compared to the other age groups, except for the 40–59-year-old group. Safety is also higher in this and previous age groups, i.e. it is much higher than in the 18–29 and 30–39-year-old age groups.

Discussion and conclusions

The collected data indicates possible fundamental differences in the attitudes between the age groups or compared to the 'traditional view of marriage'. Rather than being a natural (or organic) part of the life cycle, marriage has now become a choice. All the age groups see marriage as a way to have kids ('children' [lt. vaikai]), except for the 30–39-year-old age group.

In the first two age groups, the legitimization of relationships is at the top of the list, which indicates that people give priority to concrete proof of the legitimacy of a relationship. The term 'love' [lt. meilė] is also fairly high in all the age groups, which indicates that the feeling of love is also closely linked to marriage. Interestingly, the word 'love' [lt. meilė] was the highest term only in the 60+ y.o. age group. Family is at the top of the list for every age group. This indicates that marriage changes the status of the relationship between two people and makes them a social unit. It is also strange that the term 'sex' [lt. seksas] appeared only in one list – that of the18–29-year-old age group.

We see a lot of terms relating to sharing, which seems to come with marriage: living together, sharing a house, being together and sharing household chores. Another noticeable feature, according to the common-sense understanding of marriage, is that one needs to check certain boxes before entering a marriage. These are somewhat tangible and material in such fields as job, education and housing, and essentially in anything related in any way to material security, and

not so closely related to the personal growth and development. This also raises a question of what type of idea of marriage is portrayed here as, in many answers, 'marriage' and 'family' is used interchangeably. This may raise the question regarding the differences between 'cohabitation' and 'marriage'. The latter is strongly related to having kids and creating a family; therefore, material security (house, stable income, etc.) is required. This seems not to be necessary when partners decide to just live together.

In the free-list of the 18–29-year-old age group, many material things associated with marriage are mentioned: Church, rings, and the white dress. It is possible that some people in this age group are not yet thinking seriously about marriage, and thus they associate marriage with the traditional things that are shown in the popular media. They relate it to a tradition which is symbolized by these material features.

All the age groups mention terms related to the stability of marriage: security, certainty, and stability. The 30–39-year-old age group is more focused on the relationships – on each other – and they do not talk about kids. The youngest age group also sees marriage as a celebration/festival/party, while the other age groups are focused more on safety and helping each other in marriage.

This is only one minor part of a more extensive research. The following steps include pile sorting, survey, and conducting extensive interviews. In these interviews, free-list and pile sorts data will shape the kinds of questions we will ask our informants in the interviews. Therefore, questions will *not* be constructed by researchers and will *not* be based on their inherent biases or knowledge, but they will be grounded on the emic data obtained by free-listing. All the insights gathered from the free-lists can be validated in surveys and interviews later on, in the further stages of the research.

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Liminal
Transitions

The Three-Dimensional Perception of Reality in Evangelical Christianity

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Abstract. In this chapter, I set out to explore the transcendental perceptions among Baptists in Ukraine. I am concerned with how Baptist believers perceive the world. Particularly I am interested in how they perceived the world as consisting of a transcendent quality aside from the dimensions of space and time. To discuss the interaction of these three modes of perceiving I coined the term 'three-dimensional perception of reality'. This concept is defined as the believers' ability to incorporate narratives and symbols from the Bible into their everyday life, and interpret both personal stories and global events accordingly. This will be exemplified through my ethnographic cases.

Keywords: Baptists, Bible, Church, evangelicals, three-dimensional perception of reality, Ukraine, war.

Introduction

My research focus is on the development of the Ukrainian Baptist movement, as the hitherto closed and conservative Baptists became engaged in the broader society. In parallel with the changes occurring inside the Baptist movement, society itself was going through turbulence and transformations. While the religious doctrine remained the same, the rhetorical and hermeneutical practices surrounding it adapted to the occurring changes inside and outside of the Baptist community. The goal of my chapter is to flesh out how believers interpret(ed) events and changes, by linking the present-day events to Biblical events. I frame the constant sense of transcendence as a third dimension of reality, by adding it to the two more commonly shared dimensions, namely, the perceptions of time and space.

Methods

This paper is based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Lviv, Ukraine from March 2016 to February 2017. Three Baptist communities were included in the

research as well as one Baptist seminary. The core method of my study was participant observation, which included not only observation of activities, but also direct participation in them. I participated in a wide range of activities: sermons, Bible studies, baptisms, weddings, camps, and a missionary forum. I was also fortunate to be invited into the homes of Baptist church members, thus participating and observing their everyday lives that were independent of church activities. The total number of informants exceeded 100 people. Approximately 15 of those were my key informants.

The main part of my data consists of my field notes, in which I wrote down events, activities, and conversations that I observed, heard or participated in. Observation and participation *in situ* supplied me with data, which provided me a means to learn 'in the process'–that is, from the 'insider's' point of view. By having access to the field site, I gained an opportunity to develop knowledge of how people make sense of, give meaning to, constitute reality, and interact on that basis (Bernard 2006; Denzin 1978; Jørgensen 1989).

My informants consisted of Baptist believers, pastors and missionaries. The observational and participatory fieldwork was complemented by interviews and documentary research. I conducted 12 semi-structural and 6 non-structural interviews on the basis of relations already established through months of fieldwork, each with carefully designed interview guides for each particular interviewee. The main part of the interviews was conducted with Ukrainian believers, along interviews with a few foreign (US) missionaries. The purpose of the interviews was mainly to supplement the countless conversations I had previously had with my informants.

My research was primarily conducted in Russian and Ukrainian. The language choice depended on the preference of the people, or on the language naturally spoken in a given situation. I had learned Ukrainian through an intensive personal course at the Ukrainian Catholic University. As I was already fluent in Russian, and the two languages bear many similarities, I was able to quickly progress in Ukrainian. English was used only when interacting with foreign missionaries. All the names used in the chapter are pseudonyms.

In this chapter, I present data from the community of *Internally Displaced Persons* (IDPs)[1]. The group consisted of several Baptist families who left the

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1   IDP – *Internally Displaced Person*; a person who has been forced to move within her or his own country as a result of a conflict or an environmental disaster. In this context, I shall use the term with reference to the evangelicals who have escaped the war in the eastern part of Ukraine. These refugees are called (and they also call themselves) 'trans-migrators' (rus. *Pereselentsy* [Cyrillic spelling: *Переселенцы*]).

occupied Donbas in 2015, shortly after their church was set on fire. Another family, who had decided to leave their home in Crimea after Russia annexed the peninsula in 2014, also joined the group. At the end of my research, the number of group members had doubled, as some more IDPs and locals joined it, and it became an officially registered Baptist community[2]. This group gradually became the main community of my research. These people had travelled a long way from a coal-mining town[3] in the East of the country, bringing with themselves fresh memories, experiences, emotions and thoughts about the war in Donbas, and they were willing to share these with me. I assume that our close relationship happened partly because we were non-natives of the City of Lviv, partly because I was able to interact in Russian with them, which is my first foreign language. I became more and more involved in this group, participated in their meetings, and had lengthy conversations with them.

Three-dimensional perception of reality

When thinking about a three-dimensional perception of reality, I do not have in mind the inhabited space of the three geometric dimensions – height, width, and depth. Rather, I think about it as three values that are closely integrated, even inseparable, but each with distinctive features.

One dimension that all people live in is the physical space which is understood as the way how we are placed and navigate in our surroundings. The other dimension is time. Here, I have in mind linear time, as measured and regulated by clocks and calendars. The dimensions of time and space are crucial for understanding and navigating in what we understand as *reality*.

My argument is that for a socio-culturally functioning individual, these two dimensions are not finite. Most of us take the two dimensions of time and space for granted but through adding the third perceptions of transcendence, time and space extend from physical reality to metaphysical reality.

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2   At the beginning of my fieldwork, it was a group consisting of 15 grown-up Baptists aged 30 to 70. At the end of the fieldwork, the group had already increased to 30 grown-up members aged 17 to 75 representing the community.

3   On 28 August 2016, the members of the community greeted each other with the Miners' Day after the Sunday Church service. Some of the men in the Church had worked as miners previously, and some of the women had worked in mining services. The Miners' Day remained one of the major holidays in many cities of the former Soviet Union where the number of miners was high. This day is celebrated the last Sunday of August. The festival involves open air concerts and extensive festivities.

During my fieldwork, I found that the Baptist believers were incorporating transcendence as 'the third dimension'. These born-again Christians were seeking and learning to live with a constant presence of transcendence in such an intense way that it becomes integrated into the two other dimensions in the process of perceiving reality.

This adaptation of a different perception of life is indeed possible, and it can be seen if we make a comparison to how we understand and treat time. Today, many people see time as an economic and existential resource, which differs from how time was perceived prior to the externalization of time. As explained by Hylland Eriksen, the fact that we are able to measure time has made time independent of human experience. This perception of time differs radically from how time was understood and lived before the invention of the clock, where people had lived in an event-driven time structure (Eriksen 2007). Linear time has become a resource to manage and control. This perception of time makes people live in an entirely different reality than in the earlier clock-less society. Thus, altering one's perception of reality, whether driven by technologies, necessities, or a strong wish to do so, is indeed possible.

The same basis of an active engagement works in the case of incorporating transcendence into the perception of reality. The innovative aspect of the three-dimensional perception of reality is that it is concerned with the lived experience of faith, something which can also be applied to the study of different experiences of religious and spiritual character.

Transformation of the personality[4]

For Baptist believers, the key for comprehending this third dimension of reality is in the biblical texts. The biblical texts give a particular meaning to everyday events, and enable the believers to detect and sense repetitions of biblical events in their own lives, which leads them to understanding and (re)interpreting their lives accordingly. The specificity and complexity of the biblical texts open up the possibility for diverse interpretations. Through their interpretations of biblical passages, the Bible remains ever modern and relevant in their endeavors to interpret what happens 'here and now'. The three-dimensional perception of reality refers to the

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4   The concept of the personality, or the personal identity, is understood here in a broad sense as a part and the consequence of modernity. That means that in modernity the construction of identity becomes much more complex than before. While, in the 'past', identity tended to be simpler and less flexible, being defined by class, gender and age in a more straightforward way, then, in 'modernity', the variety of identity schemes has grown. Identities become constructed and 'composed' of a stream of competing cultural discourses; they are chosen rather than ascribed.

believers' ability to incorporate narratives and symbols from the Bible into their everyday life, and interpret both personal stories and world events accordingly. In so doing they make the Bible 'ever modern' and relevant, as its stories are constantly repeated in part to boost morale, thus making the Bible 'alive'.

The learning process for starting (and never actually ending) personal transformation in evangelical Christianity is thus based on the Bible. Evangelicalism has a clear set of beliefs and commitments (Amstutz 2014, 30)[5]. And here, in the first place, stands the belief that the Bible is inerrant. Moreover, according to evangelicals, the Bible is God's revelation to humanity in which everyone (whoever seeks) finds all instructions for being guided throughout one's life[6]. In order to be able to use this ability, one has to learn to adapt the biblical texts to her or his own personal daily life events and worldview. That means no less than mastering the comprehension of biblical texts as a whole unit revealed by one person (God). Many of these texts are dark, incoherent, and disjoined (Auerbach 2003 [1953]). These features, on the one hand, make it not difficult to connect all the diverse parts together, but, on the other hand, they leave more space and possibilities for choosing and picking up particular parts of the texts, and thus interpreting and adapting them to fit one's 'here and now' realities. Learning to see and perceive the surrounding world and its events through the lens of biblical texts for a believer is the starting point for the transformation of his or her sense of reality.

This transformation goes together with the powerful symbolism of conversion, which is embodied in the ritual of baptism, explained as the death of an old person and the birth of a new one. Even more, the act of baptism is not simply a transformation that happens 'one day'. Transformational aspirations are deeply embedded in Pauline theology, which emphasizes the constant renewal of the person so that he or she can redirect their focus from the 'temporary' and 'seen' world toward the 'eternal' and 'unseen'[7].

The work of this 'renewal' or the role of the leading guide on the way of transformation to transcendental dimension is attributed to the Holy Spirit. The

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5   Here I speak about the definition of evangelicals which is based on their theology. However, there are other ways to make definitions such as by denominational affiliation, and by self-identification. Yet, the final two in my view are vaguer (for a discussion on the three types of definition, see Stiller, Johnson, Stiller, and Hutchinson 2015).

6   2 Timothy 3:16 "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness" (New International Version).

7   "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:16–18. New International Version).

Bible is the glue which binds the transcendental and physical worlds together. Born-again Christians have many practices which help them learn, share and contemplate each other's transcendental experiences. The purpose of these practices is to enforce the feeling that their transcendental experiences are real. Nevertheless, the ability to maintain the perception of both worlds as an indivisible reality is a difficult and consuming journey demanding specific skills.

Text is the way

Baptists, unlike Charismatic Christians, reject the possibility of a modern expression of miraculous spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues, healing, or prophesy. For them the gift of the Holy Spirit is charisma in its modest meaning, which can be limited to the ability to reach people during preaching, or evangelization. Their practices are less experimental and less demanding for the tangible, physical, bodily manifestations of transcendence.

For the Baptists the Bible always remains the main source which feeds the sense of living in three-dimensional reality. It is the central locus for transcendence and the main source for extracting the meaning of events in the living world. For them, all roads lead to scripture. However, acquiring the ability of extracting the meaning of events from the Bible needs a particular environment – a community of like-minded members that help to build the condition when the Bible is the guide to perceiving one's daily surroundings.

Crucial importance is given to the hermeneutical practices, the ability to incorporate narratives and symbols, and to extract and adopt the meanings from the Biblical texts to the everyday life.

Thus, believers learn the ability to apply and adapt the biblical texts as telling and giving instructions and explanations of the 'here and now' reality. At the same time, they learn to make transcendence with its focus towards eternity a part of their experienced reality. These skills do not eliminate the sense of one linear historical time; however, they adjust it to the three-dimensional perception of reality, which makes it more complex.

The practices for mastering the text

Starting to master the biblical text to the extent of making it speak to a particular person in and about her or his personal life needs more practice than the 'simple

reading' and trying to understand "what the text is saying to me." For sure, personal Bible studies involve daily reading, studying and contemplation on the text. Thus, becoming well acquainted with the Bible is pivotal, although this is *not* the only practice needed to be undertaken.

Testimony is another important practice which trains the ability of a believer to adapt the scripture to her or his personal life events. Testimony is a personal account or witness of experiences of transcendence – 'God's deeds' in the life of a believer. Every born-again Christian has her or his own 'identity card' – the story of one's personal conversion, which takes approximately 10–20 minutes to tell, which is told many times and is always available to be shared with other believers as well as with non-believers[8].

Sermon is another significant practice. Sermon means learning by listening from the skilled master how both worlds – the tangible one and the transcendental one – are intertwined to one through the biblical texts.

Participating in small groups of Bible studies is another highly important activity. During these meetings, the participants learn how to reflect on biblical texts, share, compare, and discuss their own findings, understanding, and interpretations with those of the other participants.

I presented here briefly the key practices, though this is not the finite list of the practices in use in every Baptist community for making the Bible 'work' in the daily lives of believers.

Below I present three examples from my fieldwork that represent some aspects of my theoretical arguments.

The Holy Spirit in action

I have mentioned above that the transformation of the personal identity is attributed to the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit plays a crucial role as the leading guide on the way to perceiving transcendental dimension as ontologically real.

Baptist believers do not often (at least at the time of my fieldwork) share and discuss exactly how the Holy Spirit guides them in their lives. However, sometimes it happens, and I want to present an excerpt from a conversation which took place in a Bible Study session I attended[9]. During this session, there was a prolonged discussion about how the Holy Spirit works inside the participants:

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8   It serves to the last as a part of evangelisation. See, for example, Harding 1987, 2000.
9   Fieldnotes 10 September 2016. My translation from Russian.

Jelena and Kirill were discussing how the Holy Spirit starts acting in you after you are born again[10]. Jelena referred to her own experience, and said that, from her point of view, for a long time after her baptism, she still remained "a baby in belief"[11]. It took time and effort until she began feeling the Holy Spirit. Kirill argued that the Holy Spirit starts acting in you immediately after you are baptized. He started to feel the Holy Spirit after having learnt a major part of the Bible by heart. After that, the texts started to emerge for him in daily situations, where they could be meaningfully applied. After the Bible studies, I went to say goodbye to Kirill. "It was good of you to come" Kirill said with a smile, and asked me where in the Bible this is written[12].

Re-reading the Bible after conversion is a common practice among Baptists, and this is a practice that is encouraged by the community at large. The aim is not to dismiss the tangible world for the sake of transcendence, but, rather, a way to learn how to adopt the textuality of the Bible to one's everyday experiences. According to Kirill, this constant engagement of reading and interpreting the text turns the Bible into a template for life. The text of the Bible becomes imprinted in the mind to an extent where it appears in the believer's mind, when applicable to daily events. Baptists, however, do not attribute this ability to their own efforts and learning, but to the Holy Spirit which starts to act within them.

Who set the church on fire? Making sense of the war

My informants were ever occupied with interpreting the present-day events through the lens of the Bible. The IDPs who had fled the war in Donbas struggled to see their suffering and losses in the light of God's plan. A conversation I had with Zakhar, an IDP from Donbas, illustrates this. He had on previous occasions told me that their church had been burned down. This prompted me to ask him who had set the church on fire. I had expected a simple answer, pointing to a certain person or group of people, but Zakhar's response alerted me to how differently he had interpreted my question:

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10   All names are pseudonyms.

11   Here, Jelena paraphrases the lines from the Bible: "Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ" (1 Corinthians 3:1. New International Version).

12   "So I sent for you immediately, and it was good of you to come. Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us" (Acts 10:33. New International Version).

Whoever needed to do it… answered Zakhar[13]. *The church had been threatened. The separatists had specifically threatened to burn the church down. They threatened many times, "[W]e will burn it down; we will burn it down; we will burn it down… It is a Trojan horse…" Such phrases*[14]. *Well, they only burned only the building, right? You cannot burn the Church. The Church has been, and it remains. The Church was originally in Jerusalem, but it was then persecuted and scattered around the world. The same happens today. It happened because God counted this church as ready for being sown, so people could sow, and bring the good seed further on, share it.*

Here, Zakhar exemplifies how he interprets the event of the fire. It is not related to who actually lit the match, but what the larger reason behind the fire was. Here, he draws on his biblical alignment, by comparing the present-day event with the Bible-based events: the first Christian church in history was located in Jerusalem. It was persecuted, and it got scattered[15]. This comparison serves two purposes. One of these is to present me, a listener, to the larger scheme of God, what the actual purpose of the fire was. Here, his answer is that it happened because the Church was ready to be sown, and that the fire prompted this to happen. The believers escaped from Donbas and created new Churches. The second purpose is to draw a comparison between the temporary event with the biblical events, as narrated in the Bible. This has happened before (as described in the Bible), and the repetition of this shows a clear parallel to the Bible.

Encounters between different perceptions

My next example alerts to how the interpretations of the believers can sound strange or even inappropriate for non-believers.

The event was a Bible study class which took place a few days after the first members of the IDPs Church were baptized in Lviv. Two of the five people

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13   Zakhar, as well as other members of the community, was very open and talkative on all topics when having an informal conversation, though more cautious during a recorded interview.

14   A Trojan horse is a stereotypical reference used in depicting evangelicals mostly in Russia, where many regard evangelical Christianity as a foreign religion, and evangelical believers as American agents working for the interests of their 'hosts'.

15   See, for example, "On that day a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria" (Acts 8:1. New International Version). Or "Now those who had been scattered by the persecution that broke out when Stephen was killed traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, spreading the word only among Jews" (Acts 11:19; New International Version).

baptized were husbands of long-term members of the Church in Donbas. The wives recounted how they also, before the war, had prayed for their husbands' conversion. However, only the war was able to get their husbands to accept Jesus. One of the wives reached the conclusion of her narrative by stating that she now finally understood why the war had come to their place: in order for her husband to convert.

This interpretation was difficult to comprehend for Tamara, a non-believer who would regularly come as a guest. She gazed around the room, clearly shocked, trying to seek eye contact with others who would agree that this was sheer nonsense. However, not finding this confirmation, she just shook her head.

While the wife did not make any direct links to the Bible, she still interpreted her husband's conversion as God's plan and the way she was able to make sense of the war. She spoke in the evangelical language where this world reality is inextricably intertwined with transcendence. Tamara, however, was neither trained nor engaged in such interpretations, which made the version nonsensical, namely, that so many people had died and suffered due to the conversion of one man.

Conclusion

In this paper, my focus is on the way reality is being perceived by evangelicals, by drawing on the example of Ukrainian Baptists. I have argued that the manner in which they reflect upon, interpret and understand various events (personal as well as societal) depends on the ability to incorporate a third dimension of reality, apart from time and space. This dimension is marked by biblical stories which are regularly interpreted, and seen as repeating themselves in the believers' lives. In this way, Ukrainian Baptists not only live by the linear time marked by clocks and calendars, and not only in the immediate space surrounding them, but they are also living through a biblical time.

Other authors have likewise been engaged in understanding how evangelicals separate themselves from society in different ways. For example, Brigit Meyer in her monograph on Pentecostals in Ghana described how Christian evangelicals see themselves living in a different realm than the rest of society. This is done through discursive practices, ways of dressing, and through houses and furniture, all of which express a symbolic distance to non-believers (Meyer 1999). A thorough study by Susan Harding shows how Baptists in the U.S. make use of rhetorical skills and formalized speech in order to make God alive and perceptible

in their lives (Harding 1987, 2000). Luhrmann, who studied evangelicals in the U.S., emphasized how believers develop intimate spiritual experiences, thus making God real and tangible in their lives (Luhrmann 2004; see also Luhrmann 2012, 374). My study adds to this line of research by highlighting the experience of the believers' perception of reality, time and space. In my example of Ukrainian Baptists, all the biblical stories have connection with transcendence. The Bible thus serves not only as the expression of the eternal divine will, but also, at the same time, the Bible offers templates for interpreting the contemporary events.

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Exploring the Religious Identity of Dalits through the Lens of Religious Conversion[1]

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Abstract. The paper examines the role of religion among Dalits in India, especially focusing on Dalit[2] religious conversion from Hinduism to Buddhism. It is based on a case study of Dalit conversion in Shabbirpur village in the Northern Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. In line with the existing research on Dalit conversions, this paper shows that Dalit conversion in Shabbirpur serves not merely as a religious but also as a political and social strategy of Dalits through which they try to negotiate their caste identity. For Dalits, conversion means a resistance to caste oppression as well as assertion of divergent religious identity from the majoritarian Hindu identity. While exploring the Dalit religious identity following their conversion in Shabbirpur, the paper challenges the prevailing notion that religious conversion simply denotes a transfer of religious affiliation. Instead, it elucidates that Dalit religious conversion is a social process wherein Dalits' transition from one religion to another devoid of a fundamental spiritual transformation. Through this case study, I argue that there exists a continuation of the past and present spiritual affiliation which involves hybridization of religious practice, fusing worship of Ravidas with a new Buddhist identity. Interestingly, this syncretization is not unintentional. It is a conscious attempt to keep both pre-and post-converted religious traits as part of their re-invented socio-religious identity.

Keywords: caste oppression, Dalit conversion and spiritual affiliation, Buddhism, *Ravidasiya* identity, political symbolism, religious syncretism, Hindu majoritarianism.

Introduction

Religious conversion at a time of social and political crisis becomes a potent instrument of resistance to the powerful social and political structures such as the State or the Church (Wiegers 2016). A similar implication of religious conversion can be observed among Dalits who denounce Hinduism and adopt new faiths (i.e. Christianity, Islam, or Buddhism), in order to challenge the caste system and untouchability in Hinduism.[3]

Dalits constantly struggle with the challenge of reshaping their marginalized identity through various strategies, including the adoption of sanskritization,[4] taking part in movements for socio-religious reform, pursuing constitutional and democratic reforms, and more. Among these strategies, religious conversion stands out as one of the significant instruments for effecting positive and profound alterations in their identity. Ghanshyam Shah (2001) classifies Dalit conversion into two categories: one, where external influences drive the conversion, referred to as proselytization; and the other, where Dalits undergo conversion based on their internal motivation which guides them to shift from their current religious affiliation to a new and transformative one. In this paper we will see how both external factors and inner motivations interact in the case of Dalit conversion to Buddhism in Shabbirpur.

Mass conversion of Dalits from Hinduism to Buddhism was started by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar[5] in 1956. With the idea of religious conversion, Ambedkar attempted to resolve the conundrum of caste discrimination and Dalits' religious

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3   The caste system in India is said to have originated from several religious practices which legitimized the symbolic power of the priestly caste and political authority of kings in a declining order, respectively, such as *Brahmin*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya*, and *Shudra*. The first three castes (*Brahmin*, *Kshatriyas*, and *Vaishya*) are called *Dvija*, or 'twice-born' castes, as they are eligible to perform the sacrament of initiation ceremony of the spiritual birth and are addressed as the 'upper-castes' throughout this paper. In addition to this, there exists an 'outcaste', popularly known as Dalit and *Ati-Shudra* caste. They are given the lowest social position in the Hindu caste system, which prevents them from receiving the same treatment as compared to the other lower and touchable caste, like *Shudra*.

4   "Sanskritization is a process by which a low caste, or a tribe and other groups, change its customs, rituals, and ideology in the direction of high and frequently, 'twice-born' castes" (Srinivas 1995, 32).

5   Dr. Bhim Rao Ramji Ambedkar, popularly known as Babasaheb among his followers, is the father of the Constitution of India. He was an economist, philosopher, and scholar. Born into a *Mahar* caste, a Dalit caste in Maharashtra, he was a strong opponent of the Hindu caste system. He entered Indian politics in early 1920s and advocated for the rights of the Dalits and other marginalized communities in India. He started several movements, such as temple entry movement for Dalits. Ambedkar played a dynamic role during the *Second Round Table Conference* in 1932 shaping the demand of a separate electorate for Dalits. It was after this event that Ambedkar emerged as Dalit leader in India and established *Independent Labour Party* in 1936 to provide a political platform for Dalits and other marginalised communities. In 1935 *Yeola Conference* Ambedkar for the first time announced his intention for conversion which later developed into a mass movement (Patankar and Omvedt 1979).

identity (Fuchs 2004; Jaoul 2018; Zelliot 2004). Given that the question of religious identity holds a substantial significance for Dalits as it carries the historical burden of untouchable Hindu identity, it became of utmost importance for Ambedkar to carefully choose what religious identity Dalits should embrace (Mohapatra 2015). For Ambedkar, Hinduism grounded untouchables' exploitation. Religion, in his view, should be emancipatory and have a social philosophy aligned with the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. In his view, Hinduism with its inherent graded inequality through the caste system fails to align with these democratic principles. It justifies untouchability and caste-based exclusion, which contradicts the values of liberty, equality, and fraternity (Fitzgerald 2007). Ambedkar realized that Dalits would never achieve freedom from the caste system and untouchability if they continued to practice Hinduism. As a form of protest against the inegalitarian character of Hinduism, Ambedkar left Hinduism and adopted Buddhism (Mohapatra 2015). The tenets of Buddhism provide equal treatment to all human beings and form the basis of a new consciousness among Dalits. This conversion gave rise to a new social category called neo-Buddhists or Ambedkarites with the potential to challenge the contemporary Hindu majoritarian politics (Mohapatra 1999).

Viswanathan (1998) refers to conversion as a conscious political act ushering in ideas of modernity, equality, and democracy. She argues that any form of dissent that occurs through conversion most strongly manifests among minorities across all civilizations. Several researchers, such as Webster (1999), Viswanathan (1998), Omvedt (2003), Robinson and Clarke (2003), Zelliot (2004), Beltz (2015), Jaoul (2018), documented Dalit conversions from Hinduism to other religions. Their works highlight the change of religious identity through conversion among Dalits as a socio-political move to escape the stigma of untouchability and as a tool to fight against the caste system.

To understand the relationship between Dalit conversion in a broader perspective, one needs to examine the nature of the Dalits' religious identity and its relationship with Hindu majoritarian politics in both pre-and post-independent India. In this context, it is worth discussing Joel Lee's (2015) study on *Valmikis*[6] and their socio-political transformation from the previous *Lal Begi* identity in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. *Lal Begis* as per their traditional occupation were associated with sanitation labor. They traditionally had Muslim names and their practices centered on the prophet Lal Beg. In the social history of sanitation

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6   *Valmiki* refers to a caste traditionally associated with the occupation of sanitation work. They are not included in the four-fold *varna* system and previously treated as untouchables. They fall under the category of the Scheduled Castes.

labour castes in Delhi, Vijay Prasad (2000) explores the spiritual narratives surrounding Lal Beg, a Sufi figure from the Mughal period. These narratives, which were documented in a mid-20th-century text by a Dalit activist, portray Bala Shah, also known as Lal Beg, as a vocal opponent of caste discrimination, particularly when it is against sanitation and manual scavenging workers. Reacting to the socio-political changes in India, *Lal Begis* adopted Hindu names and began identifying as a sanitation labour caste called *Valmikis* (Lee 2015).

This change was not merely cultural but was also a strategic adaptation to socio-political pressures, particularly influenced by the *Poona Pact of 1932* and the *Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order of 1950* which incentivized Dalits to identify as Hindus to access socio-economic benefits reserved for the Scheduled Castes. Ambedkar's demand for a separate electorate during the *Poona Pact of 1932* for Dalits in order to ensure their political representation in the constituent assembly would have allowed them to vote for their own representatives. However, Mahatma Gandhi's strong opposition to the idea of a separate electorate for Dalits reinforced the idea that Dalits are an integral part of the Hindu social fabric and that their political representation would be within the larger Hindu community (Patankar and Omvedt 1979). By insisting that Dalits remain within the Hindu fold, Gandhi and leaders of National Congress denied Dalits the political and social recognition needed to assert their distinct identity.

This non-recognition of a Dalits' distinct political identity continues to affect Dalit communities even after Independence. Lee's (2020) post-Independence's analysis of the census data from 2011 in several districts of Uttar Pradesh (Lucknow, Banaras, and Mirzapur) provides valuable insights. He observed that the census enumerators overlooked the religious affiliation of converted Buddhists and instead categorized them uniformly as Hindus. This was evident when Dalits with surnames ending in *Gautam*[7] were recorded as Hindus, disregarding their conversion to Buddhism. Lee also highlighted instances where Dalits intervened during the survey, objecting to being identified as Hindus and asserting their distinct religious identity. Based on these examples, Lee presented two arguments. Firstly, he argued that this practice violated the guidelines provided in the Government's instruction manuals for census personnel. These guidelines emphasize that enumerators should faithfully record the religion provided by the respondents for herself/himself and for other members of the household, without presuming any predetermined relationship between caste designations

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7   Gautam is the first name of Gautam Buddha. In this case, it refers to followers of Buddhism who, as symbol of identity, take the first name of Buddha as their surname.

and religious affiliations. Secondly, Lee suggested that the reluctance to recognize the religious identity of Dalits may stem from a broader state-level reluctance to acknowledge this distinct religious identity.

Based on the above discussion, the present paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the multifaceted issues surrounding Dalit conversion in India, shedding light on the intricate relationship between religion, caste, identity, culture, and politics. The paper revolves around the following questions: What socioeconomic and political conditions drove the Dalits of Shabbirpur to pursue a shift in their religious identity? What meanings and interpretations do Dalits associate with religious conversion? How do they express their newly converted identity?

By offering a historical reading of Dalit mobilization in the state of Uttar Pradesh, this paper focuses on their caste consciousness and religious identity. The following section provides a brief description of a case study of Shabbirpur village and its caste composition, and examines their decision for mass conversion to Buddhism. The paper also tries to understand how the converted religious identity of Dalits is built, perceived, and reoriented within the community as well as in the wider caste society. The research shows that in many instances the converted Dalits of Shabbirpur are found to be following multiple religious and spiritual paths guided by Ravidas, Buddha and Ambedkar, which means that Dalit conversion results into a syncretic religious practice, keeping both old and new religious traits. However, what is most important in the conversion act of Shabbirpur Dalits is its socio-political message that challenges the upper-caste-dominated Hindu-majoritarian politics and its attempts to identify Dalits solely with Hinduism.

Historical background of Dalit mobilization in the state of Uttar Pradesh

As mentioned in the introduction, Dalit self-identification encompasses various methods and approaches which include the *bhakti* movement[8], sanskritization,

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8   The *Bhakti* movement began in South India (7th-10th century) with saint-poets like the Alvars and Nayanars. It promoted religious equality and devotional surrender to a personal god. It was later philosophically refined by scholars like Ramanuja. Later this movement emerged in North India during the medieval period (13th-17th centuries) and played a significant role in challenging the Brahminical caste system. Key figures like Kabir, Nanak, and Ravidas advocated for devotional worship accessible to all, regardless of caste. They critiqued the ritualism and social hierarchy enforced by orthodox Brahmanism, instead promoted the idea of a direct, personal relationship with the divine.

socio-religious movement among Dalits, and conversion. Examining the changing political consciousness of the Dalits of Uttar Pradesh in relation to the caste system and the religious identity reveals their unyielding and rich historical struggle for equality and social dignity.

Claiming of Kshatriya status by Dalits in Uttar Pradesh

By the late 1800, *Arya Samaj*[9] made inroads into *Dalit Mohallas*—Dalit neighborhoods—in Uttar Pradesh (Gundimeda 2016; Jones 1976). *Arya Samaj's* doctrinal position "Brahman by merit, not by birth" attracted many Dalits to the *Samaj*. They also started several social activities, including schools and hostels for Dalits (Jaffrelot 2003).

In order to remove their untouchable status and stigma, a section of Dalits in Uttar Pradesh followed the path of sanskritization and began claiming the status of *Kshatriyas*. There are a number of historical accounts that have been written on their claim of the *Kshatriya* status.[10] For instance *Jatavs* did not criticize the Hindu religion, but instead emphasized claiming the *Kshatriya* status by recreating myths and narratives around their *Kshatriya* identity. In this process, they were following similar narratives and Puranic sources that the British and Hindus adopted and promoted (Gundimeda 2016).

To further strengthen their *Kshatriya* identity, Dalits passed a number of resolutions in Banaras in 1926. They also urged their members to refrain from engaging in unclean or defiling occupations (Rawat 2011). By 1920, they became politically conscious and began claiming the rights of their community. For

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9   The period of late nineteenth and early twentieth century witnessed several traditional socio-religious reform movements across India. Some of these are *Brahmo Samaj*, *Arya Samaj*, and etc. *Arya Samaj* is Hindu social reform movement which was established in 1875 in response to the then socio-political situation in North India particularly in Punjab and its neighboring region. There was a sense of insecurity among Hindus regarding loosing Dalits from Hinduism, as they had the fear that Dalits may get influenced by Western modern ideas and deviate from Hinduism. It is argued that although the British were exploitative and controlled the resources and Indian people but they also opened new possibilities of empowerment for Dalits (Robb 1993). Their emancipation gained a new dynamic during this period through Western education and Christian missionaries that helped Dalit intellectuals fight for better living conditions and mobilise other Dalits. In addition, it provided a background for identity-based socio-political movements among Dalits. *Arya Samaj* gained momentum after the conversion of *Mappilas* to Islam in 1921 in Meenakshipuram district of Tamil Nadu which led to the development of *shuddhi* practice as a counter strategy of conversion (Jones 1989; Robinson et al. 2003).

10   Sambaiah Gundimeda (2016) refers to four important books. They are: *Shree Chanvan Purana* (1910–1916) by Raghuvanshi, *Suryavansh Kshatriyas Jaiswar Sabha* (1926) by Jaiswar Mahasabha, *Yadav Jivan* (1929) by Pandit Sundar Lal Sagar, and *Yaduvansh ka Itihas* (1942) by Ramnarayan Yaduvendu.

instance, after claiming a seat in the Legislative Council, they proposed to the Council that one member from the *Jatav* community be appointed to each district board, municipal board, and town area of the state of Uttar Pradesh. Additionally, they also formed the *Jatav Youth League* in 1930 and supported Ambedkar's claim for Dalit representation in the *First Round Table Conference* (Kuber 1991). According to Lynch (1974), the claiming of the *Kshatriya* identity not only shows *Jatav's* social mobility from one caste to another, but it also reflects their political awareness and power.

Asserting Achhut *identity and* Adi-Hinduism *in Uttar Pradesh*

The central figure of this movement was *sant guru* Ravidas who was associated with the *bhakti* sect in the 15th and 16th centuries.[11] He was a Dalit who believed in the principle of sharing God across all divisions that society instituted, including the significant religious dissection. Swami Acchutanand, ex-Arya Samajist and a 20th century social reformer from the Dalit background, started the *Adi Hindu* movement based on the principles of Ravidas. Through this movement he created a common yet distinct *acchut* (untouchable) identity whose religious belief system is influenced by the *bhakti* tradition of Ravidas (Bellwinkel-Schempp 2007).

According to R. S. Khare (1984), the *Adi Hindu* movement and its ideals not only provided them with a radical perspective to fight against the Hindu caste system, but also created a political culture that supported civil rights and coordinated resistance by organizing *jayanti* (leader's anniversary celebration*)*, *mela* (fairs), street theatre shows, etc. In essence, the *Adi Hindu* movement in Uttar Pradesh re-established a distinct religious identity for Dalits and prepared them for future political struggles (Ram 2004).

As the *Adi Hindu* movement was gaining popularity, Ambedkar announced his decision to convert to another religion and proposed an alternate path for Dalits outside the Hindu religion. Ambedkar's announcement of conversion in 1935 had a tremendous impact on the sanskritization process. For instance,

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11   The *bhakti* movement during the medieval period played an important role in providing a socio-cultural consciousness among Dalits in opposition to the Brahminical framework of identity. Kabir, Ramanand, and Ravidas in the North, Chaitanya and Candidasa in the East, Eknath, Choka Mela, and Tukaram in the West, and Ramanuja, Nimbaraka and Basava, Veemana, and Veerabrahmam in the South were mystics who spearheaded the *bhakti* movement. Their opposition to caste differences and their claim of equality before God contributed to the development of the anti-Brahminical worldview among certain social groups and individuals. Even though their teachings were religious in nature, their ideology had strong socio-economic and cultural roots with the egalitarian ethos and values. Due to this, the *bhakti* movement gained popularity among the *Shudras* and other members of the lower castes or Dalits.

a section of *Jatavs* and other Dalits of Uttar Pradesh who were claiming the *Kshatriya* status during that time abruptly stopped this identification. Thus, it shifted the ground of Dalit mobilization outside the framework of Hinduism wherein they started claiming a separate socio-political religious identity as Dalits (Gundimeda 2016; Omvedt 1998).

Following India's Independence, the establishment of the *Scheduled Castes Federation* (SFCs) and the *Republican Party of India* (RPI) in 1942 and 1956 respectively ushered in a new era of Dalit movement. Outside Maharashtra, it was the North Indian Dalits, particularly the Dalits of Uttar Pradesh, who supplied the strongest base to these organizations (Kumar 2001). In the Post-Independence period, several Dalit organizations came into existence such as *All India Backward and Minority Communities Employees Federation* (BAMCEF) and *Dalit Soshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti* (DS4) under the leadership of Kanshi Ram to mobilize Dalits and other marginalized masses in the state of Uttar Pradesh. The primary goal of BAMSEF and DS4 was to bring attention to the grievances of the oppressed Dalits and to educate them about their rights (ibid.). These organizations worked as a think tank which further led to the establishment of the *Bahujan Samaj Party* (BSP) (Jaffrelot 2003; Pai 2002). Since its formation in 1984, BSP entered into competitive democratic politics and provided a strong political platform for Dalits. The party won the State Assembly election many times and raised an iconic Dalit leader, Mayawati. She headed the Government of Uttar Pradesh four times and made history by becoming the first Dalit woman Chief Minister in India.

From the above discussion, one may conclude that Dalits in Uttar Pradesh have a rich historical tradition of Dalit mobilization. They employ various means to fight against caste discrimination, and advocate for equality and justice simultaneously challenging Hindu majoritarian politics. Throughout these movements, identity politics and caste consciousness remain essential whatever forms it might take—*Ravidasiya*, *Achhut*, *Buddhist* or *Bahujan*.

Shabbirpur village

Shabbirpur village, where I conducted field research in November and December 2022, depends heavily on agriculture which also strongly shapes caste relations. As Paul R. Brass (1965) mentioned, the caste structure in an agricultural society is subdivided on the basis of the "traditional land-owning caste," "cultivating caste," and "the caste which provides field labourers." There are around 300

Rajput[12] households in the village, and among the traditional land-owning castes, *Rajputs* hold a prominent position. Dalits occupied 220 households, second only to *Rajputs*. The majority of them were serving as laborers. There are a number of Dalit households who own land and work in their own fields, while the rest of them provide labor to the upper land-holding castes, such as *Rajput*. Thus, a significant proportion of the Dalit population in the village is dependent on *Rajputs* for their livelihood. *Kashyaps*[13] occupied the third position in the village demography, with 100 households. *Brahmins* (priestly caste), *Dhimars* (fruit and vegetable seller caste)[14] and *Goels* (*Bania* caste-i.e., mercantile or money lending caste)[15] each occupied two households in the village. There were two Muslim castes in the village composed of *Teli-Muslim* (an oil-pressing caste) and *Dhobi-Muslim* (washer man caste). Apart from this, there were ten *Valmiki* (sweeping caste) families.

At the backdrop of Dalit conversion analyzed in this paper is a deadly caste-clash between *Rajputs* and Dalits that took place in Shabbirpur on 5 May 2017. The clash began over the loud music played by *Rajputs* during *Maharana Pratap Jayanti*. Dalits of Shabbirpur raised objections over the loud music. They also argued that *Rajputs* did not have prior permission from the Government authority for the celebration. However, this exchange between the two communities turned into a series of violent confrontations. The clashes took the life of a young *Rajput*, which made the situation even worse. In reaction to this, 12 Dalits were seriously injured and approximately 55 to 60 Dalit households were vandalized as well as Ravidas statue and temple in the village. For Dalits, the temple of Ravidas has been a symbol of great religious and cultural significance and its desecration meant scandalous display of disrespect and hostility towards their community. In response to this violence 180 Dalit households in Shabbirpur village called for

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12   *Rajputs* are a warrior caste that fall under the second highest *varna* of Hindu social order. Locally, they are also addressed as *Thakurs*. Historically, they were the predominant landowners in the state of Uttar Pradesh until the abolition of *Zamindari System* in 1950. For instance, "in Ouadh, Rajput were the most prominent *Talukdars* and owned more than fifty percent of land in most of the districts" (Brass 1965, 16). Due to their historical predominance in the state, they still occupy a dominant position and play a dynamic socio-political role in the state.

13   *Kashyap* as a social group is not a caste in Hinduism but refers to a gotra of *Brahmin varna*. However, in western Uttar Pradesh, *Kashyaps* are considered as Other Backward Classes (OBC) as they belong to *Nishad* caste of water-related occupation like sand dredging, boating and fishing.

14   A sub-caste of boatman mostly settled in Central India. In western Uttar Pradesh their traditional occupation is fruit and vegetable selling. They fall under the category of Other Backward Classes (OBC) in the state.

15   In the village they have small grocery shop and a general store.

conversion to Buddhism, a movement later received support from neighboring villages as well.

This study aims to understand the circumstances and motives of Dalit conversion in Shabbirpur after the 2017 incident. For this study, participant observation and semi-structured interview methods were applied to collect data. A total of 40 interviews with males and females aged between 20 to 60 years were conducted along with group discussions. For personal interviews, the snowball sampling method was applied. Group discussions were conducted three times: once with male members only, once with females only, and the third time with both males and females. The participants were informed about the study's objectives, and they were also informed that their responses would be handled as confidential and utilized exclusively for the academic purposes of this specific research. Their names were codified and changed for the purpose of their safety except two names which are mentioned in both the print and digital media.

The attempts of Dalits to embrace any religion other than Hinduism often face criticism on the grounds that they are passive converts who are either forced or lured to conversion. But, if one visits Shabbirpur village, the above perception may appear false. They are not a particularly wretched community in terms of economic and socio-political position. While *Rajputs* have a significant portion of the land, many Dalit families also hold land ownership. The village has approximately 2,400 voters, with 1,200 being *Rajputs*, 600 *Chamars*, and the rest belonging to *Kashyaps*, *Tailis*, *Dhobis*, and *Valmikis* respectively. During the fieldwork, it was observed that the Dalits of the village were not only aware but assertive of their caste position, religious beliefs, and values. They were also playing dynamic and decisive roles in village's social and political life.

Pre-conversion Dalit identity: Dalits as Ravidas worshipers

Before the event of conversion to Buddhism, Dalits of Shabbirpur were recognized as Hindus having a lower caste identity called *Chamar*[16]. According to the Constitution of India, they fall under the Scheduled Castes category, encompassing various social groups that previously were labeled as untouchables. In terms of their political orientation, they associate themselves with Ambedkar's and

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16   *Charmar* is traditionally associated with leatherworking and tanning, considered impure and polluting occupations in the Hindu caste hierarchy. Because of their defiling occupation, they were previously addressed as untouchables by upper-caste Hindus.

Kanshiram's ideas of social justice. All of the Dalits I talked to claimed that they were followers of the *bhakti* tradition of Ravidas. Hence, while being Buddhist they also called themselves *Ravidasiya*.

Ravidas, a native of Benares, lived during the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries and is regarded as North India's greatest Dalit saint. Born into the *Chamar* caste, he was a leatherworker by profession. George W. Briggs (1920) observed that Saint Ravidas gained significant popularity among Dalits around 1900. They began identifying as *Ravidasis* or *Ravidasiya* to avoid the derogatory term *Chamar*. Addressing the Dalits of Kanpur, Nandini Gooptu (2001) noted that *bhakti* tradition reemerged in the twentieth century as a form of Dalit religion (Bellwinkel-Schempp 2007).

John Stratton Hawley and Mark Juergensmeyer (2007) described Ravidas as a special figure, a poet and singer whose hymns attracted even *Brahmins*:

> …Ravidas was special: he was a poet and singer, and the hymns he sang evidently had such a ring of truth that even *Brahmin*s came to hear them. His poet's charisma must have been equally powerful, for he says that the *Brahmins* actually bowed before him, in a total inversion of religious and social protocol. (Hawley 1988, 11)

His poetry transcended caste boundaries, and he became admired not only among Dalits but by people from all sections of Hindu society.

Hawley and Juergensmeyer (2007) also argued that Ravidas believed in sharing God across societal divisions, including significant religious divides. Although he did not propose any alternative religion against the Brahmanical social order, Ravidas offered a guiding path for many marginalized people. He adopted unconventional approaches to symbolize his revolt, such as imitating Brahminical lifestyles, which was a radical gesture at that time. Despite continuing his work as a shoemaker, he wore a *dhoti* and *tilak* (clothing style and facial marking practiced by the upper castes, particularly Brahmins) and challenged the Hindu societal norms. His egalitarian and social philosophy significantly influenced Dalit consciousness in north India, especially in Punjab and Uttar Pradesh (Ram 2004). Numerous Ravidas shrines and temples, such as *India Adi Dharam Mission* established in 1957 and *Shri Guru Ravidas Janam Asthan Mandir* at his birthplace in Seer Goverdhanpur, Banaras, were constructed to assert a distinct caste identity (Ibid.). Ravidas is celebrated as a revolutionary social leader among his followers, particularly Dalits, due to his firm belief in equality.

Dalit assertions manifest in both direct and indirect forms. They range from protests, marches, conversions, to folklore, myths, stories of epic heroes. While exploring the socio-political mobilization and cultural transformation of Dalits in North India, Badri Narayan (2011) argues that the use of cultural symbols, narratives of folk heroes, social reformers, and saints played a dynamic role in securing the electoral win of the BSP in the state. The reinterpretation of historical figures such as Ravidas and Kabir into mainstream Dalit politics in the state not only bridged the gap between grassroot politics and mainstream Dalit politics but also represents a reflection of a subaltern history (Narayan 2011).

By celebrating Ravidas and reinterpreting historical figures, Dalits in Uttar Pradesh have created a powerful cultural and political movement that continues to shape their struggle for justice and equality. The pre-conversion identity of Dalits of Shabbirpur village as Ravidas' worshipers reflects the similar essence of socio-political mobilization of BSP. The maintenance of *Ravidasi* or *Ravidasiya* identity as their pre-conversion identity signifies a strategic response to caste-based oppression and a quest for a distinct subaltern religion.

Dalit conversion to Buddhism as resistance and dissent

Following a violent attack by upper-caste *Rajputs* in May 2017, Dalits of Shabbirpur collectively decided to renounce Hinduism. This was done to convey a powerful form of protest against the deep-rooted caste-based atrocities they had been enduring for generations. It is important to note that this caste-clash was not only prompted by sentiments of caste discrimination, but also was a response to the insults directed to the Dalits' belief system. Converted Dalit Buddhists recounted the incident of 5 May 2017 when a young *Rajput* named Sumit Singh entered the Ravidas temple and started breaking the idols. They allegedly narrated that he urinated on the Ravidas statue and set the broken idol on fire. These disrespecting and dehumanizing acts of the Rajput community towards Dalits and their beliefs, along with the violence they were facing during the clash, provoked them to convert to Buddhism as they argued that the incident made them realize that Hinduism would neither accept them as equal nor would it respect their native religious belief.

This pivotal event prompted their official conversion to Buddhism, which marked a significant shift in their religious identity. As a result, they proudly identify themselves as Buddhists, embracing the inclusive principles and

teachings of Buddhism. Notably, some community members willingly provided their Buddhist conversion certificates during interviews, thereby declaring their commitment to this new faith and their determination to challenge the oppressive caste system that had long governed their lives.

Fakeerchand,[17] a Dalit respondent who denounced Hinduism and became a Buddhist, explained:

> They (*Rajputs* and other upper-caste Hindus) practice slavery (*gulami karte hain*) with us. If these people keep considering us as slaves enslaving us, then we will not remain in the Hindu religion and conversion (*dharam parivartan*) becomes the only option left for us.

Referring to the Muslim community, he went on saying:

> There are many Muslim families living with us. They also believe and practice the caste system (*jaati vivastha*) and hence have a number of upper castes and lower castes, such as *Sheikh Jolaha*, *Khan*, *Pathaan*, and *Jolaha*, but they do not discriminate against us the way upper-caste Hindus practice caste discrimina-tion. They (Muslims) eat food on the same plate, but this Hindu religion still practices untouchability and discriminates against us (*chhuachut karte hain*), and the worst part is that they (upper-castes) do not even consider us Hindus.

Fakeerchand was not the only one who spoke about the practice of caste discrimination by the *Rajputs* in the village. There were other Dalit respondents who shared similar stories of caste discrimination during the focus group discussion. There was a collective consensus among them regarding the Hindu religion, its followers and their discriminatory behavior towards Dalits.

Rekha,[18] a Dalit woman, shared her grievances and anger when she was asked about leaving Hinduism and converting to Buddhism:

> We have completely stopped celebrating Hindu festivals such as *Diwali*, *Dusseh-ra*, *Ram Navami*, *Holi*, etc. and have stopped worshipping the deities of the Hin-

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17 Fakeerchand, a Dalit respondent, was interviewed on 11 November 2021. He also took part in the *Panchayat* election of 2020 for the *Pradhan* position (village head), but lost the seat against *Rajput* with a number of 246 votes. Despite his defeat, he is still celebrated as *Dalit Pradhan* among some of his Dalit fellows in the village.

18 Rekha is a converted Dalit Buddhist woman. She belongs to the 50 to 60 years of age group. She took part in a focus group discussion conducted for women on 13 November 2021.

du religion. When I have already lost my young son in this riot, then what is left here for me, why would we celebrate the Hindu festival, what is ours in it?

Another Dalit respondent, named Pradeep,[19] also felt aggrieved, and shared his experience of caste discrimination while explaining the reason for conversion:

The reason for becoming Buddhist was that Hinduism is doing caste atrocities. They do not allow us to sit and eat together with other upper-castes. The upper-caste *Rajputs* misbehave (*badsuluki karte hain*) with us and with our children, what we would do if they continue harassing (*atyachaar karte rahen*) our children? If they keep disturbing us and disrespecting our belief, faith, gurus and leaders, whom we respect, follow, and worship, then we feel pain (*dukh hota hai*).

It was observed that caste discrimination is everyday reality in their life. They argued that it was becoming even more painful for them when their religious beliefs or *guru* were attacked during the clash. Dalits of Shabbirpur were disheartened by the upper-caste *Rajputs* who insulted them and looked down upon them and their belief system.

Ravi,[20] another respondent who claimed to be a local artist and who was singing *bhajans* (religious songs) about Ravidas, added that the village had only one primary school which was governed by *Rajputs*, and even the teachers from the upper caste background raised objections if Dalit students greeted them or among themselves with *Jai Bhim*[21]. Students were scolded and asked to greet them with *Ram-Ram*[22] only.

While being critically aware of his own community, he continued:

The attack (*hamla*) on us was not a small one. It was very intensive in nature, and it could have killed 20–30 people. So, when we were badly attached, beaten, and and humiliated, we realized the caste reality of our society that still exists with us.

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19 Pradeep was an old man of the age group of 60 years and more. He participated in the focus-group discussion on 12 November 2021.

20 Ravi was interviewed on 12 December 2021. He also shared a piece of his poetry which describes the socio-political awareness of Dalits in the village as well as in the State of Uttar Pradesh.

21 *Jai Bhim* is a slogan and greeting for giving reverence and respect to Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar and his struggle for equality and justice.

22 The phrase *Ram-Ram* is derived from the Hindu god named Ram. The Hindu followers of Ram in northern India generally use this phrase to greet each other.

Ramesh,[23] a Dalit man, about 40-to-50 years old also shared his experiences and explained what motivated him to convert:

> The fight that occurred on the fifth of May 2017 made us realize our social position in the eyes of upper-caste Hindus. These people do not consider us Hindus. They treat us as untouchables, but when we are needed, we become Hindus for them. After that brutal attack on us, when our houses were set on fire and our people were badly beaten, we decided that it is better to leave Hinduism and adopt Buddhism. At least we will not face atrocity anymore. So, with this hope we adopted Buddhism.

These explanations and grievances highlight a story of rooted caste politics and the religious rivalry in India where religious conversions are often perceived as a national threat by the supporters of the Hindu majoritarian politics. The believers of the Hindu majoritarian politics oppose Dalit conversion on two major grounds. The first ground is philosophical in nature. The opponents of conversion argue that Indian religious traditions, unlike Christianity and Islam, are non-Semitic and do not interfere with other religions or religious beliefs (Balagangadhara 2012). The second ground is political in nature wherein they argue that changing religious belief is a western phenomenon, or, in more precise terms, they call it an imperial tool to control Indian demography by changing the Dalit religion from Hinduism to Christianity or Islam. They relate such conversion to forced conversion in which Dalits are driven away from Hinduism. Due to this, the conversion of Dalits is often viewed as an 'anti-national' act in India (Bauman 2008; Patankar and Omvedt 1979; Robinson and Clark 2003; Viswanathan 2007).

However, their opposition to Dalit conversion comes from a biased perspective rooted in historical, social, and political motivations rather than a genuine commitment to religious philosophy. This bias is evident when examining the Hindu reconversion movement, particularly through the practice of *shuddhi*[24] (purification), which sought to bring converts back to Hinduism. The re-conversion movement to Hinduism through *shuddhi* had started in the 20th century, although the initial emergence of this practice occurred earlier in the late

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23   Ramesh was interviewed on 13 December 2021.

24   The word *shuddhi* implies purification in the Sanskrit language. *Arya Samaj* used this word to describe the process of purification or reconversion of individuals, particularly Dalits, who had converted to another religion, i.e. a religion other than Hinduism.

19th century with the *Arya Samaj* movement, which was a local reformers' reaction to British colonialism and the Western influence (Jones 1989). Zavos (1999) explains that *Arya Samaj's* core beliefs, including a single God, the supremacy of the Vedas, and the Vedic Age as a golden era, were successfully incorporated in the mainstream Hinduism. This alternative framework was developed in reaction to Christian missionary's conversion efforts and was closely tied to the concept of Hindu *dharma*.[25] It served as the foundation for what later became the political nationalist movement with the idea that everyone could be brought back to their 'authentic' Hindu faith. Reflecting on the pattern of the regional configuration of *shuddhi* in the late twentieth century, Patankar and Omvedt (1979) argued that the various meanings and applications of *shuddhi* were being transformed and got radicalized to justify Hindu majoritarian political propaganda.

Commenting on the contemporary *ghar-wapsi*[26] campaign, Yashasvini Rajeshwar and C. Amore Roy (2019) highlight the role of such organizations as *Arya Samaj* and *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS) in promoting Hindu nationalism. It has been observed that *ghar-wapsi* incidents have gained a prominent increase in recent years, particularly since the *Bhartiya Janata Party* came to power in 2014.[27] These conversions are sometimes controversial and often entail intimidation and violence, but the present Government under the leadership of Narendra Modi of the *Bhartiya Janata Party* has been trying to distance itself from the re-conversion activity promoted by RSS (Rajeshwar and Roy 2019).

The contradiction in the opposition to Dalit conversions lies in the fact that those opposing conversions to other religions have themselves actively engaged in reconversion efforts. This highlights a selective application of religious philosophy. On the one hand, they argue against Dalit conversions on the grounds that Dalits are an integral part of Hinduism. On the other hand, they actively pursue reconversion strategies like *shuddhi* to bring back those who had left the Hindu fold, revealing a utilitarian approach to religious identity that serves broader socio-political objectives. It is also important to note that the

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25   While often translated simply as 'religion' or 'duty', *Dharma* encompasses a much broader and nuanced meaning. It refers to the moral and ethical principles that govern individual behaviour, societal norms, and cosmic order in Hinduism.

26   *Ghar-wapsi* (in Hindi 'returning home') means reconversion of Dalits into Hinduism.

27   For instance, Pravin Togadia, the leader of the *Vishva Hindu Parishad* organization (VHP), argued that VHP alone has helped over 500,000 Christians and 250,000 Muslims to reconvert to Hinduism. According to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh data, their annual rate of *ghar-wapsi* surpassed that of the previous year which was 15,000.

supporters of the Hindu majoritarian politics oppose Dalit conversion only in the context of non-Indic religions, namely, Christianity and Islam. They tolerate the conversion between Indic religions, such as conversion between Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism.

Following the preceding discussion, a few questions with respect to the *ghar-wapsi* campaign were asked during the fieldwork. It was highly surprising to note that Dalits of Shabbirpur offered a new interpretation, or one may call it a subaltern interpretation, of *ghar-wapsi*, which is distinct from the idea of *ghar-wapsi* in Hinduism.

Agni Bhaskar and his wife Reena were one of the families in the village who were severely affected by the 2017 caste-clash. Their home was set on fire, and Bhaskar endured several injuries and had nine bones broken. If one visits the village, one can still notice the charred marks on the wall of their home. He also added that, although the people of Shabbirpur village took *diksha* (a Buddhist ceremony of initiation) in 2017, he has been a Buddhist since 1984. He even expressed the desire to show his Buddhist certificate from 1984. Unfortunately, all of his documents had been burnt during the 2017 attack. Bhaskar, while sharing his views on conversion and Buddhism, said:

> The Government is asking people to return to Hinduism, we too are returning to our religion, that is, Buddhism. We do not require Hindu practices based on superstition or casteism. We should instead focus on the path of education taught in Buddhism which is our native religion (*hamara mulnivas dharm hai*).

A sense of self-confidence and consciousness was observed among converted Dalits as they proudly claimed that it was their *ghar-wapsi*. Thus, one may say that the religious conversion of Dalits in Shabbirpur should not be observed only as an immediate response to the attack by *Rajputs*. Instead, it suggests the assertion of Dalits for their distinct religious identity which comes from their previous religious tradition of Ravidas worship and continuous through conversion to Buddhism.

Positioning Ravidas in the life of Dalits of Shabbirpur

Most of the Dalits I communicated with during my fieldwork referred to themselves as Buddhists, but they also referred to Ravidas as their prime religious leader or God. They claimed that they were followers of *sant guru* Ravidas and

hence, even after becoming Buddhist, they preferred to give prime importance to Ravidas and his teachings. In this sense, it contradicts the popular notion that religious conversion simply denotes a transfer of religious affiliation (Peel 1977). Instead, it is a social process wherein people change their religious affiliation into another "with or without a spiritual transformation" (Mathew 1982, 1082). Conversion for Shabbirpur Dalits was not a transfer of faith or spirituality, but rather a social and political repositioning. They wanted to change religion, primarily because of social reasons—discriminatory practices that stem from Hindu religion. Religiously and spiritually, they continue to relate themselves to the Ravidas *bhakti* tradition, despite the fact that they had adopted a new religious identity as Dalit Buddhists. Interestingly, this continuation is not unintentional. It is a conscious attempt to keep both pre- and post-conversion religious traits as part of their current identity. For example, a respondent, named Agni Bhaskar,[28] said:

Ravidas Ji is our ancestor, who will forget him.

Bhaskar narrated a story about the humanitarian teachings of Ravidas and the importance of him as a *guru* or a religious leader in the lives of Dalits. He recounted:

Some 600 years ago today, Sikandar Lodi[29] was ruling the Khairalgarh region. During the time, Ravidas Ji was addressing a meeting, he (Ravidas) said in that meeting that everyone deserves clothes, sufficient food, and a place to live irrespective of whatever religion and caste one belongs to. When Sikandar Lodhi came to know about this, Ravidas Ji was caught and arrested.

The majority of the converted Dalits noted that, after conversion, they stopped any kind of idol worship (by idol worship, it means the idols of Hindu Gods and Goddesses), except for Ravidas. They further added that they only visit the Ravidas temple. On this, Bhaskar intervened and said:

We do not bow down to anyone. What is the meaning of worship (*puja-paath*)? These uneducated people do not even know the meaning of worship. The

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28   Agni Bhaskar and his wife Reena were one of the families in the village who were severely affected by the 2017 caste clash. Their home was set on fire, and Bhaskar was badly beaten. As a result, nine of his bones were broken. He was interviewed on 11 November 2021.

29   Sikandar Lodi was a prominent ruler of Delhi Sultanate who ruled from 1489 to 1517.

word *poo* means complete, and the word *ja* means information, which means that when I have complete information, only then I will accept someone, only then I will know someone, and only then have faith in him. All this practice of *puja-paath* is made by this *Manuvaad* people, it is not ours. This is the reason that we urge our people to adopt Buddhism and make them aware of the teachings of Gautama Buddha.

However, Bhaskar's narration opens up some crucial points with respect to the Dalit religion, or the religion of the oppressed. The idea of a Dalit religion exists in contrast to the prevailing supremacy of Hinduism which is based on myths, discriminatory caste system, and untouchability. He used the word *Manuvaad* to refer to Hindu people who follow the ancient *Manusmriti*[30]. Ambedkar, as a reply to Mahatma Gandhi in his undelivered speech written in 1936, laid down his criticism towards *Manusmriti*, arguing that it promotes casteism and patriarchal religious principles, as well as legitimizes untouchability against the lower castes and women (Ambedkar 2014).

For the converted Dalits, religion is no longer confined to the hands of the few privileged and so-called sacred people; it is now reaching out to those who were previously denied access to God. It also challenges the ascriptive monopoly of Brahminical upper caste claims over God, religion, and religious rituals. A similar argument was given by Aloysius in his study of Tamil Buddhists who questioned the whole idea of religion given by Brahminical sources (Aloysius 1998).

Bhaskar, while explaining the importance of *sant guru* Ravidas in the life of the converted Dalit Buddhists in the village, said:

Ravidas was not a *Mahatma* or great. He was just like Buddha, Kanshiram, and Babasaheb Ambedkar. He was a leader of the poor and of the lower caste people. So, we believe in him and in his leadership.

For Bhaskar, Ravidas is as important as other religious and political leaders who have taught about social equality. It is interesting to observe how religious and political leaders are integrated into the coherent ideational universe among Dalits.

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30 *Manusmriti* or "The Laws of Manu" is one of the sacred and authoritative books in Hinduism. It prescribes to Hindus their *Dharma* or code of conduct as a member of one of the four social classes of *varna* system. It has influence on all aspects of Hindu thought and lays out the justification of the caste system.

The religious atmosphere in the Dalit households in the village is a clear indication of syncretic religious practice. Conversion to Buddhism has not entirely detached them from their previous cultural and ritual practices. Instead, they have integrated a few symbols to represent their new religious identity. They do not keep the idols of Hindu gods and deities in their homes anymore, but the photos and images of Ravidas, Ambedkar, and Gautama Buddha were prominently displayed at the entrance of every Dalit home. While they could not completely reject their previous marriage ceremonies and other ritual practices that are conducted in the form similar to Hindu practices, they have reinterpreted their cultural and religious practices by imbuing them with new meanings and nuances. For instance, instead of taking blessings from Hindu gods and goddesses, they seek blessings from Ravidas, Buddha, and Ambedkar. They reject the notion of the Brahmin priest as the highest authoritative position, and do not associate priesthood with the birth right. Instead, they have developed their own method of selecting priests from their caste based on knowledge, wisdom, and seniority to conduct rituals. Additionally, the converts have also developed a textual form for their indigenous religious expression through the Ravidas *Chalisa*.[31]

Dalit religious identity appears to be fuzzy and fluid. However, this fuzziness is not meaningless. It represents the subtle resistance against the supremacy of Hinduism and its caste system and the pursuit of equality, justice, and empowerment. Dalit religious syncretism is not bound by any structural religious dogmas rather it keeps accommodating the changes occurring in the immediate socio-political context.

Conclusion

The study reveals that the Dalits of Shabbirpur nominally converted their religious identity from Hinduism to Buddhism after the violent caste conflict in the village in 2017. However, they did not make major changes in their religious beliefs or spiritual life as they were following *sant guru* Ravidas as their spiritual leader even before their conversion and continue his veneration after converting to Buddhism. A similar, yet different approach can be observed in the case of the sanitation labor caste of *Lal Begis* in Lucknow, who despite outwardly adopting Hindu names and *Valmiki* identity, retained their traditional *Lal Begi* practices

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31   A small booklet composed of hymns and mantras on Ravidas by Sammandas Maharaj, a contemporary preacher of Ravidas *bhakti* in western Uttar Pradesh.

in private. This reflects a tactical dissimulation where the community appeared to conform to Hindu norms publicly while maintaining their distinct socio-religious identity privately. The transition to *Valmiki* identity was not purely a cultural or spontaneous sanskritization but was a politically motivated move to secure their constitutional rights for reservation (Lee 2015). Therefore, one needs to be critical when discussing religious conversion among Dalits because it is not about a drastic change from one religion to another, but rather about syncretizing religious practices and sociopolitical motives. Dalit religion in Shabbirpur appears to resemble Dalit grassroots politics in a sense that it includes saints, epic heroes, and political leaders into the Dalit ideological and religious fold as long as their thoughts and ideas are centered around critiquing caste inequality and advocating for social justice.

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Rethinking a *Better Life* – (Im)mobility Experiences of Vilnius Roma Families

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Abstract. Most of the Vilnius Roma families are actively engaged in transnational family networks shaping their everyday life, their social imaginations and life trajectories. When discussing the migratory experiences and the meaning of a better life, there is a constant comparison between 'here' and 'there', or between lives in Lithuania and abroad. 'Here' is a place where Roma are always spotted and stigmatised, while 'there' assures invisibility and, hence, more opportunities. The circulating ideals about the 'abroad' can be read as a disappointment with a life 'here' – what is idealised, fantasised and seen as a goal 'out there', it is what people would wish to have in Lithuania. This comparison and lived experiences are becoming a collective community knowledge that is shared among all generations – one does not have to really experience life abroad to know that there is a place where everyone "can feel a human being." But can the imagined paradise be also criticised and questioned? Can a better life be related only to some geographical space and socio-economic experiences? This chapter is based on a long-term ethnographic fieldwork among Vilnius Roma families.

Keywords: Transnational family networks, better life, Vilnius Roma, social imaginations, social exclusion.

Vlada came to my office on a Friday afternoon – our work day was about to finish. "Agnieška, I want to go to England with my family," she said. I found this decision unexpected at that time even though I had already heard about many of her relatives living in the UK for more than 10 years. "Can you help me to find flight tickets?" she asked me with a genuine smile on her face. She seemed excited and confident with her decision. I opened Google Chrome and we dug into searching the cheapest and most convenient flight options. Ten minutes later I already had a one-way ticket from Vilnius to Liverpool in my e-mail box under Vlada's name. She would leave in four days. Next day, I received an e-mail from *Ryanair Holdings Plc* informing that, under new regulations, all passengers travelling to the UK were required to fill in an immigration form. It was a new law which entered into force after Brexit. I called Vlada's mother Aldona to clarify the daughter's passport details which I needed to finish the check-in registration.

Aldona's heart was breaking, she confessed with a deep sigh that she was sad to bid farewell to the eldest daughter. When I printed the boarding pass, Vlada's brother Germanas came with his uncle and younger brother to pick it up. "Are you happy your sister is leaving?" I asked Germanas that day. "Yes, I think I am. It would be much better for her *there*."

In this chapter, I will follow the transnational (im)mobility experiences and imaginations about a better life and how it is described, experienced and imagined by Vilnius Roma families. As my research revealed, Roma migrate westward not only to create better financial well-being, but also to escape discrimination and racial stigmatisation imposed on them in the country of origin. While constantly comparing and negotiating life *here* and *there*, my informants guided me through what it feels to be Roma *here*, in Lithuania, and *there*, in England (or elsewhere, abroad), and how (im)mobility experiences enhance social imagination about *a better life* on different sides of national borders.

Methodology

The fieldwork data was gathered during an ethnographic research carried out in Vilnius among Roma who had at least one immediate relative living abroad and/or had some migration experience by themselves. My initial intention was to interview Roma from Vilnius whose relatives had migrated to mostly Western countries but who had never been abroad themselves. However, when I started to mingle around and raise migration-related questions, I quickly realised that it would be hard to find informants without previous experience of engaging in transnational mobility. Even though I was sure that some of my informants had never travelled abroad, longer conversations proved I was wrong. Finally, I decided to include both, and to extend my research coverage to those who had lived abroad and/or had close relatives living abroad. This fact is crucial in focusing my research on (im)mobility experiences as my informants drew their experiences, notions and imaginations about life *here* and *there* from both personal and communal experiences, and it was difficult to define a clear line between what is a personal experience and what is a circulating knowledge or experience of others. Hence, by (im)mobility experiences, I mean both the experience of those who had lived abroad for a longer period of time by themselves and returned to the country of origin, and those who had never been abroad but were keeping close contacts with family members who had emigrated, which strongly impacted their imaginations about the life abroad.

I started my fieldwork in September 2020, and I continued it until the end of February 2021. Even though the main fieldwork was carried out in 2020/2021, some of my data dates back to 2018 and 2019 when I had my first conversations with Roma families about their transnational (im)mobility experiences and I became interested in the topic. During the fieldwork, I returned to some of these families to carry out semi-structured interviews.

My ethnographic data is based on conversations and interactions with 18 informants, with 12 of whom I had conducted semi-structured interviews. The main site of my research (and participant observation) were two extended families residing in Vilnius City who clearly identified themselves as Roma – in total 10 people (excluding children under 16). I named them Aldona's and Liza's families. As my research revealed, for my informants, the family is a primary context in which migration practices and imaginaries take place. It is an *emic* perspective through which transnational (im)mobility is experienced, practiced, and imagined. Transnational family networks deserve additional theorisation and specification, however, it is not the subject of my paper this time.

My main informants had been connected with each other via kinship and familial ties constituting close-knit transnational family networks. Both families had been affected by the transnational mobility of their relatives (or themselves), and almost all family members to some extent had been participating in these (im)mobility processes. It really facilitated the study of how a family becomes a primary field of social practices and migrations surpassing national borders (Sørensen and Olwig 2001). Moreover, the practiced relationships between mobile and immobile family members showed how relatives living abroad play an important role in the definition and decision-making of the family members back home, leading them to reconfigure their imaginations, aspirations, and expectations (Tamagno 2001).

I had a reliable gatekeeper – my youngest informant Germanas, a son of Aldona, (at the time of my fieldwork, he was 16 years old) who introduced me to the whole of his family and enabled a deep and strong contact with the majority of the family members living in Vilnius (7 people in total). Members of Aldona's and Liza's families constituted more than half of all my informants I interviewed during the fieldwork. Other five informants were individuals not related to these families by kin, but they were members of their own transnational family networks. I was able to reach them by personal contacts and the snowball method. All of them were regular visitors in the Day Centre and the Community Centre.

I would argue that the conclusions of my research go beyond the (im) mobility experiences of just these two Roma families from Vilnius. First of all,

the lived experiences and the socio-economic situation of people who identify themselves as Roma are quite similar in Vilnius, and in Lithuania in general (Kontvainė 2020). It also shows that the two families I chose as my main site can be contextualised in a broader Vilnius Roma community, and their experiences could be representative of Vilnius Roma (im)mobility experiences at large. I do not want to generalise and homogenise Vilnius Roma as a single entity. It is definitely a more diverse group, but my research would illuminate a dominating narrative and attitudes within Vilnius Roma community.

Theoretical approach

While interacting with Roma community in Vilnius, and elsewhere in Lithuania, I have not met a single family which would not have someone close living abroad. Whenever we would meet, some would be welcoming and others would be bidding farewell to their brothers, sisters, sons and daughters, mothers, fathers and grandparents who were about to hit the road (or take a flight) to England or any other Western destination, and others finally coming back home after months (and sometimes years) of living abroad. It was a repeating experience of mine – hearing someone stay and someone go, come back, stay a little bit and go abroad again. Everyday interactions with Roma families were inseparable from stories about international migrations, dreaming about *luchshaya zhizn'* (Rus. a better life) abroad and the issues they were facing at home. It made me think that transnational mobility constitutes an important part of everyday Roma experiences, but it was clear that not everyone is mobile, and that not everyone is migrating. So how does migration impact the ones who are staying?

A recent so-called 'mobility turn' in migration studies calls to pay greater attention to immobility and recognise its complex and compound character (Schewel 2015). Aileen Stockdale and Tialda Haartsen (2018) in the editorial introduction of the journal *Population, Space and Place* call for the adoption of an immobility perspective and stimulate others to consider stayers as active participants and staying as an active process. Staying put should be viewed as a conscious and deliberate decision with explicit outcomes. By adopting an immobility perspective, focusing on the processes of staying (rather than on why people did not move), the agency of stayers could be recognised, and different perceptions and interrelations of staying could be uncovered.

Mata-Codesal argues that (im)mobility is a complex research category which entails very different reasons, motivations and meanings, just as transnational

mobility. Similar to migration, it can be an embodied experience, culturally constructed and socially enacted (Mata-Codesal 2015). It is important to add, though, that despite the slow recognition of the importance of immobility for the initiation, development, and maintenance of migratory projects, migration studies have incorporated immobility and non-migrants in the research on transnational families and migrant networks (Mata-Codesal 2018).

Literature on immobility suggests that, for many non-migrants, staying also reflects and requires agency; it is a conscious choice that is renegotiated and repeated throughout the life course, hence it is not a stable condition, it is a dynamical process (Gray 2011; Hjälm 2011; Mata-Codesal 2018; Preece 2017; Stockdale and Haartsen 2018). As different ethnographic research show, staying is not merely a solitary condition, vacuumed from interrelations with others. It is a highly connected and complementary state within different life projects. In other words, staying is connected to other people and life strategies (Hjälm 2014), and mobility and immobility are interchanging practices.

As burgeoning immobility literature suggests, those 'left behind' are not always 'stuck' as they are sometimes referred to, but are a far more heterogeneous group in terms of the personal conditions, household compositions, motivations, and diverse family livelihood strategies. Stayers can be forced, involuntary, desired, attached/detached, tied, rooted/unrooted, intentional/unintended, etc., so it is never a singular homogenous group. In other words, immobility is 'involuntary' for some but 'desirable' for many others (Carling 2018; Hjälm 2014; Jingzhong 2018; Mata-Codesal 2018; Schewel, Carling 2018; Stockdale and Haartsen 2018).

One should be aware of relationality between mobility and immobility and to challenge the binary opposition which denies the simultaneity of connection and differentiation between the two. As I already wrote above, during my research, it was sometimes difficult to distinguish the experiences of mobility and immobility among my informants in terms of whether they came from personal encounters or from circulating collective imaginations. I decided to use the term *(im)mobility* to highlight the close connection between staying and going.

Another important category that I focused on in my research was the one of social imaginaries. A growing number of anthropological literature engages with the role of the imagination in migration processes. Arjun Appadurai back in 1996 stated that the imagination had become an organised field of social practices, a form of work (in the sense of both labour and a culturally organised practice), and a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individuals) and globally defined fields of possibilities (Appadurai 1996, 2004). He stressed that many people 'today' (i.e. at the time of his paper) live in such imagined worlds,

and these imaginaries penetrate everyday practices which have become an inseparable element of understanding (and creating) our surrounding in the context of (im)mobility (Appadurai 1996).

The concept of imaginaries is essential for trying to transcendent the binary division of motion and fixity. Even when a person is tied to a place, he or she can move across the globe through the imaginaries fuelled by mass-media, states, organisations, collective memory, religiosity or stories of relative migrants and/ or returnees. The imaginaries of mobility can impact one's experience of staying put. Studying and questioning imaginaries of (im)mobility gives an opportunity to grasp the ongoing global transformations, they can also act as imagined alternatives to international migration (Salazar 2010).

Echoing Appadurai and Salazar, the imaginations are not naturally 'existing inside people's minds' but are shaped through engagements with the material and the ideal (Ingold 2013). Besides that, imaginaries are constructed "within a landscape of multiple and at times competing visions of what *should* be imagined and what *should* be desired" (Chambers 2018, 1422). Migration imaginations is a socially constructed project – when everyone around is talking about *a better life* abroad, one also starts to imagine it as an option. Hence, (im)mobility imaginaries can have an impact on life aspirations – by idealising and imagining abroad as 'another world', new wants, needs, dreams, expectations and calculations can be developed, and new forms of attitudes can be formed (Carling, 2008, 2014). The imaginaries exist in different configurations and are not fixed to time and space – they can change over time. They also do not exist in a social vacuum – various legal, social, economic, cultural and political circumstances, which rearrange mobility-immobility decisions, can impact how and why the abroad is imagined.

Enhanced (im)mobility imaginations (cultivated by personal and collective mobility experiences) can be viewed as "new subjectivities or forms of consciousness that may offer challenges to normalized hierarchies, structures, or inequalities" (Chambers 2018, 1424). By imagining *a better life* possible somewhere, not here, it challenges "the given repertoire of lived lives and revealing its restrictions" (Römhild 2003, 22).

The broadened social horizons brought by migration imaginaries can be seen as "a form of resistance to existing imbalances of power and economic constraints" (Salazar 2010, 12). When a personal mode of existence *here* is circumscribed by a lack of means to achieve substantial socio-economic changes and communicate these struggles in public, (im)mobility imaginaries can become an ultimate space for social critique where experienced social injustice can be addressed and social rights reclaimed (Jónsson 2008).

(Im)mobility imaginaries do not serve solely to praise and idealize 'other worlds'. Foreign places can be imagined as preferable due to economic circumstances and cosmopolitan lifestyles, but they not always bring overall satisfaction. Noel Salazar concludes that, among Tanzanian youth, imaginations "also offer critiques that illustrate that overseas migration is best envisioned as a temporary endeavour undertaken mainly to improve one's life at home" (p. 5). Gardner stated that, by imagining foreign worlds, those who have never migrated can develop an ambivalent relationship with the homeland (Salazar 2011, after Gardner 1993). (Im)mobility imaginations, however, can also have an opposite effect – sometimes imagining moving abroad where one does not speak the language, does not have family and does not feel being in a right place, can reinforce personal attachments and belonging in the country of origin. Ultimately, personal aspirations filter imaginaries and ideas of other possible places and lives (Salazar 2020).

Finally, there is a growing academic interest in the 'Roma migration' field as such. The narrative of mass migrations by Roma from Central and Eastern Europe to the Western countries is exaggerated and shaped by media and politicians, especially those of the right-wing alliance, contributing to the stigmatisation and *othering* of European Roma. In a public discourse, Roma migrants are under a magnifying glass despite the real intensity of their engagement in the international mobility, and, as various estimates show, they are not the most dominant migrant group in Europe. As Vera Messing (2019) states, the scope of international migrations of Roma in the European perspective is insignificant as most Roma "are too powerless and lack the funds to be mobile" (p. 23). Scholars explain it that in Europe Roma are being perceived as rather a 'racialized minority' and not just an ethnic group. (Kocze, Van Baar 2020; Sardelić 2019). The existing 'imagination' of massive migration flows by Roma spurred the academic interest in the topic over the past few decades.

Literature of Roma migrations which I have examined (Fiałkowska et al. 2018(a), 2018(b), 2018(c), 2020; Grill 2012, 2018; Magazzini andPiemontese 2016, 2019; Messing 2019; Sardelić 2019; Tremlett 2014) is mainly focused on the westward mobility and new integration strategies, policies concerning Roma migrants, gender issues, kinship networks, and the changing identity patterns. In-depth qualitative methodology and ethnographic accounts of lived experiences of individuals and families of the Roma origin are especially useful and valuable because they allow to see how Roma themselves perceive and make sense of their migratory processes. This information can hardly be captured by just national statistics or surveys.

There has been no qualitative research on the topic in Lithuania before, and my study aims at investigating it for the first time. There are, however, new and profound research in the field from Central European scholars who were very helpful and inspiring for my research process. I found qualitative studies by Polish anthropologists and social scientists, such as Kamila Fiałkowska (2018, 2020), Michał Gerapich (2018, 2020) and Elżbieta Mirga-Wójtowicz (2018, 2020), who investigated the recent migration experiences of the Polish Roma, very valuable and helpful for my own work. Their works are a result of a consistent and long-term ethnographic observation of Roma migrations from Poland, mostly from the area of Southern Poland. Slovak anthropologist Jan Grill (2018) is another significant scholar whose work about Slovak Roma migrations to Britain helped me to better understand how a racialised 'darkness' imposed on Roma bodies shape (im)mobility experiences and imaginaries among Vilnius Roma.

Empirical findings

Vlada's brother Germanas is a great saviour when it concerns family matters. He is always there to support departing relatives and meet the returning ones, he genuinely wishes her sister to succeed abroad because "it would be better for her. Maybe she will learn English, maybe she will find a job. Not like here" (Germanas, 16). He knows that there she will have her life easier, that her being Roma will not be such a stigmatising experience as here. And he perfectly knows what he means. Germanas attends a Russian language school in Naujininkai District in Vilnius, the capital city. He likes it there, he has friends, he is good at math, all of his siblings are attending the same school. However, a few years ago he was not that satisfied with the education process. Together with his after-school tutors, there was a decision to switch schools – Germanas started attending a Lithuanian language school in a district which was supposed to be of higher standards. But his experience was devastating. "There was lots of bullying happening" – Germanas remembers a few years later. "They would call me *juodas* (Lit. *black*), *čigonas* (Lit. *gypsy*) and other stuff. At first, I was angry, I wanted to hit them back, but later I just stopped paying attention." He started to skip lessons, he would not participate in after-class activities. That year, Germanas did not finish his school year – he decided to take a break, disconnect from everyone and everything. He returned only next autumn – but already back to the old school.

His grandmother Natalija is despaired hearing how her grandchildren are treated and feel at school, and in general public:

N: Out there *people are not divided like* here. *People are divided, harmed here, and there they are not.*
Me: How are they divided here?
N: Here people are divided, children go to school, and they are divided at school.
Me: What do you mean by divided?
N: Well, like her [pointing at her granddaughter – my remark], *she is Roma, I am Lithuanian and so on. People get away from her, stare at her weirdly, everything, insult her.*
Me: At school?
N: Yes, it happens also at school, there are lots of stories like that.
Me: And how is there then?
N: Ten užsienyje *(Lit. there, abroad) no one divides people into us and them. It doesn't matter which nation you are, everyone is equal. There they don't divide people by nations, for sure. There is another culture towards people, everyone behaves well with others, everyone is polite. Children feel fine at school. If someone sees that you are in trouble, they will come, ask if everything is alright. And here, if people saw you, everyone would just pass by. Everyone would pass by. Children might be in trouble, attacked. No one would say anything* (an extract from interview with Natalija, 50*).*

"There I could just be" – (in)visibility of (im)mobility

For my informants, 'abroad' gains almost a mythical status of a multicultural land with equal rights for everyone. For them, the migration process and experiences of the new destination is more than just moving from a relatively homogenous Lithuanian capital to the more diverse urban areas in the UK. For them, it is an escape from the dominating white Lithuanian gaze, as Jan Grill (2018) would frame it, to the place where "we can feel normal humans as anyone else" (Natalija, 50). It assures desired invisibility. *Here*, Roma feel always being in a spotlight, they are trapped in a fixed category of suspicion and stigmatisation. Every time Germanas walks on the street, he feels "those looks of people, as something we did wrong, as if we owe something to someone" (Germanas, 16).

On the contrary, "there no one would even guess I am Roma. It is so diverse there. If I go to work, it is only a human, a simple human came. It is all about humans, there is nothing like *here*. There is no difference what is your eye colour, what is your nationality, none of these things" (Marina, 35).

This invisibility allows liberating oneself from prescribed fixed identities and preconceived notions, it allows being finally 'a simple human-being'. This human-

comes-first approach – which Vilnius Roma imagine to find abroad – becomes existential, even metaphysical:

> *If we talk about Roma, about our nation, and to think where I would just feel myself better, it is definitely in another country. I would feel myself* svobodnee *(Rus. freer**), I could just be**. I lived in England, so I know. I felt myself good* there. *No one pays attention to you, no one looks at you from above that you are Roma, or Jewish, or anyone else. But* here – *you have no choice, you are always spotted* (Marina, 35).

In the diverse multicultural environment, the skin colour and appearance are not automatically ascribed to the negative social capital of being Roma (Grill, 2018) as compared to their daily existence in Lithuania. British Roma Jonathan Lee, who is currently working as an Advocacy & Communication Manager at European Roma Rights Centre, in one of the podcast series titled *The Romani Tea Room. What about Brexit*? shares his insights of being Roma in the UK. His explanations coincide with Vilnius Roma (im)mobility experiences:

> *In the UK, Roma don't stand out as they would in Eastern Europe which is predominantly white. The UK is one of the most multicultural countries in Europe. Roma migrate to cities which are very diverse. They don't look like what majority of British people think how* Gypsy *look like. For a while they could pass under the radar to some extent. However, Roma learn not to advertise their ethnicity as British Roma do as there is still a high level of accepted anti-gypsism* (Lee 2018).

Vilnius Roma families, however, rarely encountered direct anty-gypsism compared to their experiences at home. Vladimir shared one personal story which he interpreted as a general example of the local Lithuanian hostility towards Roma:

> *V: Once I was going to the market in Rudamina* [a small town in Southern Lithuania – my remark] *by bus, and one guy started to insult me.*
> *Me: Because you are Roma?*
> *V: Yes, 'Look at you, you are Gypsies, you steal, you go from home to home, you steal, you do this, you do that'. And what you think – he grabbed my throat, pulled me to the window, and I could not do anything. And all the Lithuanians sitting in the bus – they did nothing, they said nothing. Only the driver. He said: 'What are you doing, let him go'.*

P: He opened the door and pulled the guy out of the bus. 'Go out now or I will call the police'.
V: But this guy called out to fight. You understand. If I go to fight with him, hit him hard, he goes to police, and I will go to jail. Maybe by accident, but I can harm him hard, maybe even deadly. And then what. I will be guilty, no matter what. Because they are Lithuanians, they would support each other, not us. This is how it is here, you understand. If one Roma guy did something somewhere, some idiot, we all will be blamed for that. In England it would not happen (Patrina, 43, and Vladimir, 44).

It is not only the British diversity that releases Vilnius Roma from the stigma. As Jonathan Lee states, Roma would not face the same levels of marginalisation in the UK as they would in Eastern Europe, not only because people are more open, but because the state institutions are more robust, the democratic structures are stronger, anti-discrimination legislations are more advanced than in Eastern Europe (Lee 2018). Those Roma who have lived in the UK for some time are aware of their rights and the legal consequences people might face due to racial insults. This is something still hardly imaginable in Lithuania:

V: Out there we are not different from anyone else. There is plenty like us. Out there no one would dare say something like: 'Oh look, a Gypsy *is going'. If you hear something like this, that's it, you can write a complaint. You can report it. You can write a complaint on this person, and he will pay, he will be paying all his life…*
P: It means a person offended me, and it is not allowed there, we are protected from this. And here… impossible… (Patrina, 43, and Vladimir, 44).

Here, they feel and are made to feel *chernyye* (Rus. Blacks) (Germanas, 16), *there* they are "one of many" (Marina, 35). Roma have been historically placed at the bottom of the societal hierarchy, objectified by the state policies and social stratification leaving few possibilities to get out (Grill 2012). In England, Roma are not, ultimately, perceived as one fixed ethnic group, they can acquire and manifest several identities. Marina felt content that no one would recognise her as Roma when she lived in England. "No one would even guess" – she admits. There was one situation, though. She was working in a yarn manufactory, and one of her colleagues was an older mechanic, in his 70s. It was a really hot day, and, in order to protect herself from the rising dust, she decided to tie a head scarf. The story continued as following:

Just a simple head scarf [Marina laughing – my remark]*, but just in a way how we do it. In Lithuania, people would immediately guess that I am Roma. But there, only this one man, this really old man. He was really nice, a good person, and he started to observe me. I worked with him for so many years, but only when I tied that head scarf, he came to me and asked: 'Aren't you Roma?'* [Marina laughing hard – my remark]. *I answered him: 'Yes, I am Roma'. And he continued: 'Only now I got it that you are somehow different, you are not Russian'. Because we would present ourselves as Russians. They would ask us 'Where are you from?' and we used to say: 'Lithuania'. 'What is your nationality?' And we would answer: 'We are Russians'. So it was always Russians, Russians. And only that one time, only that older man figured out that I am Roma but he didn't do or say anything. He knew what that was. 'Are you Roma?' 'Yes, I am' and that's it. There was nothing extraordinary about it* (Marina, 30).

It was a conscious decision of Marina and her friends, working in that factory, to present themselves as Russians. 'Juggling with identities' was one of the personal strategies exploiting the invisibility. While speaking with each other, every now and then Marina and her relatives would use some Russian words and, hence, their colleagues would rarely question their ethnicity. Other times they would be identified as Bulgarians or Serbians. This practice represents one of the possible strategies of processing (and dealing with) imposed identities. "In Lithuania it would be impossible" – Marina laughs.

"There is no place dearer than here" – rethinking personal belonging

The perception of the 'abroad' is not unambiguous, though. From the previous section, it may seem that Vilnius Roma recognise England/*užsienis* (Lit. foreign countries/ abroad) as inevitable for *a better life*. However, the imagination of a good life *here* and *there* is more complex. Those who are moving are claimed to "become multi-local: found and retained in more than one locality" (Tedeschi et. al. 2020). However, the tensions in the multi-localness are unavoidable, and personal attachments to these multiple localities can vary greatly. Migration, adaptation and staying are described as "not fixed processes, but are instead a relentless negotiation" (Tedeschi et. al. 2020, 5). Even though life abroad brings more social and financial stability and assures invisibility, *here* always remains *namai* (Lit. home) or *gimtinė* (Lit. motherland), ensures a sense of belonging.

Marius has never been to Western Europe to visit his siblings. Only once, back in the 1990s, he had a work-related visit to Białystok, Poland. Marius was invited to go to England or Denmark many times, but he refused because:

> *There is everything here, in Lithuania, for me, I was born here, I grew up here, and I feel the best here. My relatives, brothers and sisters were inviting me to come: 'You will come, you will have a place to live, you could live well, we will find you a wife.' No, no, I declined their offers. What will I do in that England, I will be a stranger there, I don't speak the language. In Lithuania I am* savas žmogus *(Lit. insider/I belong here)* (Marius, 55).

In the case of Marius, the sense of belonging outrivals the potential physical and social well-being. He heard many success stories of his siblings starting 'new lives' abroad, but he was never lured by them. He pointed many times that 'abroad' gives many more possibilities for Roma, however, he imagines 'abroad' as a place not for him, somewhere he would not feel really well. Attachment to the place of birth can be very sentimental but also be related to very practical concerns assuring a sense of belonging – understanding the language plays a huge role in feeling "to be among homeys" (Marius, 55).

Natalija visited England three times. She visited her brothers, spent time with her daughter, worked in a factory for a while. However, she could not remain longer than for a few months each time, she had "an urge to come back home where it's best for her" (Viktorija, 25). Natalija is convinced that if "the local government would help its people, no one would ever leave the country" (Natalija, 50). My informants stated that there should be reforms in the social welfare system, new labour market regulations, so everyone could find a work easily, earn more, provide for their children, buy food and clothes. If there were better conditions related to housing and employment possibilities for Roma, "no one would even consider going abroad. It's our country, it's our homeland, *niekur nėra nieko mielesnio* (Lit. there is no place dearer than here)" (Natalija, 50). Aldona shares a similar opinion: "We like to live here, we like Lithuania, just I wish the system worked better, if it did, it would be easier for us, nobody would leave. I was abroad a few times, worked there, but it's not for me, I did not like it, my place is here." It shows that staying is an active process of considerations and negotiations – people not just passively stayed behind those who moved abroad, but they are also choosing between several options. Carling proposes not to conceptualise the wish to stay as "the absence of migration aspirations, but rather as the presence of aspirations to remain in place" (Carling 2014, 12).

England is receiving criticism because of filth and dirt on the streets. It is contrasted with the neat and well-kept parks, walking trails, pavements in Vilnius. I spoke to Vlada after she returned from Liverpool in late October. She could not forget how "dirty it was *there.* Wherever you go, you find litter on the streets" (Vlada, 18). Germanas confirmed similar information. He has not seen it himself, but he already envisions England as a place "where people just throw trash on the pavement and they walk over this garbage" (Germanas, 16). His criticism of 'abroad' does not end here. For Germanas, "*užsienis* (Lit. foreign countries) changes people." After emigrating, people become arrogant. All of Germanas' friends who went abroad changed. They grew up together, *viename kieme* (Lit. in the same yard), everyone was friendly back then, but now when they come back to Lithuania, "they do not communicate with us anymore, they don't want to" (Germanas, 16). Germanas concludes: "I don't want to be like that."

Final notes

As my research shows, *here* and *there* became key points of reference for the informants. When discussing the meaning of a better life, there is a constant comparison between lives in Lithuania and abroad. (Im)mobility experiences are strongly dictated by both personal migratory experiences and imaginations shaped by the stories of others. Ethnic identification and various implications referred to it have become one of the binding elements among my informants linking it to their (im)mobility experiences. *Here* is a place where Roma are always spotted and stigmatised, while *there* assures invisibility and, hence, more opportunities. Circulating ideals about the 'abroad' can be perceived as disappointment with the life *here* – what is idealised, fantasised and seen as a goal *out there*, it is what people would wish to have in Lithuania. I would state that, for Vilnius Roma, (im)mobility imaginations can be seen as a space for social critique of experienced inequality and injustice. However, the picture happens to be much more complex than it could seem from the first sight. There is no *perfect place* – (im)mobility experiences, through a comparative perspective, allow Vilnius Roma families to renegotiate their relationship with different localities and gain critical distance to both of them. (Im)mobility experiences become "meaning-making and world-shaping devices" (Salazar 2010) which help to understand the surrounding, to rethink personal conditions, ethnicity, social and cultural rights, based on persistent comparison and new knowledge (and imaginations) about life *here* and *there.*

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Legal Opium Farming in India: Historical and Ethnographic Perspectives

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Abstract. This chapter[1] explores legal opium farming in Madhya Pradesh, India, by focusing on legal opium farmers and the complexities of their profession. The chapter is divided into three parts. An historical overview of opium cultivation and consumption in India shows that, throughout centuries, the opium plant has been used in many different ways, including medicinal, recreational, and ritual purposes. The second part focuses on how the Indian government regulates opium cultivation and consumption. In 1985 a still valid bill was passed by the Indian government regulating contemporary opium cultivation, possession, sale, purchasing, transport, and storage. Regulation of this psychotropic substance is outdated and poorly functioning, while the number of illicit drug use or possession cases has only increased in recent years (Mehrotra 2021; Sharma et al. 2017). The third part of the chapter analyses ethnographic data (interviews, photographs and fieldwork observations) gathered in two villages in Madhya Pradesh in August 2021 and February 2022. Farmers not only explained the traditional processes of opium cultivation and the meaning they attribute to opium, but they also shared what problems they were facing in their work, most of which are related to unclear or burdensome Government policies on opium cultivation and the increasing attractiveness of the black market.
Keywords: opium, legal opium farmers, India, ethnographic research, drug related policies.

Introduction

Due to a long history of opium cultivation, deep traditions related to this plant have developed over the centuries in South Asia and other parts of the world. Since ancient times, opium has long been used for medical, ritualistic, or recreational purposes.

There are a number of articles and books discussing opium cultivation in various parts of the world; mostly the focus of these texts is on opium use for

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1   This chapter is based on the bachelor thesis in Area Studies titled "Legal Opium Farms in India: Historical and Ethnographic Perspectives", which was defended at the Institute of Asian and Transcultural Studies of Vilnius University in 2022.

medical purposes and its presence on the black market. I will draw on the rich literature on the history of opium use in indigenous medical systems and its regulation. Even though India is the world's largest manufacturer of legal opium for the pharmaceutical industry, there is scarce academic material related to legal opium farmers and their work. Below, I will briefly review several of the most relevant ethnographic studies conducted by researchers with legal opium farmers.

Beverly A. Smith in her collective article *Cultivation and Use of Opium in Rural India: Bottom-Up Insights into Anti-Drug Efforts* (2007) interviewed 50 licensed opium farmers from 13 randomly selected villages in Madhya Pradesh. The researchers focused their attention on the Government-led policies and programs which they deemed to be ineffective. They also discussed the lack of education among opium farmer communities in rural areas. Opium addiction and crop diversion in India are a few other common problems observed by the researchers (Smith, et al. 2007, 30–32). However, the timespan between this scientific article and my research is 15 years, during which, the authorities passed laws which severely affected the farmers. I will analyze these new changes in the empirical part of this chapter.

For comparing opium poppy cultivation and traditions in other countries, I will use the ethnographic research of Kyle T. Evered *Traditional Ecologies of the Opium Poppy and Oral History in Rural Turkey* (2011). Evered conducted forty individual interviews with retired Turkish opium farmers. The paper offers insights on how the Turkish governmental policies of opium eradication may deliver cultural, eco-logical, and political impact on a people and a nation (Evered 2011). The informa-tion gathered by the author and the conclusions drawn about legal opium farmers in Turkish villages are consistent with my research, and they show that the culture and problems of opium farmers are quite similar internationally.

The existing research largely focuses on the history and legal aspects of opium cultivation in India, while sometimes comparing it with opium cultivation in different countries such as Turkey. Much less attention is dedicated to opium farming as a profession and farmers' attitudes towards opium cultivation. My research will focus on the following dimensions of opium cultivation in India: its history, regulation, agricultural practice, and farmers' views.

The first part of the chapter gives a historical overview of opium cultivation and an explanation why the interest in opium by a wide range of social groups has remained significant to the present day. In modern times this plant is still widely used in the making of important medicines, such as codeine, diamorphine, morphine, etc. (Pathan et al. 2012). Currently, the states of Rajasthan, Madhya

Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh are the only states in India where the psychoactive opium plant is legally grown. The opium grown there is regulated by the State and transferred from farms to the pharmaceutical sector. Then, opium is used for medicinal purposes. However, due to being in high demand, some of the opium appears on the black market as an illegal drug. For the latter reason, the opium farming remains a controversial topic.

The second part of this chapter shows the processes related to the contemporary legislation on opium cultivation from the point of view of legal opium farmers and the point of view of policy makers.

The final part of the chapter focuses on the analysis of empirical data gathered in two villages in Madhya Pradesh in August 2021 and February 2022. The research was conducted in this particular state because, statistically, these farmers produce one of the largest yields of opium compared to the other states of India (Central Bureau of Narcotics 2021). For better understanding of the opium cultivation process, I have also used my own observations and photographic material from the opium farms. I have analyzed the qualitative semi-structured interviews with legal opium farmers which I conducted in the previously mentioned villages. During these two visits, I conducted 6 interviews with licensed male opium farmers who agreed to give recorded interviews with their informed consent. By depicting the interactions among opium farmers, through observations and interviews on opium cultivation, this chapter will explain the problems that legal opium farmers are facing in their occupation, such as the burdensome policies of the Government and the increasing attractiveness of the black market.

The history of opium plant in South Asia

The history of the opium flowering plant is long and complex. It has played an important role in numerous civilizations. Over the centuries, the opium plant has become related to medicine, recreational drugs, traditions, and war. In this section, I will examine the origins and prevalence of opium in the subcontinent of South Asia.

The origin of the word 'opium' etymologically lies in the Ancient Greek language word *ópion*, which is a diminutive of *opós* "milky juice of plants" (Askitopoulou et al. 2000). In 1753, Carl Linnaeus (Carl von Linné), a botanist from Sweden, used the Latin word *Papaver somniferum* meaning 'sleep-bringing' to name and categorize the opium plant (Fraire 2021). The word 'opium' has some connections with the Arabic language, where the plant was known as *Afyun*, in Chinese – *Yapien*, in Persian it is known as *Afium*, in Sanskrit, the ancient Indo-

Aryan language, it is known as *Aahi Phen* meaning 'snake venom' (Central Bureau of Narcotics 2021). Nowadays, the word 'poppy' is widely used as a synonym for opium. The etymology of the word 'opium' shows the main attributes of the plant that people in various regions found the most important.

Due to its unique composition of various chemicals, the opium plant is one of the world's oldest medicinal plants. According to archaeological research, one can find evidence of fossil remains of a poppy seed cake and poppy pods which date back to the Neolithic age (5600 to 4000 B.C.) in Western Europe (Salavert et al. 2020). Around 4000 B.C., the ancient Sumerians already knew the psychological effects of opium plants. At least 1500 B.C., opium was cultivated and consumed by the ancient Egyptians (Hobbs 1998, 67). Soon, the knowledge of the Egyptian civilization about the use of poppy reached Classical Greece. Here, opium was related not only to medicine and nutritional properties, but it was also linked to the sacred world.[2]

Opium was introduced in India during the conquests of Alexander the Great around 330 B.C. (Central Bureau of Narcotics 2021). However, in the 8th century A.D., Arabs not only started cultivating poppies in Egypt for exporting to Europe and the Middle East, but they also made a huge impact on spreading opium in the South Asian subcontinent and even China. It is worth mentioning that Arabs left a significant contribution in exploring the use and effects of opium (Derks 2012, 187–188). With Arabs travelling and settling in India, around the 9th century A.D., they brought their Perso-Arabic traditional medicine called *Unani Tibbi*. Here, opium was mentioned as an ingredient for treating catarrh, conjunctivitis, dysentery, hemicrania, and as an aphrodisiac (Duke 1973, 393–394). After the 9th century A.D., opium cultivation in India and its use in classical Ayurveda began. Moreover, poppy or cannabis (or both) were also consumed by Sadhus and yogis belonging to *Shaivite* and *Shaktiya* cults for concentration and meditation (Dwarakanath 1965). This medicinal and ritualistic use of opium in the early Middle Ages was more or less prevalent for centuries. Yet, since the times of the Mughal Empire, much more data has been acquired on consumption, as well as on an increased production of opium. The main difference between opium use before and during the Mughal Empire period is the consumption of opium for recreational purposes, and this was even the beginning of its use on a regular basis for medicinal purposes. In 2010, Stephanie Honchell published a thesis discussing the complex relation between all six Mughal emperors and drugs, particularly opium (Honchell 2010).

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2   Carod-Artal (2013, 28–35) shows how deeply Greeks related to opium through historical literature, ceremonies, and medicine.

Babur, the emperor who conquered northern India's regions in the 16th century, brought his Turko-Mongol cultural background to the regions where it was later incorporated into the Mughal culture. Honchell describes Babur's and his courtiers' lifestyle as having been mostly peripatetic, and involving a tendency to use of intoxicants, such alcohol and opium (ibid., 12). The use of opium or *ma'jun*[3] was mentioned in the *Baburnama* ("The Memoirs of Babur") over thirty times (ibid., 13). Usually, the emperor and his court consumed opium socially, for relaxation from emotional and physical stress while making stronger mutual connections between Babur and the men who surrounded him (ibid., 15).

The drastic change of the Mughal society's view towards opium took place with the rule of Aurangzeb. The drastic constraint on drug policy was implemented as a result of the development of radical, orthodox Islam. Aurangzeb sought to reform the Mughal Empire into an Islamic state governed by *Sharia* law. Moreover, during the Aurangzeb reign, opium was being used as a death penalty tool for his imprisoned opponents by giving them opium alone instead of water and food (Carter 2017). Yet, his efforts against psychoactive substances were not fruitful. In her thesis, Honchell notes two main reasons explaining why Aurangzeb's radical approach towards opium restrictions was not successful. Firstly, the Mughal society was very diverse religiously and culturally, and laws were not relevant to the belief structures of the majority. The second obstacle was associated with the fundamental ideas of the Empire instilled by Babur himself who strongly believed that the liberal adherence to religious beliefs is a matter of individual rather than universal concern (Honchell 2010, 77).

The Mughal Empire was already crumbling during Aurangzeb's rule, and later heirs did not distinguish themselves as highly influential rulers. There is almost no historical evidence on their relationship to opium. However, I would highlight four main opium related processes for all the rulers of the Empire: the prevalence of recreational drug use with the first manifestations of addiction, the beginning of systematic poppy cultivation, the use of opium as a death penalty tool, and, finally, the first drug bans (Honchell 2010, 71).

With the gradual weakening and loss of the influence of the Mughal Empire in India, explorers from various European countries, including a large number of traders, started coming to India. In the early 17th century, traders from Portugal, the Dutch Republic, England, France, and Denmark–Norway established their own trading posts on the coast of India. These western newcomers soon got involved in profitable opium trading. Derks's work on the role of opium in India

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3   *Ma'jun* – a mixture of opium, ghee, and sugar.

between the 17th and the 20th centuries shows that, by that time, opium had already become an important product for international trade (Derks 2012, 40–41). Eventually, it was the British who colonized the majority of the South Asian subcontinent. Having taken over the lands and the opium regulation from the Mughal Empire, the British greatly expanded their opium farming in India. From 1637 onwards, opium became the main product of the British trade with China. Finally, in 1793, the East India Company forbade all poppy growers in India to sell opium to competing trading companies (Derks 2012, 135; Central Bureau of Narcotics 2021). The opium monopoly in India was held by the British until the independence of India in 1947.

Since the second half of the 20th century, the importance of opium has not diminished either in India or elsewhere in the world. In 1953 The Opium Protocol was formulated for regulating farming, production and trading of the opium plant. India became one of the world's major opium exporter. Advances in medicine made it possible to expand the pharmaceutical potential of opium. According to medical researchers, until now, it still remains the only commercial source for narcotic analgesics, such as morphine, codeine, and semisynthetic derivatives, such as oxycodone and naltrexone. Opium also produces numerous other benzylisoquinoline alkaloids (BIAs) with potent pharmacological properties, including the vasodilator papaverine, the cough suppressant and potential anticancer drug noscapine, and the antimicrobial agent sanguinarine (Hao et al. 2015, 217).

However, recreational and abusive use of opium or its components has also increased. People have been prone to abuse of codeine and morphine, but heroin, invented as early as 1898, came to the fore and became particularly popular among drug users even though certain restrictions on its production, use and distribution were imposed by international treaties. Eventually, seeing that heroin was not suitable in medicine due to the very rapid development of addiction, an international ban on heroin production was implemented in 1912. In the 1960s and 1980s, the black market for various drugs, especially heroin, was increasing at the time when the United States declared war on drugs and tightened their narcotic policies (Hosztafi 2001; de Castella 2012). India started its own war on drugs campaign during the 1980s. By introducing the *Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act*, 1985, (commonly referred to as the *NDPS Act*), the Indian Government adopted a highly punitive approach towards drug-related crimes.

One more important aspect of opium in India is its traditional consumption. It includes traditions, rituals and special occasions when members of a certain

caste, community, or tribe use opium. Such actions are still happening even though, according to the laws of the Indian Government, opium consumption or even possession (if it is not related to licensed farming) of any quantity is highly illegal. There is very little research done on this topic, but it is still possible to find some examples of data taken in different states of India from people consuming opium as part of a local tradition.[4]

I shall add that, during my interviews with opium farmers from Madhya Pradesh, I asked them if they had any knowledge about traditional opium consumption. The majority of them knew about the traditional use of opium in Rajasthan. Moreover, the information on the traditional opium use obtained from the interviewees coincided with the examples from the above cited articles.

Opium regulation in India and its cultivation in Madhya Pradesh

In this part, I will analyze legal policies controlling opium cultivation on the international and local levels. I will also examine the licensing process of legal opium farmers in India. This will help to understand how and why the current legal framework for the cultivation of this plant affects the conditions of opium farmers.

During the early years after India gained independence, policies related to opium did not change much from the British times. The main view towards opium was that opium needed to be regulated, but it could not be completely curbed as the habit of using opium for medicinal purposes was widespread, and the majority of the Indian population was knowledgeable enough not to use the plant (UNODC 1957). The early Government of India did not wish to entirely suppress the use of opium, but rather implemented a set of policies restricting it to a certain level. For example, the main approach was the restriction of the consumption of opium by limiting the amount of opium which a person may possess at any given time (ibid.). According to the *UN Opium Conference of 1953* and the *Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961*, India, along with 6 other countries (Bulgaria, Greece, Iran, Turkey, USSR, and the former state of Yugoslavia), was authorized to produce opium for export and domestic needs (Deshpande 2010, 110).

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4   Researchers described Hindu communities in Rajasthan and Gujarat that practice ritualistic opium consumption and their rituals (Bareth 2009; Mathrani 2019; Prévot 2018). Opium use is also prevalent among Buddhist communities in Arunachal Pradesh (Chaturvedi et al. 2013).

From 1985 to the present, India's main bill regulating contemporary opium cultivation, possession, sale, purchasing, transport, storage, as well as consumption of a psychotropic substance is called the *Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act*, 1985 (commonly referred to as the *NDPS Act*, 1985).[5] According to some experts, many of the bans on psychoactive substances in the Act are outdated and poorly functioning because the number of illicit drug use or possession cases has only increased in recent years (Mehrotra 2021; Sharma et al. 2017).

A key aspect of the criticism of the NDPS Act, 1985, is the application of a similar scale of criminal liability for both drug users and drug traffickers. For this reason, law enforcement work is overloaded with the extra burden of 'hunting' single drug users, instead of using their funds to curb major drug suppliers (Agrawal 2021; Grover et al. 2021). Another important criticism of the Act is its non-compliance with the recommendations of international health organizations, which does not ensure the proper reintegration of drug users into society. Many rehabilitation and de-addiction centers have been criticized for mistreating drug users by treating them with outdated and ineffective methods, which not only fail to provide the necessary help, but also violate their rights (Tandon 2018). India also faces major issues with people addicted to opium or various opium by-products. The maximum growth was reported in the consumption of heroin. According to statistics, in 2008, India had the highest level of both heroin consumption and production in South Asia (Chawla 2010, 42).

Licenses to farmers to grow opium are granted according to the terms and conditions of the *General Conditions* relating to the issue of license regulated by the Central Government. Another important role is played by the village *Lambardar* (village headman), who leads and represents opium yielding cultivators in the village. *Lambardar* usually has the largest field of opium and is appointed by the District Opium Officer to oversee other opium cultivators (NDPS Act 1985, 64). The license is issued to the eligible farmers for one year, and the new license is issued again after a year. To qualify, a farmer must generally have proper records of previous opium cultivation. A new farmer in opium farming is usually a descendant of a current opium farmer or a trustee to whom the rights are transferred. Another important aspect in obtaining opium cultivation rights is the absence of any penalties under the *NDPS Act*, 1985 (ibid., 74). Every year, in late December, inspectors from the *Central Bureau of Narcotics* measure each

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5   Since its beginning, the Act has been amended (with no major changes) four times – in 1988, 2001, 2014, and 2021.

field to check for excess cultivation. According to the regulations, the cultivated area cannot exceed 5% of the licensed area (Central Bureau of Narcotics 2021).

In January and, sometimes, February opium begins to bloom in white flowers. At that time, farmers must ensure regular watering and maintenance of plants. Quite often, during this period, nets are placed on the opium fields to help protect it from birds which eat the opium plant capsules (Figure 1).

Fig. 1. A net on an opium field to protect plants from birds (16 February 2022, Daru, Madhya Pradesh; photograph by the author).

The *NDPS Act*, 1985 only mentions one case where a farmer may fail to achieve the required harvest quantity and still retain the rights of an opium farmer. This case covers natural disasters, rains, hailstorms, plant diseases, etc. destroying or severely damaging opium fields. In this case, farmers must inform the local officials responsible for the opium fields who assess the damage when they arrive in the field and may allow the farmer not to reach the planned opium harvest without any consequences (ibid.).

The end of the opium season is considered to be the months of February and March. During this period, the opium capsule reaches its final stage and is ready for extraction of opium by cutting the opium capsule. The process of cutting is done with a traditional tool known as *nukka* (Figures 2–4) which makes 4-5 cuts simultaneously.

Fig. 2. *Nukka* – a traditional tool used for cutting opium shells. The cut is done with smaller needle-like blades (the upper side) (17 August 2021, Daru, Madhya Pradesh; photograph by the author).

Fig. 3. A legal opium farmer imitates the cutting action with a *nukka* on a dried and empty poppy shell (17 August 2021, Daru, Madhya Pradesh; photograph by the author).

Fig. 4. A ripe opium shell has been cut. The incision on the left side of the shell was made about 15 hours ago, and the opium latex has already run off and solidified. The cut on the right was made a few moments ago (4 March, 2022, Daru, Madhya Pradesh; photograph by the author).

After about 16–24 hours, the semi-liquid opium, also called latex, resembling the structure of tree resin, slowly flows out of the pits and is collected with a traditional tool called *charpala* (Figure 5).

The process of cutting the capsules of the opium plant and collecting latex, depending on the size of the opium field, usually takes about a week. Generally, both cutting and collecting, and even guarding the fields during this period, is carried out by local workers (Figure 6), while a licensed opium farmer is overseeing the entire process and guarding the vessel with the collected opium (Figure 7).

The farmer later weighs the opium extracted on a daily basis and records the weight of opium in a register called the *Preliminary Weighment Register* (PWR) which is maintained by the village *Lambardar*. An officer from the *Central Bureau of Narcotics* periodically checks the entries in PWR and observes if there are no discrepancies, i.e. whether the farmer is not cheating on the amount of opium recorded (ibid.).

Fig. 5. *Charpala* – a traditional tool used for collecting leaked opium latex from a cut poppy shell (17 February 2022, Daru, Madhya Pradesh; photograph by the author).

Fig. 6. Local village laborers are cutting opium shells and collecting opium latex (4 March 2022, Daru, Madhya Pradesh; picture by an anonymous legal opium farmer).

Fig. 7. A vessel with collected opium (4 March 2022, Daru, Madhya Pradesh; picture by an anonymous legal opium farmer).

After extracting opium latex, some of the opium capsule remains. The capsule is called a 'poppy husk' or a 'poppy straw'. The husk contains a minor quantity of opium, and, until 2016, it was also bought by the Government and used in the medicinal sector. Later, the following was declared by government officials: "poppy husk has no medicinal and scientific value and has to be destroyed" (Ghatwai 2018). This relatively new rule soon became quite controversial because statistics show that, after it had been implemented, the price of poppy husk in the black market started to grow massively. Illegally, poppy husk is still used by truck drivers to stay active during the shift and by traditional opium consumers during rituals (Mitra et al. 2017). Before the new policy, over 93 percent of medicinally useful alkaloids were made precisely from the poppy husk (International Narcotics Control Board 2015). Moreover, another major licit opium exporter is Australia which meets more than half of the world's demand for morphine produced from, particularly, poppy straws (McAlister et al. 2016). Poppy straws contain numerous chemicals which are later converted into pharmaceutical

drugs. Moreover, the poppy straw is a safer product, since it cannot be turned into black market heroin, unlike raw opium (Siegel 2020). Unfortunately, I could not find any consistent explanation for why such a new amendment on the poppy straw was adopted, neither on the official Indian Government internet databases, nor in interviews with legal opium farmers, or from the responsible authorities.

Another part of the opium plant which needs to be described is the seeds. The opium seeds do not contain opiates and can be sold more easily. According to the farmers from whom I took the interviews, they collect the seeds from the plant and sell them to local buyers who might use them for cuisine, oil, or for further legal/illegal cultivation of opium. According to statistics, the seed selling rate in various parts of India has increased (Statista Research Department 2022).

After the final harvest, opium latex is transported to the *Weighment Centers* in special sealed containers. Tests on the composition and purity of opium are carried out here, after which, it is heated until all the moisture in the opium has evaporated. After examination and purity testing, opium is classified into different categories as per the consistency of opium, and the category is announced publicly. Each category indicates the purity or quality of opium. The amount of money a farmer receives also depends on the category of the opium. The main indicator in the opium quality is the amount of morphine in it. If there is too little morphine to be found in raw opium, the farmer may lose his opium cultivation license. In principle, a sufficient amount of morphine, as specified by the Government, is expected from each opium crop grown by the farmer. It is important to note that, until May 2017, the Government specified the minimum amount of raw opium that farmers had to reach. According to the farmers themselves, the new policy, in which the quality of opium is calculated from the morphine in it during laboratory testing, makes their work much more difficult as the amount of morphine in opium is in no way dependent on the farmers themselves. This means that, even in a high opium harvest, if a low morphine concentrate is detected, the farmer will get less profit, and may therefore lose his opium cultivation rights. This political decision has received negative reactions and even evoked protests from opium farmers, but, so far, the Government has not changed the requirements (Ganapatye 2018).

Lastly, opium latex in further laboratories is converted to alkaloids and is transferred to India's medicine manufacturers. Another big part of raw opium is exported from India to such countries as the USA, Japan, UK, France and Thailand, where it is used for medicinal purposes as well (Central Bureau of Narcotics 2021).

The complexity of the issue of opium for the Government and society has constantly raised controversy and the need to review the opium laws. Subsequent

international legislation on opium and other drugs has provided the basis for many current legal frameworks, including the *NDPS Act*, 1985 adopted by India. Heavily backed by a penal policy based on the war on drugs mandate developed in the USA, the *Act* is being increasingly criticized for creating legal inflexibility and stigma. As a result, there is an excessive distribution of governmental money to curb the black market. As we shall see further, legal opium farmers reveal controversial details of the same drug regulatory system. This package of legislation leads to discrepancy between the Government and the opium cultivators. As a consequence of the recent legislation, the black market of drugs for some opium cultivators may start to look increasingly attractive because it is here that the prices of opium and its products begin to rise competitively compared to the price offered by the Government. In the final part of my chapter, I shall discuss in more detail the regulatory system from the point of view of the farmers themselves.

Fieldwork among opium farmers in Madhya Pradesh

This part of the chapter describes my ethnographic study conducted in the Neemuch district of Madhya Pradesh, India. Analysis of 6 qualitative in-depth interviews conducted with legal opium farmers living in two villages in the above-mentioned district will be presented here. Together, I will analyze both the work conditions of the farmers interviewed and my own observations while staying with these farmers, which will provide additional context and detail to the topic. Moreover, before the main part discussing the field work, I will shortly describe the prehistory of my research, and the events which took place after my departure from the two villages about which I got to know from my interlocutors remotely. Due to the possibility of relation of the interviewees to the black market, I will change the names of the two villages where I conducted the fieldwork, the names of the farmers from whom I took the interviews, and the name of my colleague who accompanied me in travelling, helped with getting the contacts, and translating the conversations with the farmers. The rest of the data presented below remains unchanged.

Daru and Tanig villages

On 21 July 2021 I came to India and settled in Punjab, Phagwara because I started studying and working at *Lovely Professional University* (LPU, Punjab, India).

While staying there, I decided to use an opportunity to conduct field work for my final bachelor thesis. My idea was to conduct an ethnographic study in one of the three Indian states (Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, or Uttar Pradesh) where opium cultivation is legal. Initially, Rajasthan was in my plans because I had read a lot about the ancient traditions of opium consumption that still exist there, and I hoped that, in addition to the main topic about opium farmers and their legal work, they would be able to tell me more about the illegal side of opium. A few weeks later, I happened to meet Zain, a student who was of my age. He lived near my home in Phagwara and, after hearing about the subject I was researching, told me that his parents were engaged in opium farming. After getting to know each other better, he invited me to go with him and visit his family who lived in Madhya Pradesh, Neemuch County where there were several opium farms. Fortunately, Zain was curious about my research work and offered to become my research assistant.

It was 16 August 2021 when I first came to the village of Daru and met Zain's father Zeeshan. For four days, I was staying in his house built in British colonial times, along with his other family members: his wife, and three children, two boys and a girl. As far as I heard from the people living there, foreigners rarely come to this village and its surroundings, so they were quite surprised to see me in the village. They were even more surprised by the news, which quickly spread, that I had come here to conduct research on the opium plant and its cultivators. However, I did not receive any negative reaction during my two visits to the village. The casual and hospitable villagers were even more inclined to accept me when they found out that I was a friend of Zeeshan's son.

The village, surrounded by hills, was not large. In a valley-type region, small villages are located at a similar distance of 2–3 km from each other. According to locals, Daru was home to about two hundred people, most of whom were farmers, workers and their families. Depending on the season of the year, a large proportion of farmers were engaged in rice, wheat, maize or groundnut cultivation which were grown in scattered fields around the village (Figure 8).

Meanwhile, Zeeshan was growing not only these plants but also opium along with 6 other local farmers under an opium cultivation license.

During my short visit, local groundwater got mixed with dirty rain water. As a result, I and other villagers who had drunk the water got water-poisoning. Because of my sudden illness, it became harder to do the fieldwork, yet I still managed to conduct 2 interviews with licit opium farmers and take some photos of the local environment and the traditional opium cultivation tools. One of them was Zeeshan in whose house I was living.

Fig. 8. Scattered opium fields around Tanig village (16 February 2022, Tanig, Madhya Pradesh; photograph by the author).

Another interlocutor was his neighbor Yuvaan with whom I met at a local temple for evening worship, one day before the interview. That evening, we came to know more about each other, and he himself invited me to come to his house the next day. Yuvaan was also the only farmer who told me he had opium stocks at his home since last year's harvest. Just before the interview at his home, he opened a closet and took out a pot-like container of about two liters. Yuvaan opened it and I saw it full of opium latex, dark brown in color. Its consistency was very thick, hard and similar to plasticine. The farmer did not allow me to take photos of the opium and explained that he would keep this opium stock in case the next harvest would be poor and he would fail to meet the harvest quantity requirements announced by the Government. In this case, Yuvaan would secretly add this opium to the harvest, because he did not want to lose his license to legally grow opium. Only my colleague Zain, who helped with translation during the interview, and I knew about these opium stocks. We agreed not to tell other villagers about it, although Zain mentioned that it was a public secret for many opium farmers. I left the village after four days because I had to buy proper medicine for my water-poisoning ailments and return to work at the university in Punjab.

I came to Neemuch district for the second time on 16 February 2022, and left the village on 19 February 2022. During this visit, the fields planted with opium were already blooming white, and, just a week after my departure, opium harvesting began. It is important to highlight that I met Zeeshan and his family

once between my two visits to the villages when I was invited to the wedding of their family member. During the wedding celebration, we got even closer, and I gained more trust from Zeeshan's side.

During my second visit in Daru village, I once again settled in Zeeshan family home. Although about half a year had passed since my first visit, I did not notice much change in the population or in the area. Because of my better health, this time I was able to hike around the villages and meet local people. I discovered that legal opium farmers could be found in almost every local village. During this visit, I was able to go to the opium fields, collect photo material, and conduct four more interviews with legal opium farmers. Also, I visited the neighboring village of Tanig. This village is located about 2 km south of Daru. At present, the village buildings and the layout look almost identical. The buildings in both villages are simple, built of clay and stone. Tanig and Daru villagers know each other well. Sometimes they work on the farms together and celebrate the same holidays. Two interviews were conducted with farmers Viraaj and Tejas who were from the same village of Daru. Viraaj was the *Lambardar* of Daru. The other two farmers, Sahil, who was the oldest farmer, and Purab were from the nearby village of Tanig. The interviews with the farmers of Tanig village did not differ significantly from the farmers from Daru.

Interviewing opium farmers

During my two visits to Daru and Tanig villages in Madhya Pradesh, I conducted 6 interviews with licensed male opium farmers who agreed to give recorded interviews with their free consent, in places acceptable to them. The places were either their house or the yard belonging to them. The age of the farmers ranged from 30 to 80 years old. Five interviews were conducted in Hindi and one in English. Every time, the interview was attended by a middle-man. He was either my colleague Zain who grew up in this village, or his father, a local legal opium farmer Zeeshan. The purpose of the mediator was to translate parts of the conversation that I or my interviewee did not understand.

On both visits, I asked the farmers the same questions that were focused on 5 research themes:

1) *The role of opium in farmers' lives.* As for the start of the interview, I asked questions about how the farmers began to legally grow opium and if it is a common profession in their families.

2) *Peculiarities of work.* In this section of questions, I tried to understand each farmer's personal views towards opium cultivation and asked about the

main aspects of opium crop, how legal opium farming has changed during the farmers' careers, and how it has affected their income.

3) *Opium paths (black market and medicine sector).* Since opium could be used for different reasons, and the farms in particular are the place of origin of opium, in the third section, I wanted to understand what farmers think or know about the further 'path' of opium, its trajectory to the black market and the pharmaceutical sector. I also asked if they had any knowledge about consuming opium or its products legally/illegally in their environment.

4) *Opium regulation.* Further, I inquired farmers about the role of Government institutions in legal opium farming and how they perceive the state authorities' measures to control opium cultivation.

5) *The image of a legal opium farmer and the traditional role of opium in India.* In this section, I asked about the attitude of the local people towards legal opium farmers and whether the farmers wanted their children to follow the same occupation. I ended my interviews with the final question about whether the farmer knew anything about the traditional opium use in India.

From the first section of questions, I learned that all the interviewed farmers had lived in these two villages for most of their lives and they all had inherited their opium cultivation occupation from their ancestors. Only one person in a family could hold an opium cultivation license at a time. In all cases, the farmers applied for and obtained a license after another licensed member of their family (father in all cases) retired from farming. *It comes from my ancestors, my father and grandfather, they all did this opium farming. Actually, I don't know when all this started in my family or when it started in this village or in this area* (Zeeshan). The takeover of opium farming from the older generation is perceived as a usual process, even if this action required stopping other activities in life: *I quit my studies to help my family and become an opium farmer as my own father was* (Yuvaan).

From the questions of the second section, it is evident that the farmers' view towards the opium crop split into two types of responses: pragmatic and sensitive. Zeeshan described his relationship with opium cultivation by mentioning the properties of the plant, the harvesting process, and, more notably, the religious aspect of opium cultivation: *For me, this (opium crop) is like caring for a child. I care for this (opium) crop much more than we care for other crops. There is a sentimental relation also. Usually, when opium farmers start planting opium seed and at the time of collecting the harvest, we would pray to god. We pray to Kali*

Mata, goddess. Because of the color of the opium, it is similar to Kali Mata. So, in a sense, opium farmers are intermingled/linked with this crop... And when we take milk (opium latex) *from poppies every morning, it is like a festival for us... And when we're doing this crop, the female members of a family also take good care of us* (Zeeshan).

Other farmers described their approach to opium cultivation in a shorter and simpler way: *I have good experience because I used to get income from three sides: from seeds, from opium latex, and poppy straw. It is more prosperous than other crops* (Sahil). Later, Sahil corrected himself and said that: *Already for 5 years, the Government does not buy poppy straw* (Sahil).

To the question how opium cultivation changed during the farmers' life, *Lambardar* Viraaj said that: *The cost expenditure of opium cultivation has gone up due to new techniques. Before, we didn't use nets for protecting opium from birds. Also, there are special ropes that separate rows of plants. Moreover, the prices for laborers' work have increased. So nowadays farming costs have gone up in all aspects* (Viraaj).

Sahil marked governmental policies which, according to him, made opium cultivation more expensive. I would like to emphasize that, in answer to this question, Sahil also mentioned the black opium market which, later in the interview, he noted more cautiously: *There have been many changes in the law, and now policies have become very problematic. The return, the rate of opium is very low now. If people don't do black market, it is not possible to cultivate this crop. Since it is illegal, it becomes a problem. The price of opium was increased only once when the finance minister was Jaswant Singh,*[6] *15 years back. That time only the price was changed a bit. It was 2800 rupees per kg* (of opium)*, now it was around 1500 rupees* (Sahil). The increase in the opium cultivation costs was also mentioned by Purab. The remaining farmers said that nothing had changed during their licensed farming period, apparently referring to opium being collected in the same traditional ways.

From farmers' descriptions, it can be concluded that, although the old religious cultures of opium are still preserved by some, yet, the main distinguishing feature of opium from other plants is its profitability. However, profitability in legal ways could be questioned as the value of opium has fallen over the past decade, and the ban on poppy straw also means a lower income. Based on Sahil's brief mentioning of the black market, a presumption could be made that the black market may have become more attractive to some farmers during this period.

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6   Jaswant Singh (1937–2020) – an officer of the Indian Army and an Indian Cabinet Minister. Former Minister of Finance (1996; 2002–2004).

The third section of questions is related to the black market of opium; answers varied. Purab and Sahil, who had previously mentioned the relevance of the black market, replied briefly that they knew nothing about it. Three other farmers–Zeeshan, Tejas and Viraaj–mentioned that there are some farmers who sell it to the Government, but very few of them are from Neemuch district. They added that it is highly illegal. Yuvaan mentioned the black market in more detail: *The rate of opium in* (legal) *farming is 1500 rupees per kg. In black market the rate of opium is 1 lakh* per kg. If the Government would increase the rate of opium in farming, no one would be selling it to the black market. The money is the main thing. If the Government would increase the price of opium to at least 10000 rupees per kg, even this much would make black market decrease* (Yuvaan). The profitability of the black market was also highlighted by Siegel (2020) who conducted an ethnographic study with illegal opium farmers in Madhya Pradesh. The researcher noted that the difference between legally and illegally sold opium prices was nearly 80 times.

To the question about the role of opium in the medicine sector, three farmers said that they did not know much about it. Tejas admitted that he knew only that opium was later used as allopathic medicine. Yuvaan told more about it: *People can use opium either in a good way, as a medicine, or in a bad way as a drug. Here, some old people use opium to cure themselves, to cure diseases. This is the only reason why people use opium here. In this village, there is an old guy who cannot afford treatment. He cannot afford all the medicine, doctor fees and so on. So, what he is doing is consuming opium in small quantities, and it helps him* (Yuvaan). He also elaborated when I asked more about the opium consumption of locals: *Opium is very strong, and usually once a person starts to consume it, he can never leave it. There were a few old people in the village. One of them died last year. The villager used opium for a long time but eventually he started to exceed the limit. You should never go beyond your limit. Eventually, he almost stopped eating food and ate only opium at any amount he could get. His health started worsening and then he died… Another, a Rajput guy from Mewar, he consumed opium every once in a while, but not too often. He had used opium since childhood but always on a limited scale. He purchased opium from here* (Daru village) *also. He was very healthy all the time and reached 100 years of age* (Yuvaan). The rest of interviewees said there was no or very little consumption in that district. This section showed that small-scale use is detectable for both medical and addictive purposes.

In the fourth part of the interviews, I asked the interviewees about the governmental institutions responsible for licit opium cultivation, and all interview-

ees gave detailed insights. All of the farmers mentioned that their relation with the Government officials they worked with was not positive. Without asking, each farmer marked at least one problem that is caused by Government officials. Yuvaan described the vast corruption among Government officials: *In every place they will ask you for money. The Bureau of Narcotics takes a lot of money from farmers especially. For example, every year officers from the bureau come to farms and measure the size of a farm. Usually you have to pay them money if you want the measurement process to go smoothly, some farmers also can easily increase the size of their farm up to 1000 meters just by paying this officer. Another example is when opium is collected, the farmer has to go to a government place and stay there for at least a few days, until the opium quality is being checked. The waiting is never easy. The farmers have to sleep on the floor. By paying 10000 or 20000 rupees there, a farmer can skip the waiting process and he gets the results quickly. So, each farmer on average pays around 70 000 rupees just for bribes. Last year the Bureau of Narcotics got 36 crores rupees just from opium farmers in this and other districts* (Yuvaan).

According to Zeeshan, because of the Government, for the past 4 years they cannot sell poppy straws. *We also used to get good returns from poppy straw, but, in recent years, I don't know the reason, but the Government is not letting us sell it to them, so we have to burn it* (Zeeshan).

Viraaj spoke of the sharp fall in opium prices over the years: *The farmers feel that the money that we get for opium is very little according to the cost of doing cultivation. And the money hasn't been revised for a long time. I think that if the rate of opium per kg would be increased to 25,000–30,000 rupees per kg, farmers would not sell it to the black market* (Viraaj).

The remaining interviewees complained about a new policy where the grading of opium is measured not by moisture in it, but rather by the quantity of morphine in it: *It is difficult for farmers to understand because we don't have any control on what level of morphine will be found in opium... So, there is no logic. For example, I can produce apples, but if you want any particular material or extra color in that apple, I cannot make it happen unless it happens naturally. This new policy was introduced 2–3 years ago. Initially, they used to do grading of opium manually, and it was on the basis of moisture. The more moisture, the worse is grade, the lesser moisture or water, the better is grade* (Sahil). *A new law of morphine shouldn't be imposed. Even if the crop is good, it could be considered bad if the Government sees lack of morphine in it. So, the farmers are confused and don't know what to do when the good yield is being called as bad. It is not logical* (Purab).

This section of questions became particularly important in the light of the detailed and comprehensive answers given by the farmers. Corruption, a ban on selling poppy straw, Government corruption, and the fall of opium prices have been identified as important problems hindering good relations between farmers and the Government officials. Half of the farmers have highlighted their concerns about a new system of opium grading by morphine in it, which seems to be a major concern about the Government's policies. Another ethnographic research, also conducted in Madhya Pradesh 15 years ago, showed similar opinions of farmers who criticized the Government's policies and programs towards opium cultivation being ineffective (Smith et al. 2007, 30–32).

Finally, the questions in the last section cover the folk image of legal opium farmers by other villagers. Also, there are questions on the problem of the generational transfer of this occupation within the family, and the knowledge of traditional opium use during rituals.

Tejas shared a thought that he did not feel any different from other plant farmers. Nevertheless, everyone else felt respect from those around them for their opium cultivation licenses: *...in matters of license, when you get it, you feel proud. You have a reputation if you have a license in this area* (Zeeshan). *Other people also benefit from us, for example, the laborers who help us collect opium get payment... Also, among our society those who have an opium license are respected* (Viraaj).

Next, all interviewees replied that they did not want their children to take over the profession. These answers turned out to be particularly interesting, having in mind that all the interviewed farmers came from families that had been involved in the production of opium from generation to generation: *The laws are very strict, and it is quite a risk. Only if the Government would treat farmers with good laws then I would let them* (children) *to continue* (Purab). *I don't want my children to do this farming because it is very costly and hard. It is a very responsible job as you also have to keep good protection of opium that no one would steal it* (Viraaj). Tejas even said that he did not want to continue this type of farming himself: *I don't want for my children to inherit. Even I will discontinue it in a few years. I'm afraid of Government policy followers, I mean officers, because when they are issuing licenses for the farmers, they don't have faith in farmers… It is kind of an insult. So due to no other employment I do opium but, after my daughter's marriage, I will stop. I will grow other crops: wheat, maize…* (Tejas). The pessimistic future of the hitherto considered lucrative opium cultivation profession is also noted in the findings of an ethnographic study in Turkey. There, farmers who are also traditionally engaged in opium cultivation are now facing strict Government

requirements covering the seed quality, setting a specific cultivation period and price regulation unfavorable to farmers (Evered 2011, 179–180).

When asked about the traditions of opium use, the answers of all farmers matched. They all said they had heard of some rituals in Rajasthan through which opium is used ritually, mostly during weddings. Yuvaan and Zeeshan mentioned that this opium consumption is practiced in the desert region, mostly among *Banjara* and *Rabarri* communities: *Opium [is] used mostly in marriages. The expenditure of marriage itself is not that much. The marriage facilities, the gold, everything is not that expensive as the opium used in the marriage* (Yuvaan).

This indicated that the attitude towards farmers from their surrounding environment is rather positive. They feel respected, but they still do not tend to pass on the profession to their children because of its complexity and the high level of responsibility.

Contacting Government officials

In order to get different views of legal opium farmers and their problems, I also sought to interview the authorities responsible for the regulation of the cultivation of legal opium. Unfortunately, all my attempts were fruitless. First, I tried to contact the *Central Bureau of Narcotics* in Neemuch. I wrote them an email explaining who I am, what research I was doing, and that I would like to conduct an interview with them live or remotely. I never received a response from them.

When I arrived in the same village in February, Zeeshan gave me the address of the *Central Bureau of Narcotics* in Neemuch which is responsible for all legal opium cultivation in the region, and told me how to properly communicate to the officials. When I came to the *Central Bureau of Narcotics* with my colleague Zain and spoke briefly with the security guard, I was admitted to the headquarters (Figure 9) guarded by the officers and even briefly talked to the people in charge of the opium cultivation process.

Unfortunately, as soon as they heard that I was interested in the opium cultivation laws, they immediately said that neither they nor any other official working here would agree to give me an interview.

At the beginning of April 2022, while staying in Delhi and already planning to go back to Lithuania, I met an entrepreneur who was interested in growing fibrous hemp in Madhya Pradesh and found many common interests in legal opium farms. The entrepreneur knew one of the Deputy Directors from the *Directorate of Horticulture*, Madhya Pradesh. The entrepreneur suggested that

his contact could be used to reach out to officials who could comment more widely on the regulation of legal opium cultivation in India. Enthusiastically supporting the topic of my research, the entrepreneur promised to personally pass on my inquiry to officials with a description of my research and a request for an interview. I had included in the inquiry that the officials responsible for the legal cultivation of opium would answer my questions online or in writing of their choice. Unfortunately, about a month later, I received a reply from the businessman that the deputy director just kept giving excuses, and did not give either positive, or negative answer to my inquiry.

Fig. 9. The author near the headquarters of the Central Bureau of Narcotics (20 February 2022, Neemuch, Madhya Pradesh; photograph by an unidentified guard).

These unsuccessful attempts to contact the authorities are not enough to make a statement that the opium issue is neglected by the public authorities in Madhya Pradesh. However, my experience reinforces the argument that opium regulations remain unclear. There is also no communication about them, and the gap between the officials responsible for opium cultivation regulation and the people who seek information about them remains significant.

Conclusion

As well as in other regions, in South Asia, the opium plant has become an important medical and recreational tool. Over the years, it has also become

a symbol of addictions and wars. There is no doubt that this plant, with its powerful positive and negative potential, has always been exploited in its own way by different empires and their rulers. In modern times, opium, as a part of the economic trade, is a cause of drug addiction in India. Yet, its importance remains significant.

To ensure that opium would be strictly used by pharmaceutical companies only for the development of modern medicines, the Indian Government inherited many of the international laws regulating opiates from the USA, which, most of the time, used the controversial war on drugs strategy. Yet, according to statistics, the black market for the substance and opium-related addiction diseases in recent decades has not only continued unabated, but has also increased. The latest recommendations from experts and international organizations suggest that India's legal framework contains strategies that are outdated, dysfunctional, and in need of revision.

The latter argument was confirmed and further expanded during my field research. I was able to obtain a great amount of information defining not only the traditional processes of opium cultivation, but also the problems which the legal opium farmers have to face. All the above-mentioned problems were related to unclear or burdensome Government policies on opium cultivation. The main ones were: the falling price of opium; the new and questionable procedure for determining the quality of opium; the ban on selling the poppy straw, the part of the opium plant left over after harvesting; and Government corruption. My numerous attempts to contact the authorities responsible for opium cultivation have been fruitless. The Government's work on opium regulation is, at the very least, questionable, lacking in credibility and, in some cases, fueling the black market.

In addition, all interviewees mentioned that they have taken over the legal opium farm from their older generations, however, due to the high risk and declining profitability, now all farmers doubt that they will pass this profession on to their children. Such a scenario could potentially lead to the disappearance of the occupation of legal opium farmers. Moreover, from personal experience and from the interviews with legal opium farmers, I have learned that the use of opium for recreational, medicinal and ritual purposes is still widespread in some parts of India. A decline in legal opium cultivation in the face of a high demand for opium on the black market would likely lead to an increase in the illegal cultivation of opium.

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Rather than widening the schism between more humanistic and more scientific anthropologies, the current volume brings them closer, offering a fresh perspective to the field. The editors made sure that scientific and humanistic studies were equally presented. For this purpose, the papers are nicely mixed, allowing the audience and readers to enjoy scientific, humanistic, and in-between types of papers that collectively build bridges between methods, theories, and field sites. The volume's attention to issues pertaining to methodology is a noteworthy feature and makes it a compelling read.

Dr **Renatas Berniūnas** (Aarhus University)

The texts in the edited volume are divided into three main themes/sections, which systematically complement each other while allowing the reader to become familiar with the development of the science of social-cultural anthropology, its methodological challenges, and current research directions. The first section of the book features texts by four leading anthropologists that clearly reveal the development of the field, the challenges it faces, and its relevance to contemporary societies. The second section consists of texts that touch on methodological issues related to data collection, systematization, interpretation, and representation. The third section of the book includes papers by young researchers, whose topics are novel, relevant, and engaging for readers. The texts are rich in ethnographic details, revealing the depth and possibilities of anthropological research. The topics discussed are relevant to the contemporary social anthropology, sociology, ethnology, and other disciplines of social sciences and humanities.

Dr **Kristina Šliavaitė** (Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences)

This much called for volume discusses both the nature of anthropology as a discipline, just as it challenges us to think about who we, as anthropologists, are today. Rather than being passive by-standers, it encourages us to work with a point of view when conducting research of the various problematic social, political, economic and religious issues of the present world. Drawing on rich ethnographic material from Mongolia, Lithuania, Ukraine, China, Poland, Palestine-Israel and India, the contributors of the volume convincingly show us how anthropology as a discipline is as relevant as ever.

Dr **Ida Harboe Knudsen** (Vytautas Magnus University)