CASTING AND HAULING IN NUUP KANGERLUA, GREENLAND:

SENSORY ETHNOGRAPHY

FOR A STUDY OF INUIT LIVELIHOODS AND THE BODY

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A Kalaallit fisher baiting longlines in Nuuk's municipal workshop. Photographed by author, 2014.

Abstract

Sensory ethnography has been employed to proffer anthropological understandings that extend beyond the written word, and in many cases, sensory ethnographers have gravitated toward the study of both contemporary and traditional livelihoods. Yet ethnographic inquiries made outside of textual forms of representation, inclusive of those concerning livelihoods, are projects that are often contested on epistemological grounds. I will show how sensory ethnography may be understood in relation to longstanding concerns about representing the human body and how it bears in mind this history through its work, despite lacking an explicit, written corpus to support it. Recognizing and remaining conscious that the topic of representation in anthropology lies atop contested grounds, I suggest that a paradigm shift toward non-textual sensory ethnography *tout court* is inopportune, especially in relation to the study of livelihoods. By briefly showing that longline fishing practices in Nuup Kangerlua, Greenland

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(the Nuuk Fjord), shape and are shaped by complex environmental, political and technological processes, I seek to problematize the assumption that employing sensory ethnographic methods without the discursive handles of text affords a discernible contribution to the study of livelihoods. Instead, I suggest that sensory ethnography functions productively as a discursive project when circumscribed by textual critique, even if the pith of its anthropological representation exists outside of words. Especially in an ethnographic study of longline fishing livelihoods in Greenland, the site and its socio-political processes demand methodological and representational approaches that remain attentive to how the environment, local and global politics and technology transform and are transformed by bodily or sensory practices.

Tags: Greenland, small-scale fishing, representation, point-of view recording, sensory ethnography

Introduction

'The older generations communicate with their bodies when they are telling stories. In the fjord, they are often using their hands too, but most of the time, they are saying nothing.' –Kunuk,[2] Kalaallit fisherman.

VISCOM LISTSERV: On Sunday 3 March 2013 at 8:54 AM, Jay Ruby wrote: 'Lucien Castaing-Taylor has become the first anthropologist to become a well-regarded avant-garde filmmaker. For me the art world's gain is visual anthropology's loss.'

In recent years, several of the most prolific scholars in visual anthropology have struggled to reconcile sensory ethnography within the discipline. Some do not perceive films made by groups like Harvard's Sensory Ethnography Lab as ethnography, nor as part of the ethnographic film tradition (Henley, 2014). Others argue that sensory ethnography's uptake by the art world comes at a loss for visual anthropology (Ruby, 2013). With scepticism of their labours, sensory ethnographers have responded by clarifying that even *they* remain sceptical of their work as part of the canon of visual anthropology (Spray to Snyder, 2013a), and some openly invalidate their titles as anthropologists (Chang, 2013 in Snyder, 2013b). However, because sensory ethnography has frequently been employed within the ethnographic study of livelihoods (Barbash and Taylor, 2009, Grasseni, 2007, Taylor and Paravel, 2012), the extent to which thematic or regional interests can continue to be comprehensively studied with sensory ethnography remains unknown.

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[2] Names mentioned in this paper are pseudonyms to protect anonymity.

As Marilyn Strathern plainly remarked, some regions of the world seem to provide locations for the pursuit of particular problems in anthropological theory, whereas others do not (1990: 204). In the 1980s, the Arctic re-emerged as an area that had once again become valuable for scrutinizing theoretical problems in relation to the body, livelihoods, the politics of representation, and space and place (Tester, 2006: 5, 15, 21). Considered against the backdrop of earlier representational histories of the Inuit — which extend back to the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the work of Lewis Henry Morgan (1871) and Marcel Mauss (1935), for example — Greenland emerges as a key site in which to challenge generations of primitive visual and linguistic representations of Inuit culture and technology (Stevenson, 2006: 244). Because contemporary Inuit studies seeks to tread fresh methodological soil to find better ways of representing human knowledge, we should ask which themes ought to be probed and with which methods (Kersenboom, 1995: 234). Given that livelihoods remain a longstanding focus in both Inuit Studies and sensory ethnography, I seek to question how and to what degree the latter is a germane approach by means of an ethnographic study of longline fishing practices in Greenland.

The initial function of this paper is to show that anthropology's discursive history of representational concerns has, if only in part, developed in the direction of the creation of sensory anthropology. Sensory ethnography, operating on two distinct vectors (one textual, the other ontologically sensory) can be understood in relation to historically grounded representational concerns. Yet the latter, more sensory iteration of sensory ethnography poses epistemological and discursive concerns that are especially contested within a study of livelihoods. Chiefly, while sensory ethnography responds to key themes in anthropology – including phenomenology, the body and affect theory – the manner in which it represents its findings through sensory media fails to align with anthropology's discursive, textual frameworks. More often than not, sensory ethnography without textual circumscriptions fails to satisfy fundamental goals for a more engaged and systematic ethnographic study of livelihoods, especially in the Arctic.

The questions I pose include the following: (1) How has anthropology's history of representation given birth to sensory ethnography, and how has its creation perpetuated key debates in visual anthropology, sensory anthropology and the anthropology of the body? (2) Because the body is a site with which anthropology has critically engaged throughout its history (Stoller, 1997: XV) and because it remains an area of interest throughout the discipline (Edwards, 1999, Krmpotich, 2010, Kratz, 2011, Wolff, 2012), how does sensory ethnography, as a method and a representational strategy, contribute to a study of the body? (3) Is sen-

sory ethnography a germane approach for studying livelihoods, such as longline fishing in Greenland? If not, (4?) which methods and thematic tools should also be considered to achieve a more critical Inuit Studies?

In Part 1, I describe the thematic handles used to hold on to the various components of the argument (e.g. representational strategies, body versus embodiment) by tracing some of the key historical sediments of representation in anthropology. Part 2 focuses on how anthropology has critiqued and represented the body and how the field has developed in the direction of sensory anthropology. In Part 3, I outline sensory ethnography's two distinct vectors, which I then seek to make clearer with two case studies in Part 4. By analyzing an article written by sensory ethnographer J.P. Sniadecki (2014), I shall highlight the merits of yoking a critical, textual ethnographic account to his critical media practice. Sniadecki's projects propose (1) a discursively engaged and (2) reflexive anthropological representation, but they also (3) challenge distinctions between discourse and practice and (4) permit interpretation of his efforts as a sensory ethnographer tacking between the sensible and the analytical (Stoller, 1997). In the final section, I will describe my own attempts to adopt a sensory ethnographic approach in the study of indigenous fishing livelihoods in Greenland. Instead of relying entirely on sensory ethnography, a rigorous and systematic use of sensory and textually based ethnographic methods emerged as compulsory for considering how longline fishing practices configure and are configured within complex environmental, historical, political and technological currents.

In Part 5, I conclude with a culminating analysis of the outlined history of representation and the case studies. I argue that representational issues not only persist, but are amplified when anthropologists employ sensory ethnography in its current configuration. I suggest that studying livelihoods, especially in Greenland, requires attention to not merely phenomenological, affective concerns, but also to the political ecologies and technologies that are active forces within the very bodily experiences of Inuit fishers in Greenland.

While I describe some of the fieldwork I have undertaken in Greenland, space and current knowledge constraints prevent me from doing justice to other emergent themes that build upon environmental studies, political economy, and science and technology studies. In addition, the principle aim of this paper is not to undermine, disqualify or determine one representational strategy or theme as *the* means by which livelihoods should be studied. Instead, the initial aim is to trace the historical and discursive configurations that ground these sensory experiments and that remain open to the new set of both representational and thematic concerns that unfold as a result.

At the risk of repeating myself, the cross-cultural and theoretical significance of Greenland's longline fishing livelihoods should be approached carefully. As Arjun Appadurai remarks, 'if places become the guardians of particular cultural features or of particular forms of sociality, does this not affect the way these cultural forms and features are analysed in other places?' (1986: 356). What might be understood within longline fishing livelihoods in Greenland should not be assumed to be either regionally exceptional or cross-culturally applicable. This is especially crucial to bear in mind as artisanal, semi-commercial and commercial fishing practices throughout the world grapple with different configurations of environmental, political and social histories (Tilley, 1997; Subramanian, 2009; Krmpotich, 2010; Chimello de Oliveira and Begossi, 2012).

Part 1. A History of Representational Strategies of the Body

A Kalaallit fisher points in the direction of where he intends to cast a gill net. Photographed by author, 2014.

1.1. Phenomenology of the Body: Toward a Crisis of Representation

The body has long been an important locus in the discourse of the human sciences (Stoller, 1989, XII), of special concern within both visual anthropology (Edwards, 1999; Ruby, 2000, Grimshaw, 2001; MacDougall, 2006; Pink, 2010) and the anthropology of the senses (Howes, 1991; Ingold, 2000). While the body has been an area of anthropological inquiry since the early twentieth century (Mauss, 1935, 1950; Boas, 1944), many of the representational questions concerning it are rooted in phenomenology and make frequent reference to the work of Merleau-Ponty (1945). Grounded in the phenomenological turn, Jackson (1983: 328) insists that the anthropology of the body has been limited by the tendency to interpret embodied experience using linguistic and cognitive models of meaning, which limits the

phenomenological qualities of the body, as well as the analytical representations through which the body is understood. Instead, Jackson argues that 'anthropological analysis should be consonant with indigenous understandings which … are frequently embedded in practices rather than spelled out in ideas' (ibid.: 339).

While Jackson's interest in bodily practice and phenomenological considerations for the body partly fuelled what would later become the crisis of representation, Nakamura (2013: 133) suggests that 'a crisis in cultural or textual anthropology had been going on for more than two decades in visual anthropology'. Amid a positivistic era of anthropology, phenomenological considerations of conceptualizing the body through visual means were limited due to ethnographic films adopting expository styles and film-makers' ceaseless quests for objectivity and transparency (Nichols, 2001: 163; Pink, 2006: 109).

As Pink argues (ibid.: 12), by the 1980s and 1990s ethnographic film had emerged as a subjective and reflexive genre in the films of Jean Rouch and David MacDougall, who rejected past attempts to serve the scientific anthropology promulgated by Karl Heider in the late 1970s. While I disagree with Pink that this occurred for the first time in the 1980s, since as Rouch had been making reflexive films since the late 1950s (Henley, 2009: 93), questions about the body, phenomenology and experience, as well as an interrogation of the relationship of film to anthropological writing, did become increasingly important at this time (Pink, ibid.). Rouch not only served as a crucial figure in the history of cinema, he has also been described as the first anthropologist to become a well-known avant-garde film-maker (Henley, 2009, X, XV, 91), not Lucien Castaing-Taylor, as purported by Ruby (2013). Situated temporally between Rouch and Taylor's films, Trinh T. Minh-Ha's subjective and rhetorical films in the 1980s and 1990s were also pivotal for anthropology. Her notion of representation and speaking about, but also 'nearby' (Chen, 1992), indicates an increasing interest in becoming theoretically and proximally closer in a study of the body.

1.2. Polemics Against Text

Stoller (1989: 154, 156) also recognizes Rouch's work as influential for the ways in which ethnography might evoke, rather than state, 'a sense of what it is like to live in other worlds'. Like Jackson, he critiques the anthropology of the senses as logo-centric. Stoller (1989) argues that the senses are culturally constructed and biologically experienced, as well as being an apparatus of the body through which we experience the world. Stoller's work is among the earliest to show an inextricable relationship between the senses and the body, seeing both as facing similar epistemological and representational challenges vis-à-vis logo-centrism.

Responding to Stoller's *Taste of Ethnographic Things* (1989)*,* Moore questions the use-fulness of Stoller's (1989: 155) allergy to 'lifeless texts' and his call for 'the decolonization of anthropological texts' (Stoller, ibid.: 84). Moore asks with reason, 'are there only two frame-works [for anthropological representations of the senses], one good and one bad? There are a great many ways to do fieldwork, and even more ways to write. What we need least is a new orthodoxy' (Moore, 1990: 131). Like Jackson, Stoller and others, Moore (ibid.: 130) implores anthropologists to consider 'other dimensions of ethnographic discourse [and] other conven-tions of representation which may carry anthropology deeper into the being of the others.'

1.3. Theory, Practice, and Habitus: Historicizing the Body

Considering a historical dimension of ethnographic discourse as a means to scrutinize the body and the senses, Csordas (1990: 5) historicizes a paradigm of embodiment that can be elaborated for the study of culture and the self. Doing so generates concerns about the dis-tinctions between the body and embodiment. Recognizing phenomenological frameworks, Csordas clarifies their role within the study of the body in relation to Bourdieu's (1977, 1984) notions of discourse (representation) and practice (methods). Csordas also invokes Mauss (Mauss and Hubert 1972 [1902]), a figure whose work grounds some of the earliest consider-ations for the study and representations of the body, as well as being a figure of continuing importance within Inuit studies.

Later refined by Jackson (1983) in his notion of understandings embedded in practices rather than in words, Bourdieu (1977, 1984) situates embodiment in an anthropological dis-course of practice (Csordas, 1990: 7). For Merleau-Ponty, Csordas points out that, in the un-derstanding of the body, speech does not exist in opposition to embodiment, but instead is 'a gesture with which one takes up an existential position in the world' (Merleau Ponty, 1945 in Csordas, 1990: 25). However, Csordas also recognizes Merleau-Ponty's skepticism of what can be seen or described, given that 'there is always more than meets the eye' (Csordas, 1990: 8). These kinds of claims seem central to discussions about ethnographic film's purchase within the field of anthropology, and they challenge the seductive nature of purportedly total-izing thick descriptions (Jackson, 2013: 153). While speech and the written word can de-scribe the body, according to Csordas, the meanings of the body are always incomplete. His explication of the distinction that Mauss (1935, 1950) draws between *la notion du personne* (a theory of the body) and *les techniques du corps* (bodily practices) suggests that what is known through a discourse of the body is different from bodily practices and thus signals a departure from studying the body to studying embodiment. When Csordas (1990: 8) suggests

'that the body as a methodological figure must itself be non-dualistic and not distinct from our interaction with an opposed principle of mind,' he is arguing for an epistemological indigeneity or somaticity that would not collapse the space between indigenous and scholarly knowledge, but would instead work to legitimize the methods upon which his epistemological claims are based (cf. Jackson, 2014).

Reflexivity collapses the subject–object and body–embodiment distinctions that Csordas (1990) describes in his notion of embodiment as a paradigm. Reflexivity in anthropological representation writ large emerges in the wake of the *Writing Culture* movement (Clifford and Marcus, 1986) that punctuates the crisis of representation, within which Ruby's longstanding claims for a more reflexive ethnographic film are brought to the fore. Reflexivity in an ethnographic film context is as much about showing the film-making process itself as depicting the film-maker and his or her body.

In accepting the notion of embodiment as a study of culture and the self (cf. Csordas, 1990: 5), Lock critiques the discursive tendency toward 'a radical separation of knowledge and practice (in poststructuralist terms, of text and enactment)' (Lock, 1993: 136, her parentheses). Returning to Mauss and his insistence that all bodily expressions are learned (Lock, 1993: 135), she argues that an anthropology of the body 'requires more than reconciling theory with practice', which has special implications for those writing about the body (Lock, 1993: 136, 148). While she isolates the representational concern to writing, representing bodily practice is an area of concern for filmic and photographic representation as well. As posited by Jackson (1983), Lock (1993: 148) also detracts notions of the body as a sterile 'it', which she believes is part of the assumption and contention with representing a totalized body, especially when bodily knowledge is thought of as being located within and through the body and bodily practices. She also finds textual representation to be an increasing challenge for an anthropology of the body, yet also insists that text is 'an excellent forum to reflect not only theoretical dilemmas, but also the politics of the practice of anthropology' (ibid.).

An embodied study of the body is achieved through reflexivity while remaining aware of and accepting the body as a site which refuses to sit still and be totalized. A theory of embodiment is developed and is based upon Boas's (1944) work on gestures and posture, and Mauss's (1935, 1979) concept of the *habitus*, all of which are grounded in mimeticism. As elaborated by Bourdieu (1977), mimeticism is grounded in the repetition of unconscious mundane bodily practices (Lock, 1993: 137). As I show later, these mundane bodily practices remain important in the study of longline fishing practices in Greenland, and they are also

attended to carefully in sensory ethnography. According to Lock (ibid.: 139), 'ethnographic accounts in which taste, sound, and touch take centre stage have opened up new horizons, with great potential for a politics of aesthetics grounded in felt experience'.[3] The question remains: how can such a mimetic, embodied and felt study actualize itself methodologically and representationally?

1.4. The Anthropology of the Senses

While an anthropology of the senses positions the senses centre stage, two propositions limit its depth. Firstly, Pink (2006: 44) argues that in the 1990s the anthropology of the senses isolated and studied only one sense, instead of the senses as a whole through comparison between 'modern western [and] 'other' cultural expressions of sensory experience' (Classen, 1993; Howes, 1991). Secondly, such ethnographic accounts of the senses continue to employ logical analysis through text, despite former scholarship (Jackson, 1983; Stoller, 1989) flagging both the ambiguous and dynamic (as opposed to static) nature of the senses that fuels scholars to think through representing the senses beyond words.

Stoller's (1997) *Sensuous Scholarship* reaffirms the senses' relation to the body as located within it,[4] the need to study the senses as a whole and the strategies by which they could be represented. He remains skeptical of the supposition that 'rigorous research methods result in more or less objective observations' (ibid.: XIII). Was anthropology in the late 1990s still struggling over positivistic notions of objectivity? As an undercurrent of his argument, I remain sceptical that the objectivity hatchet had been buried. However, Stoller problematizes the body in anthropology as a representational issue and fortifies Lock's discontent about the trajectory of sensory/bodily discourse when he says that, 'even the most insightful writers consider the body as a text that can be read and analyzed' (ibid.: XIV). Stoller (1997) argues that 'textualizing' the body strips it of its smells, tastes, textures and sensuousness.

Stoller seeks to build upon Lock's (1993) suggestion for an incorporation of all the senses alongside addressing longstanding epistemological challenges of representing the body through text. While defended *ad nauseam*, he, like several others, argues that 'scholars should not consider the body as a text which can be read and analyzed' (Stoller, 1997: XIV). Instead,

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[3] Because affect theory has emerged as a key area of inquiry related to the body, and because it also raises special epistemological concerns, I describe its work more fully in Part 3.

[4] While I have shown that the body is often 'wrongly' described as an 'it', the body as an 'it' in this instance is a pronoun, and therefore faces a hermeneutic challenge of the English language, as opposed to a suggestion of the body as absent of life, dynamism, or gender. This challenge should be considered when 'it' takes the place of 'the body' throughout the paper.

a sensuous scholarship should tack between 'the analytical' and 'the sensible' through which 'embodied form as well as disembodied logic [can] constitute scholarly argument' (ibid.: XV).

Sensuous Scholarship posits several troubling reductions. First, while Stoller insists that a study of the body ought to tack between the analytical and the sensible, he only writes as much and suggests no further representational strategies by which to bring the full sensorium to the fore. Secondly, when he describes a binary situation in which writing is a form of disembodied logic, he reduces and discredits the possibilities of analytically describing embodied and sensate experiences through the written word, which is a possible project, as I demonstrate later by drawing on the work of Grasseni (2007). Thirdly, under his framework of a sensuous scholarship that considers all the senses together, film is also compromised because, after all, films ostensibly attend to the senses of vision and hearing, not the full sensorium.

The most troubling reduction is Stoller's reaffirmation that there is great benefit to aligning scholarly understandings of the body with indigenous ones. 'An inclusion of the sensuous body is paramount in the ethnographic description of societies in which the eurocentric notion of text — and of textual interpretations — is not important' (Stoller, 1997: XV, 30, 57). However, both 'preliterate' *and* textually based societies benefit from ethnographic analysis that takes the form of text. Such assumptions also reduce the sensory elements that are found within our 'modern' or 'literate' societies. To attribute a sensory numbness to purportedly Eurocentric societies exoticizes the Other and his or her body and senses. Representational consonances between 'the indigenous' and 'the scholarly' guarantee an understanding that is no more holistic than a multiplicity of representational strategies, especially amid the now frequently contested and collapsing boundary between scholarly and indigenous knowledge (Haakanson, 2001).

1.5. Film and Anthropological Representation, Problematized

Taylor (1996) brings visual anthropology and film back into the debate regarding anthropological representations of the body and the senses and deepens the distinction between Stoller's categories of the analytical and the sensible. He disputes reflexivity as film's means of reconciling its discontents with text when he insists that Ruby's prescriptions are a logically impossible order (Taylor, ibid.: 82). Instead, (ibid.: 75) he conceptualizes film 'as a sensory medium, nearly as much as the human subject is a sensory being, and [yet the human subject] is more often than not made up of both images and words.'

Taylor therefore argues that many meanings are inherent in both film and textual anthropological representations. With scepticism, he nonetheless affirms that text alone 'is the [present] condition of a possibility of a legitimate (discursive, intellectual) visual anthropology' (ibid.: 66). However, he argues that depicting the body beyond text aligns with earlier notions of an anthropology of the body that fails to hold still (Lock, 1993: 148), or a notion in which there is always more than meets the eye (Csordas, 1990: 8). Paradoxically, he argues that filmic ethnography, 'whether about Mursi spitting at each other, an Icelandic ram exhibition, or anything else, requires as much 'local knowledge' as written ethnography' (Taylor, 1996: 77). If reflexivity *à la* Ruby is logically impossible, yet both textual and filmic ethnography require context, how does Taylor's proposition differ from the fundamental claims of scientific ethnographic films such as *The Axe Fight* (1975)? Taylor's project instead relies not on transparency or exposition, but rather on the ambiguity and messiness of the lived experience. As I show later, this key claim emerges as a substantial representational contradiction and ultimately undermines the discursive legitimacy of his work.

1.6. The Pictorial Turn

Theorizing the role of film within the analytical and the sensible, MacDougall (1998: 61) insists that visual representation may be seen as an appropriate alternative to ethnographic writing in understanding the body and the senses. I continue to challenge MacDougall's positioning of film as a representational *alternative* to words: as Taylor insists (1996: 75), both representations are fallible, and more often than not the human subject is comprised of both. Because image-based technologies mediate different kinds of relationships between ethnographers, subjects and audiences than those associated with the production of literary texts (Grimshaw, 2001: 3), the pictorial turn sought to critically reposition film's role in anthropology. Yet, as I will show later, text remains a productive project for understanding and representing the full sensorium, even within a specific focus on vision (Grasseni, 2007).

What film provides is a forum to scrutinize both reflexivity and the body. MacDougall (1998: 90) argues that Taylor's understanding of Ruby's reflexivity is rooted in the 1980s, in response to the doctrines of scientific objectivity. Against Taylor, MacDougall insists that reflexivity be taken to a deeper and more integral level, the relevance of which emerges most saliently in relation to his study of the body in cinema.[5] The cinematic body is never ordinary; instead, the body on the screen is often heroic, beautiful and sanitized, evoking Jack-

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[5] As I show later, such concern for the body in cinema is taken up seriously by Taylor in his film *Leviathan* (2012).

son's (1983) notion of the body as a sterile 'it.' Referring to a modernist notion of the unfamiliar qualities of the lived experience, as expressed in Mauss and Bourdieu's notion of the *habitus,* the body engages in mundane activities, albeit seldom depicted in cinema (MacDougall, 2006). How might a visual anthropology of the body formulate a mundane, unfamiliar, reflexive, embodied and deeper representation?

As I have shown, the interconnected clashes and responses to the crisis of representation are found in epistemological concerns over representing the body and the senses, many of which are conceptualized through a binary of either film or text. These dilemmas have manifested themselves through a more reflexive and embodied ethnography that also continues to challenge the binaries of theory/practice, subject/object and scholarly/indigenous knowledge through textual and filmic representation. The body remains a site of contestation within the collision of an anthropology of the senses and visual anthropology. In the next part, I briefly describe how sensory anthropology's debates with the anthropology of the senses have filmic implications for its representational strategies.

Part 2. A History of Sensory Anthropology

A Kalaallit fisher signals an acceptable boat heading amid rough weather conditions. Photographed by author, 2014.

2.1. A Storm in a Teacup: Sensory Anthropology versus the Anthropology of the Senses

Sensory approaches have manifested themselves in ethnographic film (MacDougall, 1998; Ruby, 2000), in experimental anthropological methods (Grimshaw and Ravetz, 2005), and also when considering the materiality and sensory qualities of visual artefacts (Edwards, 1999, Pink, 2006: 42). Sensory anthropology, as opposed to the anthropology of the senses, purports to avoid situating sensory modalities in 'disembodied culture' which, Pink (ibid.:

332) argues, are 'incompatible with an anthropology that understands learning and knowing as situated in embodied practice and movement'. Jackson's (1983) insistence that indigenous understandings are embedded in practices, Stoller's (1997) call for a study of the senses that is written in a disembodied language, and Lock's (1993) understanding of the body that moves instead of standing still fortify the claims made by Pink (2006) within sensory anthropology.

To address these concerns, Pink (2010: 332) insists that the senses 'have to be considered together to be compatible with representations of the body, which are achieved through practice and movement.' Although Classen (1997) suggests that the anthropology of the senses has always been concerned with the senses as a means of inquiry and not solely as an object of study, the discipline has made few, if any, representational experiments through sensory means. One can begin to question how or where it is even possible to conduct a sensory project without or beyond words. Anthropologists problematize the word for such a project, but as I have shown, there is little empirical evidence to bolster the sensory outside of the supposed limits of words. Debates surrounding disembodied and textual representations have had implications for both film and text, which have shaped both sensory anthropology and sensory ethnography.

2.2. Body vs. Embodiment in Text

MacDougall's work contributes to how the body is seen within the pictorial turn. But for sensory anthropology, the question remains: does the body see, or is it merely seen? While published outside anthropology, *The Third Eye* (1996) theorizes and historicizes how the human body has been visualized as an object to be gazed upon and studied. Within an anthropological context, Rony (1996) ponders what it is to see oneself as one is seen, as a seeing body rather than a seen body. Her questioning helps to break down the distinctions between the body and embodiment, thus deepening conjectures that embodied studies require new representational strategies.

Considering MacDougall's call for reflexivity at a deeper level and Rony's interest in how the body sees, Grasseni (2007: 5) argues that 'skilled visions orient perceptions and structure understanding that may not only convey ideas, meanings, and beliefs, but configure them'. Understanding a particular visual configuration through participant observation and textual representation offers an analytical yet embodied understanding of how the body sees. Looking not merely at the personal empathy that arises from being there, vision is understood as embedded in mediating devices, contexts and routines (ibid.: 6). Embodiment is therefore

not merely understood through a reflexivity of one's own participant observation. By eliding some of the theoretical and historical conceptualizations of looking at the body that Rony (1996) arraigns, Grasseni attempts to understand how the body senses with consideration for all of the senses, yet remains engaged with some of anthropology's core representational and methodological strategies.

While *Skilled Visions* challenges Stoller and Pink's calls for a representational strategy beyond or in isolation from words in order to study embodiment, it also further interferes with the distinction between an anthropology of the senses and sensory anthropology. As I show in Part 5, sensory ethnography collapses neat and clear distinctions between the body and embodiment, but because such moves are beholden to a particular discursive history, it is also liable to criticism.

Part 3. The Evolution of Sensory Ethnography

A frame grab from Leviathan (2012) of a sternman hauling chains recorded with a head-mounted point-of-view camera. Photographed by ARRETE TON CINEMA, 2012. © The Cinema Guild.

3.1. Sensory Ethnography's Two Strands

Continuing to legitimize a representational dichotomy between text and film, Nakamura (2013) describes two chief strands of sensory ethnography, both of which are conceptualized within the purview of visual anthropology. Nakamura's two strands of sensory ethnography (ibid.: 133) are: the aesthetic-sensual (the conveyance of emotional states through vivid aesthetic-sensual immersion) and the multisensory-experiential (which employs the great use of multisensory experiential data, namely vision, taste, hearing, smell, touch, etc., in traditional ethnographic fieldwork). While I will ultimately disagree with Nakamura's conceptualization

of both projects as distinct, I use these categories to describe the disparate aims of the strands in relation to the work throughout the anthropology of the senses and sensory anthropology, and the constant calls for representational experimentation through sensory means. Because the first strand is akin to the work described above within sensory anthropology, I focus more on charting the second strand of sensory ethnography, which beckons theoretical and historical analysis in order to better determine its configuration within anthropology.

3.2. Bodily Praxis and Harvard University's Sensory Ethnography Lab

The second strand of sensory ethnography charted by Nakamura is produced most prominently by Lucien Castaing-Taylor and his colleagues at Harvard's Sensory Ethnography Lab (SEL), the projects of which have spawned disagreement among visual anthropologists regarding the role of such projects within anthropology. SEL supports 'innovative combinations of aesthetics and ethnography, with original nonfiction media practices that explore the bodily praxis and affective fabric of human existence … it encourages attention to the many dimensions of social experience and subjectivity that may only with difficulty be rendered in words alone' (Nakamura, 2013: 133). SEL is contested and relevant on several grounds concerning its conceptualizations of the body and its representations.

First, in a Freirean[6] sense, bodily praxis suggests the consummation of theory and practice of the body in action, which is a palimpsest of the theory of the body as posited by Jackson (1983) and Merleau-Ponty (1945). Grasseni and others have engaged in a form of bodily praxis through participant observation, but their projects and those of SEL differ in their representational strategies of bodily praxis. For SEL, bodily praxis — the theoretical and conceptual understandings of the body — are represented in their filmic sensory ethnographies, whereas bodily praxis in the projects of Grasseni and others starts with participant observation attending to the sensory aspects and ultimately produces its understanding of bodily praxis through textual analytical representation.

Secondly, instead of a study of human experience, SEL seeks to explore mere *existence*, which I interpret as a specific inclusion of the mundane and the repetitious, which may be interpreted as an ontological approach toward the body. In doing so, SEL, which is directed by Taylor, also elides Hastrup's epistemological concerns for the field of 'experience' in anthropology (Taylor, 1996: 67). Because sensory ethnographers have largely chosen not to

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[6] Paulo Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1985) posits a notion of praxis as reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it.

theorize their work textually, I am primarily describing interpretations here rather than affirmations.

SEL has produced several sensory ethnographies, all of which have taken the form of films, with the exception of a few phonographic recordings by Ernst Karel and Stephanie Spray. The most prominent works include *Demolition* (2008), *Sweetgrass* (2009), *Foreign Parts (*2011), *Leviathan* (2012) and, most recently, *Manakamana* (2013).[7] While other films have been produced within SEL, I refer primarily to *Leviathan* and *Demolition,* as these projects intersect the anthropology of the body and anthropology's representational strategies in fruitful ways. I first reposition sensory ethnography's intersections within the historical sediments of phenomenology, the body, aesthetics and the recent interest in affect theory.

As Merleau-Ponty (1945) described it, the human body provides the fundamental mediation point between thought and the world, an idea that has emerged throughout the history of anthropology as a key epistemological and representational concern. Understanding how anthropology might interpret humanity through the body has culminated in becoming a methodological and representational issue within sensory ethnography, and it remains its central tenant.

Regarding the body, Bourdieu's reformulation of Mauss' concept of the *habitus* also remains a key theme within sensory ethnography, especially considering its grounding in the repetition of unconscious and mundane bodily practices (Lock, 1993: 137). As MacDougall affirms, mundane bodily practices are often the first pieces of the lived experience to be cut from films, including moments as ordinary as 'taking a pee,' which are rarely found in fiction films, and are no more common in ethnographic ones (MacDougall, 2006: 19). While considered ambiguous, Taylor (1996: 76) insists that observation (in the case of film-making) 'reflects an ambiguity of meaning that is at the heart of human experience'. Like Jackson, SEL also takes inspiration from Boas's work on gestures and postures, as well as from Mauss and Bourdieu, in order to develop a theory of embodiment grounded in mimeticism (Lock, 1993: 137). In *Leviathan,* mimeticism takes centre stage as the camera moves on and with the body (because it is attached to it), recording and mimicking the very working practices of the body. In the case of *Skilled Visions,* similar acts of mimeticism occur during Grasseni's fieldwork, both of which work toward developing a critical understanding of how bodies see.

As Lock (1993: 139) posited in the early 1990s, 'ethnographic accounts in which olfaction, taste, sound and touch take center stage … open great potential for a politics of aesthet-

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[7] See the Appendix for short synopses and URLs to films mentioned herein.

ics grounded in felt experience'. In the context of affect theory, sensory ethnography's complex assemblages of bodies and worlds present novel combinations of themes and methods that challenge anthropology's relations to art and aesthetics. While phenomenological approaches in anthropology may be seen as 'archaic and occulted', they have been reinvigorated within the study of affect, namely within phenomenologies of embodiment in relation to human and non-human environments (Gregg and Siegworth, 2010: 290).

While sensory ethnography attempts to distinguish itself from earlier scholarship on the body and the senses through its representational strategies, it faces a key representational contradiction when conceptualized in direct relation to the principle aims and representational strategies of the anthropology of the senses. Taylor's (1996: 66) insistence on the need for 'local context' in written ethnography and film not only fails to sit comfortably in a discursive history of the body and the senses as dynamic and subjective, it also contradicts SEL's affective, post-phenomenological and non-textual frameworks. Because only an exceptionally small body of text exists to defend the theoretical aims of SEL (Nakamura, 2012; Sniadecki, 2014), its scholars have formulated a major discursive clash. While sensory anthropology has proved to contribute to an understanding of the body and bodily practices through text, sensory ethnography seeks to attend to the representational strategies of bodily praxis through a critical media practice of film-making.

Replying to the critical acclaim of Lucien Castaing-Taylor and Véréna Paravel's film *Leviathan* (2012)*, Ruby (2013) suggests that visual anthropology could stand to gain from a critical engagement with their work within the discipline. While SEL's labours are, if only in part, situated within a discursive history of the body, anthropology struggles to be an interlocutor to SEL's critical visual language, a language that is largely unknown within a discipline that purportedly 'falls prey to the illusion that the order of things could be adequately represented in an order of words' (Woolgar, 1986: 312). Despite being seemingly vernacularly opposed, sensory ethnography and sensory anthropology are not mutually exclusive domains of inquiry, especially considering their similar historical sediments. Recognizing their discursive and methodological overlap enables Harvard's SEL to be compatible with pre-existing dilemmas and theoretical frameworks, as well as with topics such as art, aesthetics and affect, as a representationally polemic project.

The first case study will analyse some of the objections levelled at SEL's representational strategies in J.P. Sniadecki's film *Demolition* (2008), which was produced in the Sensory Ethnography Lab, as well as a reflective article he recently wrote on his critical media practice (Sniadecki, 2014). The second case study builds upon SEL's representational strategies

and historical configurations and seeks to address a more critical understanding of the body within sensory ethnography.

Part 4.1 Sniadecki's Sensory Deconstruction

Frame grab from J.P. Sniadecki's Demolition (2008) of migrant workers on a lunch break. Photographed by J.P. Sniadecki, 2008. © J.P. Sniadecki.

4.1.1 - Demolition: Sniadecki's Reflections on Media Practice

In a demolition site in the centre of Chengdu, China, J.P. Sniadecki (2014: 23) collaborated with 'migrant workers, site managers, and city dwellers to produce the feature-length film *Chaiqian (Demolition),* which offers a sensual and open-ended portrait of migrant labor, urban space, and ephemerality'. Unlike Castaing-Taylor and others in SEL, Snidecki's recently published reflective article (2014) provides an exceptional opportunity to engage critically with both his ethnographic and representational theory, through which it is possible to situate SEL's sensory ethnography discursively and representationally.

4.1.2. Theoretical Framing

Situating the theory behind his filmic practice and reflexive writing, Sniadecki (2014: 26) invokes Taylor's notion of 'excess' — inclusive of ethnographic film — which grants the image a seductive power that 'draws the viewer into an interpretative relationship that bypasses professional mediation' (Taylor, 1996: 68). Snaidecki argues that sensory ethnography is a potential threat to anthropology: 'if everyone can engage excess and draw conclusions on social complexity and cultural difference on its own terms, then anthropologists are no longer

necessary, or so the argument goes' (Sniadecki, 2014: 26). While visual anthropologists might quibble with sensory ethnographers over the excess of ethnographic meaning in film, Sniadecki is more concerned with reconciling sensory ethnography's lack of logical, or discussive analysis.

Fortunately, Sniadecki recognizes similar concerns when he evokes Stoller's (1997) notion of the 'sensible' and the 'analytical', through which he describes his filmic practice as proceeding 'neither through the reductionism of abstract language nor the subordination of image and sound to argument, but instead through the expansive potential of aesthetic experience and experiential knowledge' (Sniadecki, 2014: 27). Such experiential knowledge is also akin to the strand of sensory ethnography charted by Nakamura (2013) and evinced through the fieldwork of Grasseni (2007). Sniadecki's film entails greater involvement from the audience or reader (Sniadecki, 2014) and evokes MacDougall's (1998: 79) argument that new concepts in anthropological knowledge 'are being broached in which meaning is not merely the outcome of reflection upon experience but necessarily *includes* the experience; in part then, 'the experience *is* the knowledge.' Knowledge through experience aligns with Stoller's category of 'the sensible,' whereas 'the analytical' is also formative in Snaidecki's article. By critically reflecting upon the theory that underpins his sensory ethnography, anthropology becomes an interlocutor with sensory ethnography's praxis, regardless of whether its scholars agree with the theory or its practice.

4.1.3. Writing and Sensory Ethnography

Sniadecki affirms the necessity of writing in relation to film and sensory ethnography. Writing, he insists, 'excels at advancing finely reasoned propositions in the service of interpreting and explaining not only social reality, but also abstract theory, whereas the sensorial, the corporeal and the affective tend to elude argumentation and resist propositional logic' (Sniadecki, 2014: 26, 30-31). Sniadecki's labours permits a tack between the sensible film and intelligible writing. While not fully summarized here, Sniadecki's analytical engagement permits a conversation with anthropology's historical representational and sub-discipline specific themes, such as the mundane and the everyday, and the reflexive capacities of film, for example. He exceptionalizes sensory ethnography's representational strategies as distinctly situated between conventional documentary and written ethnography, which clarifies the fact that even his ethnographic descriptions fail to be adequately understood or analysed through images alone.

While Sniadecki's text interferes with an assumption that film is an alternative to text (MacDougall, 1998) and argues for the affordances of film in representing the sensible (Stoller, 1997), the tack between the sensible and the intelligible vis-à-vis the body is not so clear cut. In the next case study, I scrutinize how a confluence of sensory ethnographic approaches from both strands may be a germane approach when considering site-specific representations of bodily practices in Greenland.

Part 4.2. Casting and Hauling in Nuup Kangerlua, Greenland

Frame grab from a chest-mounted video camera of a Kallalit fisher casting a longline in Nuup Kangerlua, Greenland. Photographed by author, 2014.

My ethnographic fieldwork in the Nuuk Fjord (Nuup Kangerlua) of Greenland focused on how Inuit conceptualize and sustain relations with the natural environment through longline fishing livelihoods. During two field visits (March-April 2014, and June-July 2014), I sought to examine how bodily practices such as fishing techniques, gestures and recognition of the natural and human environment might suggest how Inuit enact and embody social relations within the natural world. In doing so, I sought to shed light on how sensory ethnography could be employed in the study of indigenous livelihoods as it had been in other regional contexts (Sniadecki, 2008, Barbash and Taylor, 2009, Taylor and Paravel, 2012), and if so, to what extent.

4.2.2. Theoretical Framing

In keeping with the anthropology of the body and the senses, as well as sensory ethnography, phenomenology remained a guiding theme throughout the fieldwork. Since phenomenology attempts to represent how things are experienced by a subject (Tilley, 1997: 12) and understands the human body as a fundamental mediation point between thought and the world (Merleau-Ponty, 1945: 39, 278, 325), I began by recording the gesturing and working body. Moreover, remaining mindful of sensory anthropology's textual affordances (Grasseni, 2007), I later critically described the body in relation to the linguistic and discursive world that surrounds it. Like the work of the anthropology of the body, Inuit Studies strive to produce critical knowledge through a 'distancing' process. This relates into the modernist practice of 'defamiliarization', in which the aim is to reveal the strangeness, even absurdity, of that which is most familiar (Stevenson, 2006: 20). I also examined whether defamiliarizing approaches can only be achieved through merely a 'distanced' study of a sensing and moving body. Most importantly, I found it necessary to engage, with my own body, in the kind of explicit contextualizing, theorizing and thematizing work that Lucien Castaing-Taylor and others in SEL seem to have been less willing to perform.

4.2.3. Methods

Participant observation remains relevant in Inuit, sensory and bodily studies. According to Stevenson, cultural representation 'through practice of cultural activities rather than by articulating cultural norms in textual documents underlines the Inuit belief that one learns by doing' (2006, 15). Such participation also reaffirms Jackson's (1983) now longstanding conjecture that indigenous understandings are embedded in practices rather than spelled out in words. In the case of the film *Leviathan* (2012), the camera becomes an embodied one, recording and mimicking the body at work (Snyder, 2013b: 176). In recording Inuit longline fishers, I sought also to test the extent to which bodily practice can be represented through mimetic, participatory means. However, conducting interviews remained necessary to understand and articulate indigenous livelihoods throughout the Nuuk Fjord. Sniadecki's textual (2014) and filmic (2008) labours also reaffirm this need. A key question then emerges: which methods and representational strategies can be adopted to allow an ethnographer to achieve a sensible and analytical understanding of bodily practices and indigenous livelihoods?

4.2.4. Casting: Recording the Body

In the first stage, I wore a point-of-view (POV) camera[8] in a similar way as in *Leviathan* (2012), but instead of fishing on Georges Bank as seen in *Leviathan*, I sailed aboard a small open boat in Nuup Kangerlua, Greenland (Nuuk Fjord). Initial recordings were limited to my own bodily movement, inclusive of gesture,[9] rather than an embodied depiction of the fisher's body at work in the fjord. Upon reviewing the footage of my bodily movement and realizing I was incapable of coping with the extreme cold, I asked if the fisherman would wear the camera on his body while working. After strapping the camera to his chest, he and his deckhand sailed deep into the fjord to haul in the lines that the fisher and I had cast the day before. Unlike my footage, theirs shows how their bodies respond to the natural environment by ducking to avoid the wind[10] or remaining balanced atop choppy seas, as well as quotidian tasks such smoking a cigarette or urinating.[11] Longline fishers' recordings also showed (1) the skill disparities between experienced fishers and a junior deckhand in the rapidity with which each works,[12] (2) the gesturing to deckhands and other boats, and (3) the searching for natural landmarks for purposes of orientation.[13] While the camera records the body as a source of gesture, it eventually becomes a nuisance for the fisher. In the recording, something unexpected then occurs. His young deckhand offers to place the camera upon his body, resulting in footage depicting an inexperienced fisher at work.[14] Through this unexpected shift in perspectives, the process of learning by doing was clearly made visible (Stevenson, 2006). Specifically, the doing refers to the practice of the deckhand learning to clean fish and haul in lines (Jackson, 1983).

While I consider these visual representations to fall under Stoller's (1997) notion of the sensible, the recordings are not the sole means of understanding the environmental, political, ethical and technical circumstances that contextualize bodily movement and gesture. The recordings alone lack a vital analytical dimension. Reviewing the footage several days later with the fishermen permitted us to appraise the ethical implications of placing a recording camera on the body and to consider where and how the presence of a camera affects bodily movement and gesture.[15] These reasons alone suggest the necessity to ask about, listen to and

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[8] See Video 1 in the Appendix.
[9] See Video 2 in the Appendix.
[10] See Video 3 in the Appendix.
[11] See Video 4 in the Appendix. Does not include compromising or explicit imagery.
[12] See Video 5 in the Appendix.
[13] See Video 6 in the Appendix.
[14] See Video 7 in the Appendix.
[15] See Transcript 1 in the Appendix to read the conversation between the researcher, a translator and the fisher.

engage in a deeper, more reflexive participation, and to be explicit, yet prudent, in divulging and withholding extraneous or compromising recordings.

4.2.5. Hauling: Approaching the Body Through Practice, Asking, and Listening

In the summer months, the approach I took was developed in response to the environmental, ethical, political and technical limitations discovered in the first stage. This time, I worked as a curious deckhand aboard several small open boats and participated in the core longline fishing activities,[16] from baiting and casting to hauling and selling. Though repetitive and ostensibly mundane, putting my own body into action,[17] yet also asking, listening and observing how Inuit work, I did discover the following.

First, fishers move and respond to the rhythms of the natural environment, other human interaction and the technology that facilitates their work. Responses to the human and non-human environment are enacted through bodily movement, which is highly tacit and often subconsciously reactionary (e.g. we bend our knees to stay balanced in rough seas),[18] often without realizing it. These bodily movements and gestures are learned through doing (Kulchyski, 2006) and may be vitiated when described through words alone. Since learning is imparted through showing and telling, learning how to cast and haul is dependent upon a critical understanding of the body in action and also on remaining attentive to bodily, gestural and verbal communication. Learning to fish is not entirely tacit and phenomenological. Instead, communication and learning in this context are carried out between Inuit through both words and gestures, which become 'what in modern parlance is part of the individual's habitus' (Bourdieu, 1977: 78-87).

Secondly, while some bodily practices, including gestures, may be verbally indescribable, some movements and techniques shape and are shaped by family politics and technology. These are best critically analysed through text. Casting longlines in Nuup Kangerlua requires a knowledge of where fishers' families have cast their lines,[19] which is indicated by buoys that are often difficult to see in rough seas. Casting locations are openly disclosed and shared

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[16] Because the aim of returning to Nuup Kangerlua, Greenland, was to participate, ask, listen and observe, I made far fewer video recordings than during my first fieldwork, as evinced in a lack of video clips when compared with the first fieldwork period.

[17] See Video 8 in the Appendix.

[18] See Video 9 in the Appendix.

[19] Many families in Nuuk contain several fishers each, often brothers, uncles, nephews or fathers who share knowledge and work together within their elementary family, as well as being in constant contact with other fishers in other families. Where fish have been caught in large quantities or where lines have been cast are commonly discussed topics that perpetuate interdependence within and between families.

through hand gestures[20] and not just through tacit bodily movement. As one fisherman told me, 'most people describe with hand gestures the locations of where they cast their lines. This is to avoid overlap and hardship. But if you don't want someone fishing in your spot, then you keep [the location] to yourself.' Knowledge of the locations of productive fisheries, seal populations,[21] migrating whales and cast longlines are communicated through the body and voice, supporting a notion of Inuit interdependence through sharing resources and open communication. As fishers pass each other in the fjord, they rarely stop, but instead gesture toward their origin, destination or the location of cast longlines through hand signals. If open boats pass each other at distances further than several hundred metres, mobile phones or VHF radio are used. While radios may limit bodily communication, fishers actively put radio technology to work both to remain safe and efficient while fishing and to maintain their interdependence.

Thirdly, fishing politics are not only maintained in everyday bodily movement but also through language. On one occasion, two fishermen from different families climbed a steep fjord wall before casting lines to discuss and point out ideal fishing locations and, as I later learned, to describe areas where a fisher and his sons frequently cast[22] their lines. Given that bodily practices of casting and hauling are predicated upon verbal and gestural communication, both sensual and analytical approaches become critical. Since the sensible is linked to the analytical (i.e. bodily movement shapes and is shaped by family politics and technology) and since the analytical is enacted within the sensible (i.e. interdependence[23] configures how and where fishers move), Stoller's (1997) notion of the analytical and the sensible collapses. Ultimately this suggests that sensory ethnography requires the textual as much as it promotes the sensible. Challenging what sensory ethnography calls bodily praxis requires not just an understanding of how the body moves, but also why.

As I have shown in the earlier sections, SEL's projects are built on the same historical bedrock of phenomenology, body studies and sensory anthropology, yet their politics of representation suggest distinct epistemological projects. However, this divergence also places them within a constructive conversation concerning representational limits. While a sensory ethnography proposed by SEL may not sit comfortably within cognitive, epistemologically ordered frameworks of anthropology, Sniadecki (2014) shows that is fruitful to level both

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[20] See Image 1 in the Appendix for an example of a fisher signalling the location of his buoy.
[21] See Image 2 in the Appendix for an example of a fisher signalling the location of group of surfacing seals.
[22] See Image 3 in the Appendix.
[23] Interdependence is also an increasingly key factor in collaborative research, especially as it intersects with new media technologies, including video. See Jackson's (2004) for clarification.

ethnographic and methodological critiques to sensory ethnography films through text. In the case of studying longline fishers in Nuup Kangerlua, tacking between sensory and analytical approaches is not just possible but a compulsory methodological and representational step toward a deeper understanding of the complexities of human–environment relations in Greenland.

Part 5. Culminating Analysis

Frame grab from a chest-mounted video camera of a Kallalit fisher hauling a longline in Nuup Kangerlua, Greenland. Photographed by deckhand, 2014.

5.1.- Key Concerns of the Body and Representation

Ethnographic experimentations seeking deeper understandings of the body remain a productively contested practice. As I have shown, historical and conceptual issues that have been at stake in anthropology for several decades remain the substrate for sensory ethnography. How has the history of anthropological representation acted as a catalyst for a sensory ethnography? How does sensory ethnography propose to contribute an understanding of the body, or is generating a cognitive understanding even its goal?

Sensory ethnography seeks to remedy Jackson's (1983) call on the limits of words by representing non-textual understandings of the body, which purportedly fail to fit neatly into interpretive frames (Sniadecki, 2014: 29). Doing so also satisfies the call for an embodied and representationally distinct study of the body in excess of textual representations of the anthropology of the senses (Stoller, 1989, 1997; Howes, 1991; Rony, 1996). While not explicitly defended by anthropologist-filmmakers, phenomenological approaches to the representation of the body may be operative in films such as *Leviathan* (2012), which requires a

more active perception by the audience through the employment of embodied cameras, through which the sensory ethnographers attempt to show how a subject experiences the world (Merleau-Ponty 1945: 39, 278, 325, Snyder, 2013b: 176). Such subjective projects distinguish their theoretical framing as akin to the work of Mead and Bateson, who contended that anthropology becomes a science of words and that film is a means to use new tools to replace 'subjective field notes' (Mead, 1995: 5; Weinberger, 1992: 38). Against Mead and Bateson's positivist approach to film as merely objective and text as merely subjective, sensory ethnography aligns with Ingold's (2014: 385) notion that ethnography is 'more an art than a science, but no less accurate or truthful than that,' and instead recognizes that both filmic and textual representations contain many meanings (Pinney, 1992: 27).

When sensory ethnographers produce films that rely on image and sound, they affirm MacDougall's (2006) insistence that unfamilar bodily representations through film remains an area of inquiry. In doing so, they elide the claims of ocular-centrism put forward by scholars of the senses (Howes, 1991). Special attention to bodily practices is found within the mundane and unfamiliar, which resonates with the notion of the *habitus*, seen in the case of scallop shucking in *Leviathan* (2012), long shots of demolition work in *Demolition* (2008), the work of longline fishers in Nuup Kangerlua, within the scholarship of critical Inuit Studies (Stevenson, 2006), and even in cattle breeding in northern Italy (Grasseni, 2007). Placing cameras on fishermen in my own fieldwork in Nuup Kangerlua and in *Leviathan* (2012) upsets both the relations between subjects and authors and notions of indigenous media. While one may argue that anthropologists provoke such recordings, therefore disqualifying the media as indigenous, the earliest historical projects categorized as 'indigenous video' have always been prompted by the presence of an anthropologist (Worth and Adair, 1972).

While MacDougall (1998, 2006), Ruby (1980, 2000) and others call for reflexivity, sensory ethnographers like Sniadecki (2008, 2014) employ it in both filmic practice and critical writing. Because sensory ethnographers are trained in anthropology and ground their filmic practice in ethnographic methods, they attempt to work toward reconciling a longstanding radical separation of knowledge and practice in the study of the body – in post-structural terms, of text and enactment (Lock, 1993). Sniadecki's (2014) scholarship involves yoking critical, discursive and sensuous representations together in an attempt to fuse knowledge and practice. However, as one of sensory ethnography's forerunners, the anthropologist Lucien Castaing-Taylor has not produced any writing that could permit a deeper understanding of the bodily praxis present in films such as *Leviathan* (2012). Instead of assuming the body as being readable as a text (Stoller, 1997), Sniadecki (2014) and Grasseni (2007) both show that

the body can be read — if only partly — *with* text. While words have limits, they remain a key means by which to engage in discourse and analysis.

The problem with situating SEL within the historical frameworks of anthropological representation appears to be due to a disinterest in producing totalizing, thick descriptions of the body or the senses. However, when its scholars choose to explore topics such as affect and aesthetics, some, barring Sniadecki, make the foolish assumption that such areas of anthropological inquiry are exempt from discursive engagement. Yet, some of anthropology's most representationally challenging topics have vetted their efforts through text, as most recently evinced in John L. Jackson's (2013) *Thin Description*, the development of affect theory (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010) and even an entire corpus of non-representational theory (Anderson, 2010). Despite their anthropological project attending to areas that struggle to be described, why should SEL's scholars be exempt from discursive engagement?

5.2. Toward a Reconfigured Sensory Ethnography

As shown in the cases of *Demolition* (2008, 2014) and in longline casting and hauling in Nuup Kangerlua, Greenland, tacking between the sensible and the analytical is not only a possible and collapsible project, but also a highly productive task for understanding ethnography's representational limits, for auditing each representation's discursive contributions, and for moving toward a synthesis of a more holistic ethnographic understanding. Such understandings still recognize that the capacity of a body is never defined by a body alone, but is always aided and abetted by, and dovetails with, the field or context of its force relations, which are dynamic and ever-changing (Gregg and Seigworth, 2010). Such a configuration moves toward a goal of avoiding the trap of conceptualizing its task as providing complete and total knowledge. Instead, a reconfigured sensory ethnography would embrace Csordas's (1990) notion that there is more than meets the eye. It would also espouse Jackson's notion of 'thin description,' which is a way of knowing that privileges non-knowing, but not anthropological totalism (Jackson, 2013: 153).

Such a representational configuration may be a germane approach within the regional context of Greenland. The unfamiliar and the mundane remain important, which harks back to historical concerns raised by Mauss's and Boas's work in Inuit Studies. Such a configuration is also consonant with an Inuit belief that one learns by doing (Stevenson, 2006: 15). Employing point-of-view cameras in similar ways to their use in *Leviathan* (2012) records bodily praxis during which the body is seen, yet reviewing the footage and placing cameras on fishermen also shows how bodies see. While such recordings are sensible representations,

exegesis is required to understand and critique the reflexive, ethical, political and environmental circumstances that situate Inuit-recorded bodily movement. Reviewing video recordings and participant observation permits a deeper, more analytical and reflexive understanding of the body, from which critical engagement and discourse can emerge.

While it may be possible to represent the mundanity and mimicry of casting and hauling longlines textually, the body at work — especially highly tacit and subconsciously reactionary movements — struggle to be represented in words alone. However, because longline fishing bodily movements — inclusive of gesture — can be traced and understood in relation to a set of social politics, text becomes a crucial representational strategy in analysing how and also why the body moves. Existing politics and notions of interdependence that remain important from a structural-functional perspective are formed through a confluence of bodily movement and verbal and gestural communication that — contrary to the aims of the SEL — ultimately struggle to be represented in images alone.

A reconfigured sensory ethnography yokes the affordances of sensory ethnography's critical media practice and the representational affordances of text. Such a configuration proffers a methodological and theoretical forum for understanding bodily practices and their representational quandaries. It also challenges the space between the analytical and the sensible, as well as the distinctions between Nakamura's two strands of sensory ethnography, and ultimately criticizes SEL's unwillingness to contribute to anthropology through textual means.

Part 6. Conclusion

Fishers discuss the politics and locations of casting lines within Nuup Kangerlua, Greenland. Photographed by author, 2014.

Anthropology continues to ask if there are other dimensions to ethnographic discourse, other ways of knowing and other conventions of representation that could carry the discipline deeper into the being of the others (Moore, 1990: 130). When considering indigenous livelihoods in Greenland and sensory ethnography as a germane method and form of representation, what emerges is that, while sensory ethnography may offer a particular sensory 'depth', an ethnography of longline fishing livelihoods in Greenland cannot be studied and represented merely through sensory means. While many scholars have flagged the representational limits of text (Jackson, 1983; Ingold, 2000; Sniadecki, 2014), a comprehensive, deep and systematic examination of a sensing body has and will continue to rely upon the written word to construct and deconstruct its epistemological frameworks.

While Lucien Castaing-Taylor is not the very first anthropologist to become a famous avant-garde film-maker, he and his colleagues' work in SEL recognizes yet also diverges from sensory and visual anthropology's textual anchors. Even though SEL's project explores seemingly ineffable areas of anthropological inquiry, the project is stifled when its scholars refuse to circumscribe their sensate scholarship within anthropology's well-established textual modes of knowledge production. In the recent efforts of Sniadecki (2008, 2014), sensory ethnography's two strands as set forth by Nakamura (2013) collapse into one, through which possibilities emerge for sensory ethnography to engage with anthropology's methodological

and discursive history of the body and of the senses. Scrutinizing sensory ethnography on representational grounds also raises new site-specific and thematic questions. While it became clear that employing sensory ethnography among longline fishers would require the collapse of sensual and analytical frameworks (i.e. working similarly to Grasseni (2007) and Sniadecki (2014)), the chief realization in the study of indigenous livelihoods is that they are not merely tacit, sensory or traditional. Since longline fishing in Nuuk exists between cash and subsistence economies, it informs and is informed by family politics, local governance, the market economy and a modernizing fishing industry. Beyond phenomenological and sensory considerations, these very dimensions shape and are shaped by indigenous livelihoods. Political economy, critical geopolitics and the history of technology are only some of the many themes that must be considered as part of the somatic complexities of indigenous livelihoods in Greenland.

Rehearsing the representational debates surrounding the body is therefore not merely useful for understanding anthropology's means of producing and critiquing knowledge production, it has also informed my approach to the site-specific complexities in Greenland. While scholars within these fields may question who their interlocutors are, these seemingly mutually exclusive domains within anthropology do share a history, even if detractors deny it. And furthermore, they can constructively be put into conversation. In calling attention to the environmental, political and technical processes that are present in longline fishing, discourse continues to be an indispensable mechanism for the development of anthropological thought. If a study of livelihoods is to call upon the methodological and representational affordances of sensory ethnography, then the site, methods and representations need to be scrutinized for the themes they evoke, the lived experiences they record, and the politics their representations conjecture.

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Appendix

Images

Image 1. A fisher signalling the location of his buoy. *Photographed by author, 2014.*

Image 2. A fisher signalling the location of a group of surfacing seals. *Photographed by author, 2014.*

Image 3. Looking down into the fjord, two fishers discuss the politics and locations of casting lines in Nuup Kangerlua. *Photographed by author, 2014.*

Video

To strike a balance between convenience while upholding respondent privacy, the video clips referred to below are available as unlisted videos on YouTube, which are not available to the public. Readers with the URLs on the following pages are able to access the clips. Please type the URL exactly as it appears here to access the video clips.

Video 1. TRT 02:02. A video clip recorded from a chest-mounted video camera of a fisher casting a longline and tying a knot to a home-made anchor in April 2014 in Nuup Kangerlua, Greenland. *Photographed by author, 2014.* URL: http://bit.ly/Greenland1

Video 2. TRT 00:19. A video clip recorded from a chest-mounted video camera of the fisher commanding the researcher to steer the boat toward a natural landmark. *Photographed by author, 2014.* URL: http://bit.ly/Greenland2

Video 3. TRT 00:28. A video clip recorded from a chest-mounted video camera on the fisher of the deckhand sitting below the gunwales to avoid the winter wind as the men sail into the fjord to haul the longline caught the day before. *Photographed by fisher, 2014.* URL: http://bit.ly/Greenland3

Video 4. TRT 00:12. A video clip recorded from a chest-mounted video camera on the deckhand of the fisher removing his ocean suit in order to urinate from the stern of the boat. NOTE: no potentially unethical recording of a respondent urinating was taken by the deckhand. *Photographed by deckhand, 2014.* URL: http://bit.ly/Greenland4

Video 5. TRT 00:54. A video clip recorded from a chest-mounted video camera on the deckhand of the fisher hauling the longline, with the deckhand gutting the incoming catch. NOTE: Contains graphic images of gutting fish. *Photographed by deckhand, 2014.* URL: http://bit.ly/Greenland5

Video 6. TRT 00:26. A video clip recorded from a chest-mounted video camera on the fisher of the latter referring to his GPS and looking toward a corresponding natural landmark, after which the deckhand points toward the location of the orange buoy that indicates the anchor of the longline cast the day before. *Photographed by fisher, 2014.* URL: http://bit.ly/Greenland6

Video 7. TRT 00:46. A video clip recorded from a chest-mounted video camera of the fisher removing the obstreperous camera and handing it to the deckhand. *Photographed by deckhand and fisher, 2014.* URL: http://bit.ly/Greenland7

Video 8. TRT 01:29. A video clip recorded from a head-mounted video camera on the researcher of the practices of gutting fish while a fisher and his son haul in a longline. NOTE: Contains graphic images of gutting fish. *Photographed by author, 2014.* URL: http://bit.ly/Greenland8

Video 9. TRT 00:10. A video clip of a fisher's leg compression and balance while sailing into the fjord during choppy conditions. *Photographed by author, 2014.* URL: http://bit.ly/Greenland9

Synopses of Selected SEL Films

The following synopses have been written by the Harvard Film Archive (http://hcl.harvard.edu/hfa/)

Demolition (2008)

Directed   by   J.P.   Sniadecki

US 2008, video, color, 62 min. Mandarin and Sichuanese with English subtitles

Chaiqian focuses primarily upon a vast demolition site in the center of Chengdu, the capital of Sichuan province in western China, a bustling site emblematic of the many urban centers in China undergoing rapid and radical transformation. A remarkable combination of rigorous, structured aesthetics—making especially notable use of the long take—and a richly human look at migrant labor and social dynamics in flux, Chaiqian follows the site's laborers at work and rest, occasionally overhearing the workers speak to each other about being filmed and joking with the 'man from Harvard' behind the camera. Eventually the film branches out to follow a group of men who wander off to discover   the   city   by   night.   Available   via: https://www.dropbox.com/s/kfxr6c09rl92dg1/Demolition.mov?dl=0

Sweetgrass (2009)

By   Lucien   Castaing-Taylor   and   Ilisa   Barbash.   US/France/UK   2009
Digital video, color, 101 min. Not Rated. In English.

Sweetgrass offers both a sweeping panorama and intimate portrait of the vanishing way of life of Montana's possibly last generation of sheep herders. Sensitively documenting the efforts of a small group of herders to drive their sheep into Montana's Beartooth Mountains for summer pasture, Sweetgrass reveals a breathtakingly epic study of man in nature that is shaded by a mournful eulogy for the vanishing frontier that recalls the revisionist Westerns of the 1970s. Barbash and Castaing-Taylor make their points visually, beginning with the sheep and only gradually coming to focus on the herders themselves, and using an evocative sound design that doesn't necessarily foreground speech over the sound of wind and bleating sheep. Indeed, the spoken word comes later, reaching its apotheosis during a tearful cell phone call from a herder in a remote meadow. Sweetgrass is equally successful as an observational documentary as a landscape film, with the filmmakers' background in visual anthropology clearly evident in their skillful rendering of the herders' life and labor. Carefully avoiding any romanticization of the pastoral, Sweetgrass is instead an unsentimental witness to the changing nature of man's relationship to the environment.

Foreign Parts (2011)
Directed by Véréna Paravel and J.P. Sniadecki. USA,2010.
Digital video, color, 80 min. Not Rated. In English.

Foreign Parts is a portrait of a place, made up of an accumulation of moments out of which several characters emerge – including, ultimately, the filmmakers themselves – yet no real narrative. The film reveals Willets Point to be a well-functioning urban ecosystem threatened by economic redevelopment. There are tensions among those who live and work in the neighbourhood, especially around drugs and – to a lesser extent – race, but the primary menace is the threat of eviction at the hands of real estate developers and the city officials who do their bidding.

Leviathan (2012)
Directed by Lucien Castaing-Taylor and Véréna Paravel. USA/France/UK, 2012.
Digital video, color, 87 min. DCP / 1.85:1 / Dolby 5.1. Not Rated. In English.

A ground-breaking, immersive portrait of the contemporary commercial fishing industry. Filmed off the coast of New Bedford, Massachusetts – at one time the whaling capital of the world as well as Melville's inspiration for 'Moby Dick'; it is today the country's largest fishing port with over 500 ships sailing from its harbor every month. Leviathan follows one such vessel, a hulking groundfish trawler, into the surrounding murky black waters on a weeks-long fishing expedition. But instead of romanticizing the labor or partaking in the longstanding tradition of turning fisherfolk into images, filmmakers Lucien Castiang-Taylor (Sweetgrass) and Verena Paravel (Foreign Parts) present a vivid, almost-kaleidoscopic representation of the work, the sea, the machinery

and the players, both human and marine.

Employing an arsenal of cameras that passed freely from film crew to ship crew; that swoop from below sea level to astonishing bird's-eye views, the film that emerges is unlike anything that has been seen before. Entirely dialogue-free, but mesmerizing and gripping throughout, it is a cosmic portrait of one of mankind's oldest endeavors. Available via: https://www.dropbox.com/s/hzoljhv04xp5xwj/Leviathan.mp4?dl=0

Manakamana (2013)

Directed by Stephanie Spray and Pacho Velez. USA, 2013

Super 16mm, color, 118 mins. DCP. 1.85: 1. Stereo. USA. Not Rated. In Nepali with English Subtitles.

High above a jungle in Nepal, pilgrims make an ancient journey by cable car to worship Manakamana. Available via: https://www.dropbox.com/s/0rghgrt494n0mkg/Manakamana.mp4?dl=0

Transcript

Exercise 3. Semi-Structured Interview with Apollo and Per Kunuk Lynge

Recorded: 1 April 2014

Below are selected interview questions and responses from a 45-minute interview. Most of the selected clips highlight methodological considerations such as my or the camera's presence, though a few instances are representative of the data sought after toward the ethnographic research interests. CUT signifies a cut in the original recorded interview.

0:02 Researcher (R): It is okay if I do an audio recording of us when we are talking about the...

0:09 *Laughing*

0:11 Per Kunuk Lynge (PL) 'Per Kunuk Lynge' translates into Greenlandic (Kalaallisut)

0:14 R: In case I forget....

0:02 PL: You have to be, because his family is waiting.

0:20 R: Okay.

AUDIO CLIP CUT

0:19 *Video playback in Greenlandic of Apollo speaking to fellow fishermen from his boat in the harbor about the camera he is wearing on his chest*

0:21 Apollo: *Speaking back what he says in the video in Kalaallisut*

0:24 PL: Ah, he said, 'This is my passenger.'

0:26 R: Ah! Okay.

0:26 PL, A, R: *Laughing*

0:32 *Video playback continues of Apollo speaking to fellow fishermen*

0:38 R: Does the camera feel like it disappears?

0:37 PL: *Translating into Kalaallisut*

0:43 A: Nah.

0:43 PL: Nah.

0:43 R: Always notice it...

0:45 A: *Speaking in Kalaallisut*

AUDIO CLIP CUT

0:46 R: When you look at this [footage you recorded (exercise 2)] does it feel like you can understand what it is to fish better than when I was recording – when I showed the clips earlier of me recording?

1:01 PL: *Translating to Kalaallisut*

1:14 R: Who does a better job of recording [the fishing]? Me or you?

1:18 PL: *Translating to Kalaallisut*

1:18 A: *Speaking in Kalaallisut*

1:30 PL: In that point of matter, it's better that he have the camera, because you don't know anything about the fishing. It's very uncomfortable and it disturb[s] them in their work.

1:41 R: Okay, at one point he (Apollo) takes off the camera and Inunnguaq puts on the camera. Why did he decide to [do that]?

1:48 PL: *Translating to Kalaallisut*

1:58 A: *Speaking in Kalaallisut*

2:04 PL: It was...

2:06 A: *Speaking in Greenlandic*

2:06 PL: He have to wear this, uh, rain…

2:09 R: The suit (a standard orange PVC waterproof rain suit)

2:09 PL: Yeah, the suit... protecting again [from the weather].

2:12 R: It wasn't because he wanted to [show a new perspective]?

2:13 PL: No.

2:13 R: Yeah, OK.

AUDIO CLIP CUT

2:15 R: When I went out wearing the camera, on the first time, was it strange that I was wearing the camera?

2:24 PL: *Translating to Kalaallisut*

2:24 A: *Speaking in Kalaallisut*

2:36 PL: It was very okay.

2:35 R: It was more OK than the second time (exercise 2)?

2:39 PL: *Translating to Kalaallisut*

2:51 A: *Speaking in Kalaallisut*

2:52 PL: It was better if you were with him.

2:54 A: *Speaking in Kalaallisut*

2:54 PL: Because...

3:01 A: *Speaking in Kalaallisut*

3:06 PL: They have very difficult – different things to do and they – it is going very fast. If you are with [them] you are just following them. Both of them.

3:19 R: Instead of them having to worry about [the camera]?

3:20 PL: Aap (Yes in Kalaallisut).

3:20 R: Ah, okay.

3:23 A: *Speaking in Kalaallisut*

3:26 PL: *Speaking in Kalaallisut*

3:32 A: *Gesturing the shape of the camera on the head*

3:32 PL: Hmmmm

3:31 R: On the head is better?

3:31 PL: Yeah.

3:35 PL: But the most good thing is if you are going with him.

3:43 R: Yeah, OK.

CUT

3:45 R: I did not do a very good – would he agree that I wasn't able to do a very good job of filming him while I am trying to steer the boat?

3:51 PL: No, no, no. He was just thinking about your health and your comfort. Because he know exactly that you don't know a shit of being out[doors].

4:02 R: Yeah. (Pause) Yeah.

4:05 PL: *Speaking in Kalaallisut to Apollo*

4:05 R: He...

4:15 PL: He was just trying to protect you.

4:15 R: Yeah.

AUDIO CLIP CUT

4:15 PL: He said, did you get some experience of how a Greenlandic fishermen is living?

4:23 R: Aap (Yes in Kalaallisut)

4:23 PL: *Translating to Kalaallisut*

4:22 A: *Speaking in Kalaallisut*

4:27 PL: Since he was a child [he has been fishing].

4:30 R: Yeah.

4:30 PL: He has not been a worker or a labor. He has just been a fishermen. So, that is his world.

'SEPARATE BUT EQUAL', SEGREGATED OR STYMIED?
SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING ISSUES IN SOUTH TYROL

ANN WAND[1]

1. Introduction

The Italian province of South Tyrol, with its mixed Italian-, German- and Ladin-speaking communities, is situated just south of the border between Austria and northern Italy. In this mixed border region, identity negotiation and association, whether referring to language or culture, play a large part in establishing perceptions of self (Urciuoli 1995). My research is partially concerned with the modalities and construction of such linguistic identities, but it also concentrates on how second language acquisition between local community members is acquired in a region that practices 'separate but equal' education.

While the German- and Ladin-speaking communities have received a certain (though not excessive) amount of attention already from anthropology and allied disciplines, the local Italian-speaking community has not. Therefore, this article will try to bring to light not only the latter's concerns regarding the German-speaking community, but also educational issues that are relevant in the Italian-speaking community.[2]

The objective is to understand some of the reasons why many South Tyrolean students are having difficulty in engaging themselves in the second language spoken in South Tyrol. While much theoretical research on second language acquisition has focused on factors such as anxiety, motivation and perceived attitudes towards language learning in general (Ellis 1994, Gardner 1985, Horwitz et al. 1986), little research (if any) has been done on understanding how the role of history in South Tyrol assists in creating mental 'blocks' preventing second language acquisition from occurring in a region that is technically bilingual.

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[1] Post-doctoral Research Associate, School of Anthropology and Museum Ethnography, University of Oxford.
[2] For the purposes of this article, I will not be focusing on the Ladin-speaking citizens of South Tyrol, but rather on the linguistic tensions between its German- and Italian-speaking citizens. The German-speaking citizens of South Tyrol make up two-thirds of the population and Italian-speaking citizens less than one-third of the population (Woelk 2001: 2). The Ladin-speaking citizens are confined to a small regional area within the Dolomites (Alcock 2001; Woelk 2001) that accounts for only four percent of the South Tyrolean population. For more information on the Ladin-speaking people, see Cesare Poppi's work, *The Ladins: people of the pale mountains* (2001).

2. Language identity and local prejudices

In order to make sense of language-learning issues in South Tyrol between its German- and Italian-speaking residents, local journalists Giudiceandrea and Mazza refer to a key concern regarding the difficulties that can occur in second language learning: by learning another language, one is essentially opening oneself up to another culture (2012: 74). Because the history of South Tyrol is riddled with linguistic controversy and political struggle, 'language identity' takes on a new meaning for those who are required to learn the second language. 'When speaking a new language, one is adopting' the identity markers of another group, 'which can be a source of enrichment or a source of resentment', depending on how the two speech communities view their second language-speaking neighbours (Lightbrown and Spada 1999: 56).

The Italian-speaking community has made quite an impression on South Tyrol since it was ceded to Italy by Austria in the 1920s. Political objectives on the part of the Fascist Party enforced the Italian language on the German-speaking community, resulting in 'imposed monolingualism' (Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 79) in German-speaking schools. As a result of these past historical objectives, while many German-speakers have maintained a decent knowledge of Italian, there still remain those German-speakers who carry the 'wounds' of the past. While attempts have been made over the course of several years to promote inter-communal integration through second language acquisition, the social distance between German- and Italian-speakers is still felt throughout the region, including in education.

According to researchers Susan Gass and Larry Selinker, an affinity is needed with the target language group and culture in order to prevent a distancing from its speakers (2001: 332). If negative perspectives of the second language community are maintained, this creates a language distance enclosed within boundaries, which are further magnified when language groups develop stereotypes and prejudices towards their second language-speaking associates (Richard-Amato 2003: 112; Giudiceandrea and Mazza 2012: 81). Consequently, there is truth in Austrian educationalist and multilingual researcher Dietmar Larcher asserting that 'nothing is more difficult than to learn the language of your neighbour'[3] (cited in Giudiceandrea and Mazza ibid.); if one speech community does not have a genuine interest in its neighbours, its members may never fully acquire the region's second language.

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[3] Taken from Aldo Mazza's *Per imparare la lingua del vicino*, 1992.

Subsequently there have been attempts by educational professionals to modify the language system by promoting better language-learning policies to foster inter-group communication. But before these language policies can be put into effect, local students must move past their social boundaries by addressing the consequences that some students express, partially as a result of local histories.

3. History and structure of the education system

South Tyrol, which is historically situated just south of the Austrian border, acts as a sort of regional buffer zone between the German- and Italian-speaking communities. The province, which is home to three linguistic communities (Ladin-, Italian- and German-speakers), has experienced regional conflict since the nineteenth century, when the area was under Habsburg rule (Eichinger 2002: 137-8). Territorial friction between Austria and Italy occurred during and after both world wars because the territorial border was moved southwards as a result of political negotiations (Alcock 1970, 2001). Those German-speaking inhabitants of South Tyrol who became a part of the Kingdom of Italy were not provided with autonomy or minority protection, even though 'public appeal by political parties characterized South Tyrol as a "victim of a peace treaty"' that denied the right to self-determination (Steininger 2003: 5-6; Alcock 2001, Kager 1998). South Tyrol was eventually annexed by Italy on 10 October 1920. The annexation, according to Steininger, was considered an '"abomination" before the eyes of history' (2003: 6). Tyrolean representative Eduard Reut-Nicolussi stated that the cession of South Tyrol to Italy would signal the beginning of a desperate and unequal struggle between the German- and Italian-speaking communities (ibid.: 5).

Almost one hundred years later, the local linguistic communities still find themselves striving for linguistic equilibrium. After World War I, a new education system was established in South Tyrol after Mussolini encouraged the Fascist occupation of what was originally a German-speaking province. The newly promoted Fascist school system, designed as a monolingual system for the promotion of the Italian language, was largely created to eradicate the use of the German language from regular, ordinary discourse.

It was only on 5 September 1946, when the Paris Agreement was signed between Austria and Italy, that German and Italian were both permitted as languages of instruction in South Tyrolean elementary and secondary schools (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 235; Fraenkel-Haeberle 2008: 261). The agreement implemented separate language school systems for the German- and Italian-speaking communities. In order to reinforce mother-

tongue fluency in both languages, German- and Italian-speaking students were required to attend the school of their mother tongue. Teachers were hired for the separate school systems based on their own mother-tongue proficiency. Language instruction in the other provincial language was also obligatory for both school systems (Hannum 1996: 437).

In 1972, Article 19 of the Second Autonomy Statute mandated that three separate but parallel school systems be established for the German-, Italian- and Ladin-speaking communities. The German- and Italian-speaking school systems required that primary and secondary school education be taught in the mother tongue, while the Ladin-speaking school system had courses taught equally in both German and Italian (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 235; Abel 2007: 237; Second Autonomy Statute 1972, Article 19).

Article 19, followed by Presidential Decree No. 116 of 1973, also permitted the introduction of a 'largely separated education policy' (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 243) converting the original education office, or Provveditorato agli Studi, into three independent education offices for the Ladin-, German- and Italian-speaking communities respectively. After the Paris Accord of 5 September 1946, this agreement allowed all German-speakers to be guaranteed mother-tongue instruction in German in elementary and secondary education (Alber 2011: 3; Baur and Medda-Windischer ibid.). One of the objectives of the new policy was to re-establish the German-speaking language and culture, which before 1946 had been endangered due to the Italianization language policies that had come into force in South Tyrol during the Fascist period (ibid.: 244). These actions resulted in the German-speaking school system making efforts in the direction of monolingualism in school instruction for the sake of German language preservation. Monoculturalism was another educational directive, since many German-speaking South Tyroleans felt that their culture had previously been under threat (ibid.).

The aim of the reformed education system was to preserve the German and Ladin languages (Alber 2011: 5). The system was divided into three language sectors to 'preserve the German mother tongue against "foreign" influences' (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 237). The historical upheaval of the German- and Ladin-speaking populations resulted in a 'separate but equal' language policy whereby separate school systems for the Italian-, German- and Ladin-speakers were created to preserve not only minority languages but also local cultures.

On 28 July 2003, the predominately German-speaking provincial government of South Tyrol adopted a package of measures for second language acquisition. Point 4 of the package emphasized the importance of having a fluent basis in the mother tongue before learning the

second language (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 246). Criticisms, however, were made by researchers Baur and Medda-Windischer, who stated that, although learning the mother tongue is important, it is not a prerequisite for second language acquisition (ibid.). Research on early bilingual education conducted by Dr Patricia Kuhl (2010) indicates that multilingual language learning is quite possible during infancy, but after the age of seven, the critical period for learning languages becomes increasingly difficult, so much so that after the age of puberty, 'we fall off the [language learning] map' (see Lightbrown and Spada 1999: 30).

Despite these findings, on 12 December 2003 the 13th Legislature presented the concept of 'Free Choice' to the Provincial Committee of Bolzano. The South Tyrolean education system permits parents to place their children in the school system of their choosing (Alber 2011: 6). However, students can be refused admission if their language skills in the second or third language (required by the chosen school) do not meet native language proficiency, which some schools require as part of the admissions process (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 236; Abel 2007: 237). Parents can challenge the school's decision not to accept their child into a particular school before the Administrative Court, but it is only in recent years that the school system, and more specifically the German-speaking school system, has become more flexible in allowing non-mother-tongue German-speakers to attend German-speaking schools (Baur and Medda-Windischer ibid.).

Although the school system is designed to fulfil the principle of separation and monolingual instruction between German and Italian language learning, some parents and politicians are pushing for a more integrated education system (Alber 2011: 1, 11). In 2008, German-speaking parents and Italian-speaking politicians began asking for new teaching methods in second language acquisition of the other provincial language, along with the promotion of English as a third language in school education (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 237; Alber 2011: 1, 11). Some Italian-speaking parents, as well as teachers and students, also expressed an interest in trilingual schooling as recently as 2004, but the Italian-speaking provincial assessor at the time, Luisa Gnecchi, raised objections to trilingual education. Despite support for the idea from the German-speaking superintendent, Bruna Rauzi, Gnecchi was concerned at the financial costs and knew that adequate procedures to prepare trilingual teachers were outside the bounds of what their schools could offer (Giudiceandrea 2007: 23, 29).

Nevertheless, interviews with parents suggested that they were starting to see cultural and linguistic advantages in having both a German- and an Italian-speaking background. Many adults cannot work in public office without a fluent understanding of both languages

due to the Second Autonomy Statute of 1972 (Giudiceandrea 2007: 23). This has encouraged some families to push for bilingual language fluency at a younger age, as well as to support better methods of immersion teaching. According to Enrico Hell, as many as 23 percent of Italian-speaking families in 2008 chose to place their children in German-speaking education (Hell 2008a), while January 2014 showed a dramatic decrease in the number of Italian-speaking parents enrolling their children in Italian-speaking nurseries for the 2014/ 2015 school year. In the words of the South Tyrolean Provincial Councillor Alessandro Urzì, Italian and mixed families [i.e. families of both German- and Italian-speaking ancestry] will always be more inclined to gravitate towards German-speaking nursery schools, as Italian-speaking parents are constantly dissatisfied with the second language learning options in Italian-speaking education. There is a belief:

> that placing children in the German-speaking classroom is a kind of
> investment for the future, and nursery school is considered an ideal context
> for the initial immersion in the second language.[4]

Additionally, surveys conducted as far back as the 1970s show that German- and Italian-speaking South Tyroleans were aware of the values of promoting bilingualism in order to '[enhance] cross-group interaction' (Kaplan 1999: 52). But Francesco Palermo, representative of the Trento-South Tyrol region for the Italian Republican Senate, goes even further by stating that Italian-speaking parents (and in some cases, German-speaking parents) place their children in the school of the second language not necessarily in order to promote better movement between the two cultures, but because there is no satisfactory bilingual option in South Tyrolean education (2012: 71) to prepare students for civil service positions.

Like personal observations made between 2011 and 2012, these figures partially reflect the demands made by parents for better second language proficiency in South Tyrolean schools, but they also suggest that the current second language acquisition methods being taught in some Italian-speaking schools are not being well received by some Italian-speaking parents. As Hell goes on to state, these percentages act as 'a sign that something [in education] is not working' (2008b).

In response to the possibility of introducing 'immersion teaching' techniques, Alber referred to the belief among some members of the German-speaking community that

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[4] See Luca Sticcotti's article, 'A Bolzano scuole materne italiane senza alunni?' (29 January 2014). Available at: <http://salto.bz/it/article/29012014/bolzano-scuole-materne-italiane-senza-alunni> [accessed 8 January 2015].

proficiency in one's mother tongue was necessary in order to prevent 'the threat to [mixing] up languages and assimilation' (Alber 2011: 11). Although this view is not held by all members of the German-speaking community, the German-speaking school system has always been at the core of language policy in South Tyrol for the sake of language preservation against outside foreign linguistic influences intruding into the German language (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 236, 237, 244). Even as bilingualism was becoming more highly valued by German-speaking parents during the course of my fieldwork, several German-speaking political representatives had reservations about bilingual instruction and language immersion.

4. The 'block' in second language acquisition

Along with these reservations, several interviewees insisted that, despite parental attempts to promote bilingual learning, there was a 'block' that was 'preventing' students from acquiring the second language.

While on a train to Verona, I spoke with one of my high-school students, Ashley, about this supposed language learning 'block'. She told me that, when she moved to Bolzano from Trento, she had noticed contrasts between Bolzanino students who came from Italian-speaking backgrounds and students who came from the Trentino region, who were also Italian mother-tongue speakers.

> When I go to Germany I have no problem speaking German, but when I'm
> in South Tyrol...I dunno...for South Tyrolean Italian-speakers [in Bolzano]
> they have a blocked side and they don't want to speak German even if they
> can, which I find very strange...

For many students attending courses in Bolzano, there was a cultural inhibition that some students felt discouraged second language acquisition. It was this 'block' that prevented some students from wanting to learn the second language, as opposed to those students who had grown up in other Italian regions. According to Ashley, the 'block' existed for a variety of historical reasons, which may have explained why older generations were less inclined to learn the second language. In Trento, approximately sixty kilometres south of Bolzano, she described the linguistic situation as quite different because the local Italian-speaking population did not have historical prejudices towards the German-speaking community. Therefore students from Trento who studied German were described as having an easier

transition when switching languages because there was less reticence towards and more acceptance of German-speaking people and their culture.

In so far as historical influences contributed to this language learning 'block', Kager states that recent South Tyrolean history has affected relations in respect of local communication between three language groups. Despite the linguistic richness that pervades the area, along with increasing touristic interest in the region, these factors are undervalued by cultural conditions which cause language communities to 'preserve a distance' from each other (Peterlini 2013: 267).

> During the history of the South Tyrol question, both [language groups] developed a strong [linguistic] solidarity. Both groups, and especially the German/Ladin community, were well aware that their chances of survival depended on the unity of the group. German and Ladin-speakers were opposed to anything which might expose the group to Italian cultural assimilation tendencies. The result was a segregation policy: one goes to a school of one's group.... (Kager 1998)

This residue of anti-colonialist thinking in opposition to the Italian Fascist movement emphasized linguistic superiority amongst the German- and Ladin-speaking locals. The fact that their cultures were considered 'less than equal in the social (un)conscious' by the Italian-speaking community (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 239-240) increased conflicts between all three language groups and blocked language learning attempts that could have reduced internal local factions. Attitudes pitting the 'colonialized' against the 'colonializer' had continuing social affects that made learning the second language a more difficult process based on people's perceptions of social, historical and political circumstances (Lanthaler 2007: 234).

4.1 Local myths of self

Identity construction also played an important part in whether the members of one speech community would communicate with the members of others. Certain perceptions of minority groups as documented in local history may have prevented some citizens from wanting to learn the language of their neighbours.

These historical labels of the 'other', according to local journalist Hans Karl, contributed to the language learning 'block'. The self-labelling arose from historical circumstances as

early as the First World War, when the German-speaking group played the role of 'the victim' and the Italian-speaking group played the role of 'the conqueror'. These 'blocks', he stated, were another set of elements that impeded second language learning when the two main language groups were forced to live together in an environment that was originally Austrian.

Latin American history, Hans Karl explained, was riddled with postcolonial guilt in which the Spanish-speaking 'winners' were never free from the shame of the transgressions that resulted from the eradication of local languages, indigenous culture and property. He stated that, similarly, in public debates the Italian-speaking group suffered from a 'cultural and linguistic wall' in that, although unaware of their internal guilt regarding the 'other' group, historically they were unable to allow themselves to move beyond their cultural and linguistic differences from the other community.

While these myths of the self are generalizations and do not apply to every individual, Hans Karl felt that one's sense of identity in comparison to the 'other' could influence second language learning. For Italian-speakers arriving from Calabria, learning German would not be impossible, but for Italian-speaking children of South Tyrol there was a psychological block which made learning German an impossible task which they had difficulty overcoming. According to Hans Karl, the Italian children 'drag behind them the historical weight of the "unjust conqueror"', preventing them from moving beyond these cultural and historical obstacles:

> Whoever conquers has difficulty stepping out of the vest of the conqueror...to drop these symbols of the conqueror would seem like a loss of right to the conqueror's land....

This suggests that in learning German the Italian-speaker is inadvertently relinquishing his or her right to South Tyrol by allowing his or her sense of space to be shared by two nations instead of one. Although this interpretation of German- and Italian-speaking identities could be construed as somewhat radical (especially since German is viewed by some Italian-speakers as a necessary language for work in the local civil service), it is worth recognizing how certain individuals, like Hans Karl, choose to identify their personal 'place' within the social spectrum.

As a German-speaker herself, my colleague Beatrix agreed with Hans Karl that language learning can be a 'psychological thing':

> If I make mistakes in English, who cares? Nobody cares. But if I speak
> Italian, the pressure to do it perfectly is much higher. It's not about
> mistakes. It's about yourself wanting to be better. If I go to Rome in front of
> a professional, [I] want to be perfect in Italian.

She attributed these concerns towards language learning perfection as another layer to this 'block'. There is a sort of expectation that people set for themselves if they really care about the language. Even her Italian-speaking colleagues have expressed the same issues with German because there is an internal pressure to speak it better than English. But unfortunately, due to historical reasons and the local topography of the region, students found it difficult to search for opportunities to immerse themselves in the other languages. Sports clubs, churches and schools have historically always been parallel but divided (Kager 1998), which means that students will not automatically have friends from the 'other' group. In addition, some German-speaking parents do not have the time or energy to encourage their children to mix with other language groups if the latter have already made German-speaking friends in the monolingual German-speaking clubs.

Nevertheless, Beatrix insisted that this 'block' was becoming less obvious, while the superintendent of the German-speaking school system, Peter Hoellrigl, contended that these varied cultural differences had always been in existence. 'It is a matter of Goethe versus Dante, of Beethoven versus Vivaldi', sentiments that have coexisted for years. From Hoellrigl's perspective Bolzano is a region where the people are very strong and stubborn. People from outside are impressed by the region because of its multicultural atmosphere, but when one studies the deeper layers that make up the entirety of South Tyrol, one sees a region that is very proud of its language, historical background and traditions. Even if outsiders are encouraged by the various languages spoken in South Tyrol, the internal local response cautions 'Yes, and look how quickly we can lose our identity if we allow ourselves to mix to the point that we do not have a solid foundation'.

4.2 Other contributors to the 'block'

As a result, this 'block' has brought with it a variety of interpretations in that, for one set of people, it could represent political confrontations between local political groups, while for another set of people it could represent the internal structure of the varied 'separate but equal' education system. However, Dr Drumbl, Professor of German at the Free University of

Bolzano, believed that it was the structure of the education system, and not so much the history, that contributed to these 'blocks'. It was the fault of the students and the fault of the parents in not encouraging language at home, as well as the structure of the Italian-speaking school system, that interrupted further language learning. According to Drumbl, the Italian language programme's focus on grammar and memorization prevented students from understanding the deeper meanings behind language learning. Drumbl claimed that language teachers in Italian schools were unhelpful and unwilling to 'think outside the box'. He explained that language teachers in Italian-speaking schools were reluctant to look at other models of language acquisition and that these elements, outside of politics, had created an education system that was not helpful for those students who wanted to advance in the second language. In Drumbl's opinion Italian students were unable to see the application behind language learning because they had not learned the skills necessary to apply their knowledge of grammar and memorization to the wider social context.

Nevertheless, Italian-speaking politician Dr Christian Tommasini implied in an interview that the 'block' is the result of the parents' influence on their children. If students thought that relations between Germans and Italians were hostile or disrupted in some way, research 'suggests that students form their own opinions of intergroup relations in South Tyrol [based on the opinions] of their family' (Abel et al. 2012: 70). As a result, these viewpoints made it harder for students to acquire a decent understanding of the other local language if their parents maintained negative stereotypes of other local minorities. In Tommasini's case, his parents were Italian nationalists and thought negatively about the German-speaking group. However, as he grew older he stepped away from their adverse social conventions and married a German-speaking South Tyrolean. He also became an advocate of bilingual language teaching for children in the South Tyrolean school system. Even though he is aware that there are locals who remain reluctant to accept language assimilation policies, he identified a need for the community to move past this language 'block' in order to be linguistically integrated into an open European Union. However, some locals are afraid that language assimilation policies could lead to the loss of their culture and that introducing a bilingual education system could be interpreted as a threat to local identity.

Despite these concerns, many parents have opted for 'Free Choice' in education in order to move past these 'historical, sociological and psychological preconceptions' (Baur and Medda-Windischer 2008: 241). As mentioned previously, the 'Free Choice' option in local education (an aspect addressed below) has provided parents with an alternative to monolingual learning by placing their children in a school of their own preference. Although

this concept of 'Free Choice' comes with some political complications, many children attend schools in the second language. While some parents would prefer not to expose their children to the second language of the region, the German-speaking Director of Distribution, Dr Andergassen, estimated that 'out of five thousand people, only five would choose not to have their children learn another language, and those people are usually politicians.'

Since children in South Tyrol are given a choice as to which school they would like to attend, Dr Andergassen believes that this 'Free Choice' reduces the language learning 'block' to some extent. If the 'Free Choice' option were to be replaced with multilingual schools, then students would be 'forced' to attend courses in the second language. 'It's about equality for everyone', continued Andergassen, 'and if students have the choice over which school they can attend, then students will be more equipped for better fluency, promoting second language acquisition.' In Trento, for example, he stated that there is a greater desire amongst students to learn German due to them being given the choice over whether to participate or not. 'If students *have to* learn a language, then they *won't want to*', suggesting that enforced second language learning causes further complications in second language acquisition by contributing to this 'block'.

5. Is 'Free Choice' in education really a free choice?

But is Andergassen correct in assuming that students would benefit from separate education? Or is it an attempt by local politicians to mitigate the language learning issues?

'Free Choice', which was adopted in 1972 as a result of the Second Autonomy statutes (see Alber 2011: 6), gave parents the flexibility to enrol their children in any school that they felt was most appropriate. Within the course of a few years, many parents took this 'rule' and applied it to second language acquisition. If technically by law the child had the right to attend any school within the province, then legally the child could attend another school where the language of instruction was the second language. For Italian-speaking parents, the Second Autonomy statute allowed them to overcome legal barriers (Peterlini 2013: 124), which previously forbade Italian-speaking students from attending the German-speaking education system.

When examining the concept of the 'Free Choice' regulation, which is supposedly mentioned in the statues, further probing reveals that the concept of 'Free Choice' is not explicitly discussed in legislation. Instead, it says in Article 19 (paragraph 1) of the Second Autonomy statue that the student has the right to learn in his or her mother tongue by means of teachers of the mother tongue. Paragraph 3, which supposedly refers to the 'Free Choice'

principle in education, states that the '"enrolment of a pupil in schools in the Province of Bolzano shall follow a simple application by the father or guardian"' (Alber 2011: 6-7; Peterlini 1997: 198). In the event of a school refusing to admit a child into an institution, the father or guardian can challenge the school's refusal before the regional court of administrative justice[5] (ibid.). Consequently, while the words 'Free Choice' are not explicitly addressed in the autonomy statues, the liberal interpretation of Article 19 (paragraph 3) is still referred to as the 'Free Choice' principle.

However, despite parental attempts to use the 'Free Choice' option to enrol their children into second language-speaking schools, in 2008 the ruling German party, or South Tyrolean People's Party (SVP), expressed dissatisfaction with the number of Italian-speaking students in German-speaking education. To counteract this 'problem', the SVP stressed the importance of language tests in nursery schools (Hell 2008b), implying that all Italian-speaking students must take a language assessment test to be accepted into German education. According to the SVP, an excess of Italian-speaking students in German-speaking education created a 'disturbance' (ibid.). Therefore, these language tests could 'purify' the German schooling system from the influence of 'Italian and immigrant children' (Peterlini 2013: 272).

To support the party's needs for language assessment tests, the SVP referred to a presidential decree passed in 1988.[6] In the decree it states that in the event a child is unable to follow a school's language of instruction (so much so that the child compromises the efficiency of regular instruction in the classroom), the child will be subject to a probationary period of 20 to 25 days at the start of the school year. During that time, the child will be assessed by the committee and school council to determine whether or not s/he can stay in school. If the committee and the school board decide to refuse the child's enrolment into a particular school, the child will be required to attend another school where instruction is in 'the other language' (Peterlini 1997: 198-199; Peterlini 2010: 158-159; see Alber 2011: 7; Hell 2008b).

That said, this decree does not mandate the enforcement of language tests in schools, but it does stress that parents are entitled to appeal against the school's decision to the Bolzano Regional Court of Administrative Justice (Peterlini 1997: 199; Alber 2011: 7; Hell 2008b). In one such instance, a German-speaking mother wrote a formal complaint in response to South

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[5] See the Second Autonomy Statute (1972) Article 19, paragraphs 1 and 3 for more details.
[6] This presidential decree is also referred as DPR 15 July 1988, no. 301 seen here:
<http://www.consiglio.provincia.tn.it/documenti_pdf/clex_10845.pdf> aAccessed 23 July 2013].

Tyrol's 'legal institutionalization of ethnicity'. Her son, who was raised in a bilingual household, 'was cared for by an Italian-speaking childminder' (Marko 2008: 386). Upon enrolling her child in a German-speaking kindergarten, the school placed her child on probation for 25 days because s/he was in contact with Italian-speakers. According to the school, it wanted to determine that the child had 'a competent knowledge of German' (ibid.). In response to the school policy, the mother wrote a note, which was published in a weekly magazine.

> [When speaking Italian] [i]t is almost as if one speaks of an infectious illness and not of an enrichment. Did you know that many children are thereby hindered from learning good German even though it is the language of one of their parents? On the one hand, you [officials and school administration] speak highly of justice; on the other hand, you allow such rules. This can never really lead to an understanding between the language groups.[7]

When interviewing Donna, she explained that, while in theory South Tyroleans have a 'choice' in education, there is a fear in German circles of increased immersion education, which could lead to a bilingual schooling system. In her opinion:

> The problem lies with politicians who impede language groups from finding a commonality. The language groups, as a whole, do not have problems with immersion education. They speak the other local languages. Some say, 'We're Italian, so we must speak Italian', and others say, 'This is South Tyrol'. And the thing is: nobody forgets the language of their own culture. But there is this fear of losing your roots.... [And] nowadays we have this added drama because we have to choose either a German or Italian school for our children. Why do we have to choose? I was born here, and I'm used to living in an area that's bilingual. If I go to a café and someone talks to me in German, I respond to them in German. It's not a problem. It's a wonderful thing to be able to speak in another language, and it makes it easier to communicate.

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[7] See Anon 2001 and Marko 2008: 386 for more information.

But unfortunately, not all locals would agree with Donna's opinions of bilingual education, which is why many parents are constantly debating over which language school to decide on for their children. Since some parents and politicians have mild trepidations over the effects of second language-speakers in their schools, the question then arises: 'Is the concept of "Free Choice" as "free" as politicians would suggest?'

6. Conclusion and analysis

As a result, the current 'separate but equal' education system in South Tyrol continues to try to appease both language groups. Some parents are asking for better language learning methods, while others would prefer more segregation. Consequently schooling methods, like the 'Free Choice' system, act as a means to avoid confrontation, while simultaneously 'Free Choice', as a language learning system, does not provide bilingual education.

Consequently there are concerns as to whether the school system is addressing students' needs in second language learning, especially when students are expressing their concerns over language learning 'blocks' in education. With local politicians like those in the German SVP wanting to safeguard their own identity, this need to 'preserve' may only magnify historical attitudes towards the 'Other'.

Therefore school officials may need to readdress the problems that are faced in education by taking into account many of the views and observations described above concerning second language acquisition. Since history has repercussions for generations and can impact on how neighbours live with each other, these social 'blocks' must be dealt with at the schooling level so students can move past these mental hurdles. However, based on recent fieldwork, my data suggest that there is no collective will to solve this problem. And until the politicians, educators, administrators and parents find a solution to this issue, it may take several years for the system to become one of 'equal', bilingual education.

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LANDSCAPES OF SPIRITUALITY:

THE TOPOGRAPHY OF ISMAILI SACRED SITES IN XINJIANG, CHINA

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Introduction

When speaking of the attributes of places, it might be worth noting that they are not only geophysical, biological, cultural and historical, but also religious, spiritual or mystical. Natural phenomena, such as mountains, rocks, fossils, individual trees, groves, springs, lakes and rivers, are also considered sacred by some cultures. The Abrahamic religions and many other faith systems all attach spiritual importance to certain places, and millions of people worldwide recognize and value the special significance that is attributed to them.

In the pluralistic cultural landscape of Islam, apart from the annual *hajj* pilgrimage, one of the Five Pillars of Islam, *mazar* visits, a pilgrimage-like practice, are symbolic of the regional cultural expression of Islam in many Muslim societies, though some such societies may proscribe it. This study is a brief ethnography of sacred sites venerated (*mazur tawuf chaig* in the local vernacular) by the small Shi'i Ismaili community of Tashkurgan, in Xinjiang in the People's Republic of China (PRC; see map below).

This article documents some of the important sacred sites and their relevance today, in an age of economic and social change. Since in Islam the term 'pilgrimage' is often associated with the annual *hajj* to Mecca, the term 'visit' is used for the local pilgrimage-like tradition being discussed here to avoid confusion. The study is based on data collected in the Tashkurgan Tajik Autonomous County in Xinjiang in the summer of 2011.

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Map of Xinjiang China (courtesy of Russell Harris)

The Ismailis

The Ismailis are a Shia Muslim community, also known as the Seveners, who, after the death of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, followed Isma'il ibn Ja'far as their Imam (from whom their name derives). The Nizari Ismailis are the largest sub-branch of the Ismaili community and are scattered over 25 countries across five continents, with large concentrations in Central and South Asia, Africa and the Middle East. They number in the millions and consist of diverse cultural, ethnic and linguistic communities united around a single spiritual leader or imam. The current Imam, His Highness Prince Shah Karim Al Hussaini, Aga Khan IV, is their 49th Imam.

One small Ismaili community lives among the mostly Sunni Muslims in Xinjiang in western China. In the People's Republic of China religion is not recognised as a valid marker of identity, and religious communities are often referred to by their ethnicity. Accordingly the Ismailis are often

Young Tajik women in traditional costume

known by their ethnic label as Tajiks because only the Tajiks are Ismailis.[2] Therefore these two terms are used as synonyms here in referring to the same community. The latest national census statistics suggest that the Tajiks number over fifty thousand and are mostly concentrated in the Tashkurgan Tajik Autonomous County (hereafter Tashkurgan), where they still account for the demographic majority.

As far as we know, Tajiks (Ismailis), who are numerically negligible within the population of the PRC, are actually the largest Shia group in the country. Located at the westernmost end of the PRC, ethno-linguistically and in physical type they are closer to their co-religionists in adjacent areas of Tajikistan, Afghanistan and Pakistan. In recognition of their historical ties to the land, the state accredited the community as one of the thirteen 'historical residence nationalities' (*shiju minzu*) of the Xinjiang region, and they are classified as the only Caucasian Mediterranean population that is indigenous to China.

Tashkurgan is a semi-urban locality at the south-western corner of Kashgar District, where the

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[2] In Xinjiang only the Tajiks are Ismailis, but not all of them Tajiks are. For instance, the people from the Tajik ethnic village in Aktu County are Sunni Muslims, but are ethnically classified as Tajiks.

PRC shares borders with Pakistan, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Strictly speaking the Tajiks of China differ slightly from the Persian-speaking Tajiks of the wider Central Asian region and Afghanistan. The Tajiks in Tashkurgan speak the Sariquli and Wakhi languages (also known as Pamiri languages), which belong to the eastern Iranian branch of the Indo-European family of languages, with Wakhi also being spoken in the Badakhshan region of Tajikistan, the Wakhan corridor of Afghanistan and Gilgit Baltistan

Two views of Tashkurgan town, 2015

(formerly the Northern Areas) in Pakistan. The Pamiri languages are not intelligible to Persian-speakers in Tajikistan. In Tashkurgan the use of Persian is mostly limited to supplications during religious rituals and at the end of communal prayers; very few people speak Persian otherwise.

Local traditions suggest that the spread of the Ismaili *da'wa* (mission) into the region was associated with the missionary activities of the tenth-century Persian poet, philosopher, traveller and Ismaili preacher Nasir Khusraw (1004-1088; see Saidula 2010). It was believed that the mission was brought over by Nasir and a few of his close disciples. Today some of the local religious leaders, known as *pir*s, still claim descent from those early missionaries.

As in the broader Central Asia region, visiting local sacred sites for religious purposes is a part of indigenous Islam in Xinjiang. People from many different cultural, religious and

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ethnic backgrounds may venerate a sacred site in a locality according to their own tradition and interpretation (Valdinoci 2008; Bhardwaj 1998). In Xinjiang, paying homage to a shrine transcends the regional, linguistic and denominational divides by which people often build their sense of community. This phenomenon in the region has been explored by scholars from both within and without the province such as Alexander Papas, Thierry Zarcone, Yasushi Shinmen, Minoru Sawada, Edmund Waite, Lisa Ross, Rian Thum (e.g. 2014) and Rahile Dawut (e.g. 2001), to name just a few who have published extensively on the subject.

However, most existing studies on the subject are limited to an exploration of the sacred places located in the Sunni-dominated areas in southern Xinjiang. Very little has been written about similar practices among the Ismailis in the region, where, in addition to shrines visited by all communities, a few sacred landmarks have special significance for Ismailis.

The Ismaili sacred sites constitute an important component of the religious heritage of the region, and their absence from the academic literature may hinder our understanding of the region's rich religious traditions. By documenting visits to sacred sites in Tashkurgan, this article may also shed some light on the rich and heterogeneous frontier cultures of the PRC, which is often described as a mono-cultural nation state.

Sacred landmarks in Tashkurgan

In Tashkurgan County there are over four hundred places, known as *mazur*s or *mizor*s in the local vernaculars, which are venerated for their sacred attributes. The term comes from the Persian word *mazār*, used for the mausoleum or burial place of a saint or holy man, but here the expression denotes various sacred sites, including built structures or natural objects. These are places where people pray, make wishes or offer *narzulla*, a special offering that is shared by people who live in the vicinity of such sites.

Often a sacred or holy site comes with an oral narrative associated with the life of a saintly person, a folk hero, or a significant religious event. It is through such associations that these locations or objects acquire their mystical and spiritual power. The built structure category consists of the tomb of a saint (*awliyu*) or

Partaking in a special offering (*narzulla*)

martyr (*shayid*), or a group of graves believed to have been an ancient battlefield where Muslims fought against the infidels. Specific sites known as *qadamgoh* (footprint) are landmarks associated with the activity of an Ismaili Imam, and in a broader sense they also qualify as built structures, as most of them are bounded by a surrounding wall. Natural objects with sacred attributes include mountains, rocks, trees, and springs with healing power, as well as objects found in the vicinity of a sacred tomb, or household objects used by a holy person.

Except for some anecdotal stories, oral traditions reveal very little about the history of most of the *mazur*s in the region, and we can only guess how a term for a mausoleum in Persian has acquired its current expanded meaning. Paying homage to a grave may have evolved from the ancient grave-worshipping custom of the roaming nomads of the distant past. According to some Chinese scholars, the people of the Tarim Basin worshipped at the graves of their ancestors, friends, family, spiritual masters or religious teachers in antiquity (Zong Zheng and Guorong 1997). Similarly, the worship of natural objects was also practised widely in pre-Islamic Central Asia, where old and new faith traditions often merged over time. Adapting to the constantly changing religious environment offered a new lease of life to fading faith systems in a new guise, rendering the origin story irrelevant while preserving the

spiritual importance attached to a *mazur* (Starr 2013: 63 ff.; Frye 1996: 29-50; Sa'dullahzade and Ghapar 2002: 1-23).

Keeping pace with the changing social dynamics, visits to sacred sites among the Xinjiang Tajiks seems, once again, to have acquired modern significance as an ethnic identity marker, reflecting shifting social relations and a concomitant swing in the way social communities are being (re)-imagined. Social groups, whose sense of belonging was once forged in accordance with regional connections or religious associations, are now looking for evidence from the past in order to add some flesh to a modern collective identity that was born out of necessity. The resilient *mazur* tradition, which has endured the vicissitudes of time, has now been recommissioned to serve alongside ethnic and linguistic markers as an important ethnic denominator. The temporary disruption to organised religious activities in the early decades of the PRC helped to magnify the significance of informal spiritual traditions such as shrine visits as indicators of ethnic tradition (*minsu*), through which a cultural community is identified along with other common 'indigenous' features.

The Ismaili sacred sites

As remarked above, there are many *mazur*s in the countryside that have a special spiritual significance for the Ismailis in Tashkurgan. The resting place of a saint, preacher or holy man is normally known as *langar mazur*. The Persian word *langar* for 'anchor' denotes a shrine and the built environment around it in the local vernaculars. Except for a few mausoleum-type shrines that are named after a person, most of the *langar*s are associated with the deeds or life of an obscure holy person or wandering Sufi master. The shrines known as *qadamgoh mazur* are landmarks where an Ismaili imam, a prophet or a saint (*awliyu*) is reported to have met and blessed his followers. The trees with sacred attributes are known as *tol mazur*s, which means 'tree *mazur*' in Sariquli.

However, not all *mazur*s are created as equal; some are places of local importance, while others have a wider following. The mystical power of a sacred place and the blessings (*barakat*) received from it are commensurate to its ranking and local fame. Popularity, prestige and influence depend on the alleged miracles associated with a *mazur*, and its eminence is perpetuated by the retelling of anecdotal stories of unverifiable veracity. With a wider following, mausoleums and *qadamgoh*s are ranked at the top of the hierarchy. Trees, rocks, mountains, springs and other natural objects are lesser *mazur*s and have only local significance. *Mazur*s from the second tier are seldom used for ceremonial assemblies, which are usually performed around a mausoleum or ancestral grave. Below are some of the better known sacred sites in Tashkurgan.

*Langgar mazur*s

There are a few villages or small hamlets in the Tashkurgan region that are dotted with local shrines called *langgar mazur*s or *mizor*s. As we have seen, such places are named either after a legendary person or an obscure Muslim saint. The few eminent ones among them are the *Tizneff langgar* in Tizneff township, roughly 5 km to the northeast of the county town;

Wacha langgar in Wacha Township, 80 km to the south east; and two *langgar*s in Tung Township, 180 km to the east of Tashkurgan. These shrines are well known and attract visitors from various localities in Tashkurgan County.

*Langgar*s are uniformly marked burial sites decorated with rocks, the horns of ibexes and Marco Polo sheep, and a wooden pole draped with colourful banners. Up until the mid-twentieth century, these were the foci of spiritual life, where religious ceremonial events were organised and attended by visitors with spiritual or worldly needs. People came here to celebrate religious festivals, to make personal supplications, or to make the special offerings known as *narzulla*. On such occasions, they gathered around the shrine, prayed for health and prosperity, and received blessings from the caretakers of such places, known as *shaykh*s.

Tizneff langgar is a ruined tomb encircled by a 1.3-metre high, 46-metre long mud wall to keep animals from straying on to the site, and is visible from the main road that connects China and Pakistan. The shrine is at the edge of a local cemetery surrounded by many square double-layered tombs and a few mud-brick mausoleums with ornate lattice windows, interior wall paintings and domes. The top of the surrounding wall is lined with the horns of Marco Polo sheep and antelope. The shrine has a narrow entrance with a simple wooden door providing access to the almost undistinguishable tomb that was marked by a wooden stick and colourful banners, known as *togh*.

According to a local *khalifa*, a religious scholar, the tomb belonged to an Ismaili preacher by the name of Shah Talib who came to the region a long time ago, hence the site is also known as Shah Talib *mazur* locally. Apart from some anecdotal

Tizneff langgar

stories, very little is known about this person, with some suggesting that he was a Persian *sayyid* (descendant of the Prophet Muhammad), and others believing him to have been a preacher from Badakhshan (now in Afghanistan and Tajikistan), who settled and preached here and chose this location for his burial.

The fetish objects kept in the shrine once included a square turquoise rock at the western corner of the wall, and a 50 x 20 cm bronze rod, both of which were treated as part of the shrine and venerated. The village *khalifa* said the missing blue stone had been venerated because it radiated divine light (*nur*) at night, and the rod was an object used by the saint. Both the stone and the rod were looted during the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976).

Wacha langgar is a small mud and Wacha langgar
stone structure dedicated to an unknown *awliyu* (saint). Located at the side of the village thoroughfare at the eastern end of the township, it is a tomb built at the top of an isolated thirty-metre high steep hill in the middle of a narrow valley. The shrine has a circular low wall and a 2 x 3 metre mud and stone grave at the centre, which is barely discernible now. Both the encircling wall and the grave are decorated with the horns of Marco Polo sheep and ibex. The hole in the middle, where the multi-coloured bannered wooden pole once stood, is now filled with dirt. The only access is via a steep goat track from the east side of the hill; it is covered with grass and clearly had not been used in years.

Visitors may have stopped climbing to the top of the hill, but there was some food and a small amount of money left in the nearby ruins of a simple shack at the bottom of the hill, suggesting the shrine still had visitors. The place where these offerings were left was an adobe created by sealing off the front of a deep dent at the face of a colossal boulder, which was once the residence and centre of religious activity of the saint now buried on the hilltop. The simple adobe structure was later passed down to his disciple and his successors, and continued to function as the centre of spirituality, religious learning and night healing vigils, celebrating religious festivals and *narzulla* offerings until it was demolished during the Cultural Revolution. A local resident confirmed that, during the annual religious festivals of *Ramadan* and *Edil Fitr* (*Qorban Eid*), the villagers from the locality attend communal prayers at this site and partake in the special feast prepared by each household for the occasion. Occasionally, those with spiritual or worldly problems invite friends, families and local villagers to the site and offer *narzulla*.

Tungg langgars. The two *langgar*s in Tungg (also known as Datong) Township at the easternmost end of the Tashkurgan region are well-known shrines. Squeezed in by high mountains, Tungg is a narrow valley that stretches from east to west, over 25 km long and

almost I km wide at the widest part. Apart from its reserves of high-quality white jade, the area is also known for the multitude of *mazur*s, ranging from various strange rocks, trees and springs, and most importantly, the two famous shrines known as *Bamafili Mujarrad* and *Bamafili Wali*, mausoleums located at either end of the valley.

The local population believes they belong to two missionary brothers who preached Ismailism in the region centuries ago. The elder brother, Bamafili Mujarrad, was buried in upper *langgar*, the first village from the westernmost end of the valley, and the younger brother, Bamafili Wali, was buried at the other end of the township in the lower *langgar*, which was also known as the *aqtuga* (white camel) *langgar*, after the camel-shaped white-stone fossil in the vicinity that was believed to have been the mount of the saint. The anecdotal story about the exploit of those missionary brothers and the shrines has been recorded in a recent book about the Tajiks of China (Qorban et al. 1994: 450).[3]

Bamafili Mujarrad is a square mud-brick mausoleum with a circular dome. It comes with all the trappings of a shrine, like ibex and goat horns and colourful flags, and stands out from the other ordinary graves around it. According to the caretaker, in the past there was a stone candle-holder, a rusted cast-iron candle-holder and a mud cooking stove placed outside the entrance, all were destroyed during the Cultural Revolution. Inside the dome there is a 2 x 0.6 metre mud grave in the centre; near it there are stones placed against the wall, one boot-shaped, a second camel-shaped and a third saddle-shaped. These were fetish objects and are venerated for their mythical association with the saint.

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[3] The chronology suggested in this publication was anachronistic, as the authors tend to suggest that the preachers arrived there during the time of the Prophet Muhammad, whereas Islam came to the region during the tenth century, long after the death of the Prophet.

Covered in a layer of thick dust, the walls are crumbling, the door frame is barely standing, and the mausoleum looks derelict, with no sign of any recent activity around the shrine. The current heir of the shrine's traditional caretaker *shaykh*s, an elderly gentleman from the village, blamed his co-

Bamafili Mujarrad *mazur* with its caretaker

villagers for the ruinous status of the site due to their lack of piety. He said, 'Nowadays people only mumble a few mandatory words of prayer when their path crosses a sacred landmark. People have lost their direction, they have forgotten their maker, and they don't care about *mazur*s anymore. Because hardly anyone donates for such shrines, we don't have the resources to maintain the place'.

Bamafili Wali *mazur* at the lower *langgar* was perched on the ridge of a steep hill, making it almost impossible to access in the summer (when my fieldwork took place). Hence, the details below were summarised from the oral description of the place by its current caretaker, an elderly villager. The cliff is sandwiched between two seasonal rivers, which cut it off when the water rises in the warm season. Even during the winter, due to an almost vertical slope and no safe path, the site is very difficult to reach. The shrine is a lonely mud-brick tomb inside a crumbling encircling wall. It is believed that the location was selected by the saint so that he could rest in eternal peace without disturbance from his followers. It was said that, except for the caretakers, only a handful of others ever reached the shrine as far as could be remembered. The caretaker, who has not been to the shrine since 1965, said the grave was almost indistinguishable when he last clambered up there five decades ago. He also said only

the ruins of the outer walls had survived of the original shrine, and indeed the remnants of the wall were still distinguishable from across the river.

At the bottom of the hill, on the left bank of the river that flows past from the southern side, there was a mud hut known as *marqad,* which was the residence and activity centre of the saint and his disciples. As the village did not have a mosque or other communal place of worship, the hut was where people organised various religious activities until it was razed during the 1960s. Later a flood washed away all traces of it. The site was covered in weeds and wild grass, in the middle of which there lay a five-metre piece of blackened wood, allegedly the main beam of the

Bamafili Wali *mazur* and its caretaker

marqad, the only tangible remainder of the structure, which has acquired some sort of fetish status. Owing to its sacred attributes, this patch of land was left untouched in a narrow valley where open space is sparse, with the hope that one day they will rebuild the *marqad* or build a new *Jama'at Khana* (Ismaili place of worship) at the same site.

Sacred graves

In Tashkurgan, there are a few other mausoleums that are venerated as *mazur*s but are not called *langgar*s. These are graves consecrated to a saint (*awliyu*) or a martyr (*shayid*), and are known for their healing properties. These shrines are named after the person buried there, and are similar in their style of construction and identically decorated with ibex and goat horns and colourful banners like other shrines in the region. Some stand alone in a desert environment, while others are surrounded by graves. Any item collected from the mausoleum or its vicinity, such as a piece of clay, a pebble or a handful of dry hay, is

Sayyid Hasan *mazur* in Daftor village

Shah Awliyu *mazur* near Tashkurgan

treasured as a sacred object and kept as a prophylactic in a high spot within the house of the person who collected it. The presence of such an auspicious object is believed to bring blessings (*barakat*) and to ward off the evil eye and bad fortune.

The Shah Awliyu *mazur* near Tashkurgan town, the Sayyid Hasan *mazur* in Daftor village and the Jahangir Qala *mazur* in Wacha are a few well-known shrines in this category. It has been suggested that these shrines were built on the sites of ancient battlefields where the faithful fell as martyrs in battle against the infidels. Not much has been remembered about these martyred saints, the battles they fought or the foes they fought against. Given the multiplicity of religions that existed in the region before Islam, these men might have fought

against the Buddhist, Zoroastrian, Nestorian or pagan inhabitants of the land, or even the Mongol hordes, who ruled the land for centuries and gradually blended into the local culture.

*Qadamgoh*s or footprints

Qadamgoh is a Persian word meaning 'footprint' or 'place where one has set foot'. They are often associated with a saint or holy person. The *qadamgoh*s in Tashkurgan are known as *Agha qadamgoh*s, which literally means 'the footprints of the Aga Khan', an honorific title given to the Ismaili

Aga *Qadamgoh* near Tashkurgan

imam. Unlike the *langgar*s or mausoleums of the martyrs, which also appeal to non-Ismaili visitors, Agha *qadamgoh*s are important landmarks revered exclusively by the Ismailis. They are seen as sanctified locations where an Ismaili imam once received and blessed his followers (Q 1994, pp. 428).[4] There are at least six places with that name, and all are located at the side of some old tracks or goat trails, away from residential areas. These sites are also marked by a pile of stones and ibex and goat horns, a flag pole and colourful banners, and one near a new settlement south of Tashkurgan town has a circular wall.

The veracity of *Agha qadamgoh* stories may be questionable, but the *qadamgoh*s and the associated stories signify the importance of the imam in the Ismaili tradition. This association with an imam sets the *qadamgoh*s above the various other minor *mazur*s. Traditions like this are instrumental for transmitting and reproducing the basic tenants of faith in a context where formal religious learning is restricted.

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[4] It was believed that the 47th Ismaili imam, Aqa Ali Shah, Aga Khan II (r. 1881-1885), once visited the region and met with his followers, but in reality, there is no historical record of an Ismaili imam ever having visited the region until 1981.

Other *mazar*s

Lesser *mazur*s of the second tier include a variety of natural objects such as rocks, trees, springs, mountains or hills. For instance, the *Shinggun duldul* ('horse of Shinggun'), a horse-like rock formation, *Rustam bloq* (a spring named after the main protagonist in Firdawsi's Persian epic Shahname),[5] *Mustagh ata* (the Ice Mountain) *Qara Tash* (the black rock valley), and *Farhad balda* (the axe of Farhad) are a few significant landmarks in this category.[6] Moreover, there are sacred trees (*tol mazur*s) and strangely shaped stones in some places in the region that were also venerated for their mystical powers and are known as *khosiyatin juy*, or 'sacred sites' in the local vernaculars.

Rock *mazur* near Tungg

Fossil *mazur* in Baldir

Most of these sacred objects have a story attached to them. The *duldul* in the Shingun valley to the west of Tashkurgan town, for instance, was the favourite mount of Ali b. Abi Talib, the first Shi'i imam, according to local legend. When the horse was seduced and misled by the devil (*shaytan*) and failed to respond to an urgent call, it was condemned and turned into

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[5] Rustam is the folk hero from the *Shahname* of Firdowsi, the Persian epic poet (940-1020). The Ice Mountain is a snow-capped mountain in the south of Tashkurgan that legend claims to have been the shrine of a hermit saint.
[6] Farhad is the main protagonist in the Persian epic tragedy of *Farhad* and *Shrin*.

stone by the imam. Barely visible from the foot of the mountain on a clear day, it was said that the mystical *duldul* reveals itself to the eyes of the pure and the pious only.

*Tol mazur*s, Juniper trees, are distinguished from the other trees by the colourful ribbons and small pieces of cloth hung on their branches, suggesting their sacred attributes. It is one of the most common *mazur*s and are found near residential areas, in the desert or on a sheer mountain slope where vegetation is sparse, and all share a common theme.

The sacred power of these trees is ascribed to their association with miraculous and beneficial works of a wandering mystic or holy man. Most of them tend to share similar origin stories, suggesting a limited scope of imagination about their genesis. The

*Tol mazur*s near Tashkurgan

commonly told story about a *tal mazur* involves a walking stick that was used by a holy person to produce running water in a barren land, to remove an obstacle like a mountain or boulder from the path of an irrigation canal, or simply to provide shade at the side of a desert track so travellers might take refuge from the burning sun. The sacred trees are the manifestation of the miraculous stick left behind by the saintly person.

Unlike the aforementioned mausoleums and footprints, most of which are either protected by an encircling wall, or enclosed inside a larger built-up public area used for religious rituals or prayer, most of the sacred trees and other natural objects have no protection around them. Sacred trees, stones, rock formations, springs, and mountains are open to all and people pay

homage to those lesser *mazur*s if their paths cross such places, but they are rarely a destination for pilgrimages or visitations.

According to the local people, shrines and footprints were holy places that radiated with divine light at night when the people's faith was strong. The notion has been passed down orally and none of the research subjects had seen the light personally. "We can't see them these days, because our faith (*emon*) has become lax and our belief weakened, therefore, God has stopped showing as such miracles," a prominent religious leader said as an explanation for the discontinuity of the phenomenon. His statement resonated with the view of most of the local people who blamed the declining morality and lack of piety for the area's fall from divine favour. One villager said, 'actually, the light is still there, but we can't see it anymore, because our hearts are blinded by greed and our souls are corrupted by avariciousness. An unclean body (*jism*) is unworthy of seeing the divine light.'

Attending a shrine

Unlike the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, a visitation to a native shrine is not guided by canonical scriptures, and is free from strict procedural rules; mixing up, omitting or altering some of the ritual orders may not take away from the purpose of shrine visit. The essentials of paying homage to a sacred landscape among the Ismailis in Xinjiang are often learned through personal experience of them, and the absence of written rules allows ample space for individual expression and understanding. However, notwithstanding the seeming laxity of the practice, the ritualistic performance also follows an observable pattern.

When attending a shrine, being mentally and physically prepared is a prerequisite with the emphasis on the purity of intention. Ideally, if conditions allow, the making of ablutions prior to ritual is encouraged but are not mandatory. At a sacred place an appropriate and serious attitude must be expressed in one's facial expression and body language, and unseemly

behaviour like talking or laughing during the ritual is discouraged. Most importantly, in order to receive the full benefit of praying at a shrine, a clear conscience is crucial and the mind has to be free of evil intention and clear of harmful and impure thoughts.

It is believed that if the ritual of shrine visiting is presided over by a member of the clergy the odds of one's wish being granted may increase. Therefore, villagers often invite a local religious leader (a *pir*) to lead the supplication on such occasions. Such rituals are often initiated by a household and everyone in the vicinity is invited. In order that everyone may attend, shrine visitation rituals are often organised after the autumn harvest and during the quiet winter season.

The ritual includes communal prayer, then walking towards the shrine in single file with one's hands humbly crossed in front of the lower belly and the visitant mumbling some personal prayer. Then the participant touches the sacred object (the grave, tree, stone, etc.) with the right hand, kisses the fingers that have just

Incense burning during *narzulla*

touched the *mazur* and touches the forehead and eyes with the same hand. This is called *daryub zoht* (being blessed). At a *mazur*, apart from being blessed one may leave some food or a small amount of money near the shrine upon leaving. *Mazur* visitation may also involve lighting a torch during a local religious festival known as Barut Eid,[7] or burning incense during a funeral.

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[7] *Barut Eid* is performed on the fifteenth day of the month of Barat according to the Islamic calendar.

From the occasional recollection of village elders, we have learned that a sacred landmark was the focal point of religious life in a locality where people gathered on special occasions, prayed, chanted (*zikr*), held overnight meditations or vigils, and recited verses from the religious texts. When formal religious practice was suspended under the PRC, visiting such sacred places offered a sense of continuity to the spiritual life of religious communities. However, after over half a century of secular education and the association of religion with backwardness in culture, practices like this have been reduced to sporadic individual initiatives. Details such as the sort of religious texts and the language used during such occasions are gradually being forgotten. Today, when a sacred site is visited, unless clergyman religious specialist is present, supplications are mostly spoken in the local vernaculars, as very few people in the region can recite Persian or Arabic prayers.

Conclusion

The Chinese proverb 'the same water and the same soil nurtures the same people' (*yi fang shui tu, yang yi fang ren*) my aptly capture the Central Asian identity of the practice of sacred site veneration among the Ismailis in Tashkurgan. Xinjiang is known for its plethora of sacred landscapes, as 'many of the most important sanctuaries are located in Central Asia and East Turkistan (Xinjiang) … [and this] reflects the spiritually numinous topography of a region with a strong Sufi tradition' (Papas et al. 2012: 251). However, it is the contextual nuances that give the regional variations their peculiar identity. Shrine visits in Xinjiang also transcend modern ethno-linguistic boundaries, as many such places are venerated by different ethnic communities in a locality.

The seemingly unorthodox rituals, like venerating a tree, a rock, a mountain or a spring, may also attest to the rich and varied religious heritage of the region and the subtle continuity of older belief systems adapted to the surrounding cultural environment. For instance, the juniper (*tughruq*) trees venerated today may have some link with the Aryan and Zoroastrian

religions, for both of which the juniper symbolizes purity; fire-related rituals were salient features of Zoroastrianism; burning incense may have been inherited from Buddhism; and shamanism may shed some light on the treatment of mountains, rocks and springs as sacred. These were influential faith systems that flourished in the region long before the arrival of Islam (Sa'dullahzade and Ghapar 2002, Frye 1994, Starr 2013). Accordingly, there is a sense in which visiting a local shrine echoes the rich repository of the region's religious history through an ancient tradition, as well as acting like a summary of the spiritual journey of the region and its people.

Apart from the seasonal rituals organised around a shrine, people also visit a sacred site when faced with existential dilemmas or uncertainties in life. Constantly being haunted by a bad dream, being stricken by unexpected sorrow or a piece of bad luck, being tormented by lingering emotional or physical pain, having difficulty conceiving, or believing oneself cursed or afflicted by the evil eye are all valid reasons that warrant a visit to a sacred shrine. One may also pray at a *mazur* in search of divine protection or for psychological reassurance before embarking on a long journey, starting a new business, building a new house or making a serious decision.

Lastly, this ancient tradition seems to have acquired contemporary significance as a collective identity marker among the Tajiks of China. Despite the secularisation of the public space in the PRC, spiritual practices without a rigid form of performance or liturgy are treated as ethnic cultural traditions and are tolerated by the state. Accordingly the Tajiks of Tashkurgan see the sacred landmarks described in this article as a part of their local cultural heritage that defines them as an ethnic group, along with a common language, common residence, the Ismaili faith, ethnic music, and culinary and sartorial traditions. Even though the ruinous state of many sacred landmarks indicates that the spiritual appeal of shrine visits is waning, the

idea of venerating a common sacred location in Tashkurgan is seen as an indication of a common Tajik ethnic identity.

The Ismailis in Xinjiang are undergoing a subtle but important social and economic transformation. The dynamism resulting from the PRC's economic success is reshaping the cultural context which has supported the traditional values and local ways of life to date. Consequently, the new generation's apparent scepticism regarding spirituality and ethnic culture lacks the older generation's sense of connectedness and certainty. Young people may look at the shrine as an identity marker rather than a spiritual necessity, but spirituality still has some relevance for a negligibly small and marginal group's sense of community. The perseverance of such older traditions, even if the accompanying rituals are hollow and mainly devoid of spiritual significance, may soften the effects of cultural assimilation and ease a sense of disorientation. The persistence of the *mazur* tradition against all odds may also mean, even if all the tangible conceptual and cultural barriers to integration have been removed, that cultures do not surrender totally but are in a constant process of self-reinvention.

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PAST MATCHMAKING NORMS AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON CONTEMPORARY MARRIAGE MARKETS IN CHINA

WEI MEI WONG[1]

Introduction

Since 2004, marriage markets have been cropping up in various parks in cities like Beijing, Shanghai, Shen Zhen and Wuhan. Marriage markets provide free platforms for parents to help their children find a suitable spouse. Parents who were born in the 1950s or 1960s are likely to be the vendors, and their goods are their unmarried children, usually born in the 1970s, 1980s or 1990s (Sun 2012a). Parents advertise by providing information regarding their unmarried children on colourful pieces of paper. The information may include age, height, job, income, education, family values or even a picture of their unmarried children (Winter 2014, Yang, 2011), and most also list the minimum requirements to 'apply' for their children, the most common criteria being financial situation, ownership of property, family values, age and educational level.

Parents meet collectively in a specific area that has come to be used as the usual spot, usually near long lines of noticeboards that already form part of the park. They then paste advertisements in the form of paper flyers on the noticeboards. Others prefer to staple their advertisements to trees in the meeting area. Some also display their advertisements around the area creatively by pasting their flyers on to umbrellas, park walls and even pavements. The space is not formally organized, but parents tend to collect at the area of greatest concentration. Amongst the chaotic, noisy and enthusiastic setting, with posters decorating the most visible spots, the parents are mostly stationed around their advertisements, ready to 'serve' the parents of prospective partners by asking or answering questions. The advertisements are not the only way parents seek out potential mates for their children: they also survey the marriage market to gauge it, assess their competitors or strike up conversations with other parents regarding their children. Some make use of notebooks to record details of the competition or potential partners. There are more advertisements for single women than for men (Hunt 2013), a reflection of the anxiety felt by parents of 'left-over women' (Fincher 2014, Sun 2012a).

This article will first tackle the literature addressing marriage markets in China before discussing the methodology involved. Following that, the article offers a brief overview of the contemporary reasons for which parents are involved in matchmaking, focusing particularly on

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marriage markets. Finally, based on past cultural practices, I argue that practices at marriage markets are facilitated by past matchmaking norms in China and offer examples of cultural practices to support my argument.

Marriage markets in contemporary China

According to Sun (2012a), modern marriage markets started in communities living in close proximity to parks. In many areas of China, the elderly tend to congregate collectively in parks close to their homes to engage in social activities. They practice Taichi and calligraphy, dance, exercise, sing, play mahjong, and more commonly just chat. These activities are conducted individually or in small groups and are encouraged by the state itself. This can be seen through the State Council's issuing of the 'Outline of Nationwide Physical Fitness Program' and the launch, in 1995, of campaigns propagating self-maintenance of one's health through physical fitness activities (Lashley 2013). Outdoor fitness facilities were subsequently installed in public parks and squares, especially around residential areas catering primarily to the elderly. In line with the aims of the program, public parks are free to the public or provided for a fee that is waived or reduced for retirees. Zhang (2009) argues that this helps the government show that they care for retirees, thus bolstering its image. She also claims that this socially contagious and low-cost movement aids the state in reducing overall health costs.

The elderly and middle-aged have thus developed into a community and generated social bonds, prompting conversations largely dedicated to home tips and remedies, health issues, reminiscing about the past, gossip and family affairs (Zhang ibid.). Among the latter the marital status of their children is a popular topic. Often the retirees will discuss or seek out potential partners for their children through introductions on the part of the friends they have made in the public park. This contained practice within their group eventually blossoms into the large-scale, self-organized marriage markets we see today, as more and more people, even those outside the park's social circle, become involved in exchanging contacts for their unmarried children. Shared by a common concern and purpose, this socially contagious exchange at a place they already frequent for morning routines has spread across China, with weekly or even daily sessions now being held (Winter 2014).

The practice of matchmaking in a marriage market is known as 白发相亲 (*baifaxiangqin*). The element 相亲 (*xiangqin*) can be defined as meeting or dating between two individuals (usually of the opposite sex) at the recommendation of someone else, such as parents, neighbours, co-workers or matchmakers, the goal being marriage (Zhou 2009). Dating in China is widely seen as a means of

finding a marital partner, thus seeking a more permanent arrangement rather than a casual social partner. While in a survey only 14% of American students shared this view, 42% of Chinese college students in mainland China aimed to find a marital partner through dating (Tang and Zuo 2000).

Sun (2012b) explains that the element 白发 (*baifa*) in the phrase '白发相亲 (*baifaxiangqin*)' refers to parents who wish to marry off their unmarried children. The phrase 白发相亲 (*baifaxiangqin*) can thus be simply defined as the practice of parents arranging their children's marriages through marriage markets. This is a relatively new phenomenon, as the marriage market is still a fairly new form among China's dating platforms. Parents use various methods and strategies to attempt to 'sell' their 'commodities'. The entire transaction reflects the trading nature of such exchanges, where basic marketing skills are religiously employed. The positioning of posters, their informational layout, and good customer service and negotiation skills are all utilized. Some parents dress impeccably in visiting the market to project a 'well-bred' outlook and convince other parents of their family's pedigree. Chinese parents regard family condition and parental behaviour and status as important determinants of the worth of their unmarried children (Sun 2012a).

According to Hunt (2013), children typically resist the choices made by their parents in marriage markets. In this bartering process, the children do not play any role in the searches, negotiations or discussions, all of which are usually conducted by the parents independently. The children are merely the 'commodity' that the parents are trying to barter over in the dynamics of this matchmaking practice, with little say or personal involvement. This has resulted in a high failure rate for marriages arranged in these marriage markets. While the poor selection pool, typically of male candidates, does affect the failure rate of this form of matchmaking, the children's lack of involvement in or enthusiasm for what they consider a 'shameful' matchmaking practice contributes to this lack of success. Often, parents go behind their children's back to participate in the event, even after being made aware of strong disapproval on the part of their children (Hunt ibid.).

Methodology

Participant observation was carried out with a group of parents in marriage markets around China. Through participation and observation of the parents' routine activities, I established contact with a few frequent marriage market participants. Snowball sampling was used through interviewees who had been accessed through initial contacts to increase sample diversity (cf. Creswell 2013). Individual interviews in the form of informal conversations with Chinese parents who participated in marriage markets in Wuhan, Shanghai and Beijing were used to assess the contemporary reasons

for attending the marriage markets and to ask parents whether they felt that past cultural norms had affected this form of matchmaking. The informal nature of the interviews was especially important for examining such delicate questions, as parents may change or omit certain information from their answers to show themselves in a good light, especially in the sensitive areas of family and marriage. The interviewees were selected at random, and thirty participants were interviewed, only ten of whom were male. This is representative of the gender imbalance at marriage markets, which are dominated by women. Interviewees were aged between 48 to 76. The interviews mostly took place at the marriage market, but some were conducted at cafés nearby. Interviews were recorded and transcribed before being coded to find a common cultural norm that could explain matchmaking behaviour at such marriage markets.

An analysis of the contents of multiple state media and international news reports, editorials and images on the Internet on this issue was also carried out, as well as an analysis of official statistics. Besides official data, other sources of data obtained from forums were also examined. However, the article primarily focuses on the issue from the parents' and on in-depth discussions pertaining to Chinese parents' attitudes regarding marriage markets and past norms of matchmaking.

Contemporary motives for attendance at marriage markets

Why do parents continue to attend marriage markets despite their low success rates? One interviewee explained, 'As an adult with more experience, I know how to differentiate between the "good fruit" and the "bad fruit". What does my daughter know? She will appreciate me when I am successful and find her a good man'. Another interviewee said, 'I know my son doesn't approve, but I can't just sit back and do nothing. He is too quiet, he doesn't talk to girls, it's hard for him to find a girlfriend. I really want grandchildren.'

Most of the interviewees responded similarly. They viewed themselves as more adult than their children. They also indicated that they know what is best for their children and that they strive hard to influence or try to be involved in their children's love lives and personal lives. Even though the market does not always bear fruit, the interviews indicated that parents feel as if 'they are doing something' and that 'they feel like they are part of a group of people with the same problems', while others indicate their desperation on the matter. One of the interviewees reflected this anxiety and said, 'I've tried everything! Matchmaking agencies, newspaper advertisements, paid subscriptions to dating sites, and now this! The government is not helping us to help find partners for our children, so we have to resort to such drastic measures.'

Further investigation, however, showed that marriage markets are not used exclusively for the purpose of finding mates for their single children. Twenty-five of the thirty selected interviewees responded that they use many other methods in addition to marriage markets, such as various paid services, advertising platforms, dating sites and professional matchmaking agencies or 'love hunters' (Tober 1984). However, the zero to low cost of marriage markets continues to attract parents, despite the high failure rate.

Why would parents meddle in the marital affairs of their children, let alone go so far as to participate in marriage markets, often behind the backs of their children? What makes this practice acceptable and imaginable to parents? The article will next discuss the accumulation of past cultural practices of matchmaking, in the form of cultural templates and precedents, that helps make this form of matchmaking seem sensible to parents in China today.

Mediation and introduction in traditional Chinese relationships

What makes the idea of marriage markets acceptable? One respondent said, 'Why is this acceptable to me? Why isn't it? The Chinese have always relied on introductions for matchmaking, even in the past. Marriage markets are all about introductions – for free.' Another respondent answered similarly: 'It is part of Chinese culture to look for introductions by parents with similar needs, like matchmakers in the old days.'

Matchmaking based on introductions by one's peers is therefore nothing new in Chinese matchmaking culture. Parents in marriage markets rely on other parents or relatives to introduce their own child or younger relative as a potential candidate. This accumulated practice is not without a historical basis. Culturally, we can find similarities in Chinese history that date back thousands of years (Buxbaum 1978, Szto 2011). The idea of marrying an individual whose acquaintance one's unmarried child would otherwise not make unless they are introduced by an older stranger or parent has long been prevalent in Chinese culture. Traditionally, children were taught from youth that an intimate relationship should be based on the etiquette of a formal introduction. Such procedures are conventionally performed by matchmakers (Xia and Zhou 2003).

Mencius's words about matchmaking reflect the ideals of his period:

丈夫生而愿为之有室，女子生而愿为之有家；父母之心人皆有之。不待父母之命、媒妁之言，钻穴隙相窥，踰墙相从，则父母、国人皆贱之。古之人未尝不欲仕也，又恶不由其道；不由其道而往者，与鑽穴隙之类也。

> When a couple has a son, they want a wife for him; or when they have a daughter, they want a husband for her. All people have this parental feeling. But if, without waiting for a parent's command and a matchmaker's word, [the young people] were to bore holes to catch a glimpse of each other or climb over fences to be together, then their parents and compatriots would all despise them. The ancients rarely failed to want to serve in office, but hated to do so by means of an inappropriate path. Proceeding by an inappropriate path would be like boring holes.

Mencius's words draw attention to the importance of 'introductions' in making matrimonial arrangements. Jorden (1999) argued that Mencius made this statement to teach his listeners that pursuing public office directly should be condemned just as decent people condemn young people who engage in romantic liaisons without proper marital arrangements and the approval of matchmakers and parents. The nature of the statement indicates that the process of matchmaking was evident to both Mencius and his listeners. It also shows that the repertoire of matchmaking is linked to parental consent, the cultural practice whereby parents use their approval or acceptance of a young couple's union as a direct tool facilitating a matchmaking event. This will be discussed next in the article.

The phrase 'a parent's command and a matchmaker's word' (父母之命媒妁之言) from Mencius's statement underlies the marriage culture in China in the past. This phrase later evolved into a proverb used even by modern Chinese today (Chao 2014, Sheng 2004, Jorden 1999) to signify acceptance of the role of matchmaker in Chinese marriage culture. As Chen (1936) points out, the role of matchmaker was acknowledged as legal in Tang times. Indeed, the law stipulated that without a matchmaker the marriage would not be legal (Zhang 2011). We also find matchmakers in the Ming and Qing periods. Under Republican legislature as well, the 'introducer' is required to draw up documents pertaining to the legalization of a marriage (Jorden ibid.).

Also, under the influence of Confucianism, formal marriage ceremonies called Liu Li ('the six rites of matrimony') were developed. These included a stipulation that the family of an unmarried son must send a matchmaker to the unmarried daughter's family to express their desire for marriage (Lu 2008, Luo 2007, Ma 1981, Xu 2011). The Six Rites, though often simplified into three, are found even in the Song period (Bernhardt 1999, Chiu 1958). Spouses were often unaware of each other's physical appearance until the wedding ceremony and had no say over the final selection. In most cases, unmarried children were excluded from the selection process (Sheng 2004). Matchmakers, mediators and introducers evidently occupy a strong cultural position in the history of marriage in China.

However, Confucian values were criticized by the May 4th Movement of 1919 (Lang 1946, Levy 1949). This is reflected in an article Mao Tse-Dong wrote condemning Confucian values, citing the example of a young woman who had committed suicide due to the pressure of a traditionally arranged marriage (Pridmore and Walter 2013, Xu and Whyte 1990, Witke 1967). This simultaneously brought the traditional role of matchmakers into question. The Communist Party, which came into power in China in 1949, advocated greater freedom of marital choice, which further drove out the figure of the matchmakers. Coupled with propaganda efforts, cultural reform and Westernization, the idea that marrying for 'love' is the 'right' way to get married became increasingly accepted among young people in China (Levy ibid., Meijer 1971, Yang 1959). While this transition has significantly increased love marriages, public discourse shows that repertoires of matchmaking still include resort to 'introducers', a remnant of the ancient cultural practice of utilizing matchmakers.

According to Xu and Whyte (1990), data from a probability sample of 586 women who were or had been married in Chengdu, Sichuan, in the People's Republic of China, which was used to examine the transition from arranged to free-choice marriages in that city, revealed that approximately twenty percent of marriages that depended on mediation were arranged by parents or senior relatives. It can therefore be concluded that, although freedom of mate choice is legally available and mandated, the transition to it from arranged marriages is incomplete. Compared to the West, marital freedom is not exercised as much in modern China despite the increasing Western influence (Parish and Whyte 1980). Given this incomplete transition, reliance on intermediaries and introductions prevails. Expectedly, 12.5 percent of couples from Shanghai were previously neighbours or had been introduced by relatives, while Gansu returned a much higher percentage of 45.3 per cent (Xu 1997). The most frequent practice of matchmaking is still by arrangement (Tober 1984). When young people are unable to find a mate on their own, either at school or at work, their relatives, friends, colleagues and professional match-makers will be mobilized to fill the role of 'matchmaker' (Tober ibid., Xia and Zhou 2003). These arrangements are usually made by two separate introducers who already know each other. These 'friends' will introduce their own acquaintances or relatives, who would otherwise not get to know each other. The introducers also act as mediators and provide information and pictures about the potential match. If this possibility does not come to fruition, the searching will continue (Xia and Zhou ibid.). This method is more commonly used when kinship ties are strong. Moreover, there are still instances where the parents from both sides will discuss the particulars without involving their children, the matches often being announced after the details have been worked out (Tober ibid.). Interestingly, this is the precise method that is used by parents in marriage markets. It is not hard to see how this particular outlet

and the practice of *baifaxiangqin* are imaginable to parents in China, especially when they already indulge in practices like this even without the help of such markets.

However, why would parents attend marriage markets to act in this way? One respondent said, 'Most of us have already exhausted the contacts we know. It is nice to come to the marriage market, where there are many other parents with whom we are not acquainted. This way, we can fish out potential new mates, and there is a greater range to choose from.'

This reflects the sense of security for parents when they act in this fashion, as their peers are able to vouch personally for the potential mate's family conditions and parents. Some parents tend to pass on their cases out of good will when they know that the match is more suitable for their acquaintances in the marriage market. Matching a good marriage is culturally perceived as helping to accumulate good fortune for oneself and one's child (Jorden 1999, Lu 2008). With past culture having such an influence on current matchmaking practices, modern Chinese parents are adapting them to current times and challenges.

Decision-making by parents

Queen and Habenstein (1974) pointed out that marriage is a social contract between two families, and thus the marriages of children are not regarded as matters for the individual. The magnitude of the importance of such decisions is given as the reason why it should be the parents who influence the outcome (Lu 2008). This puts a new perspective into the saying, 'Parents know best', as strong parental control is culturally part of marriage traditions in many Asian cultures, including China's (Salaff 1973).

This is reflected in one of the responses I collected. The interviewee said, 'Even though it is not as strict as in the old days, parental approval is still very important today. The last boyfriend my daughter brought home, I did not approve of him, he had no stable job. My daughter broke up with him. It is simply Chinese culture for the parents from both sides to approve of a marriage in order for the children to marry with full blessings.'

'The Story of Yingying', written during the Zhenyuan period, illustrates the discourse on romance and social propriety which involves approval of the arrangements by guardians or parents in the Tang period. The story revolves around a young scholar called Zhang and a maiden called Cui Yingying. One of the moral lessons championed in the story was that a man should not commit the social delict of being physically and romantically involved with a woman without the involvement of parental arrangement and choice. Deviating from propriety and succumbing to romance was frowned upon. Liu explanation (1962) for the Chinese attitude towards love is in line with the discourse found in this 'moral fable' – be sensible and realistic. He also showed that the

theme of love is 'seldom, if ever, platonic' in Chinese poetry. Marriage was still primarily a family and parental affair. Tales from the Tang period echo this motif.

Owen (1986) argued that, in the context of Confucian public values of the period, the moral lesson of the fable was justified. Romance was seen to be less important and should be foregone when propriety dictates that a union must have formal parental blessing (Luo 2005). While there is greater emphasis on 'romance' and 'love' in relationships in contemporary China, Xu and Whyte's analysis (1990) of the Chengdu Marriage Quality Score showed that respondents regarded the relationship with husband's kin and that between the respective parents as important factors making for a happy marriage. Even in modern China, the family's approval of the spouse is perceived to affect the quality of the marriage itself as well. All of these criteria are commonly found listed in the posters hung up around marriage markets. However, the prerequisite for a successful match in these marriage markets is approval of the potential mate's parents, since it is the parents who are the agents facilitating the matches. This is the distinguishing aspect of marriage markets and *baifaxiangqin*, the matchmaking culture where parents are primarily involved in mate selection. Parents may even persuade their children to marry a pre-approved mate choice, especially when they are uncertain of their children's own plans and decision-making (Lu 2008).

Thirty-three per cent of respondents in urban areas made marriage decisions 'by myself with my parents' permission', and 58.86 per cent of urban respondents answered that decisions were made by their parents but with their permission. Marriages are therefore sometimes arranged by the parents but with their children's consent (Sheng 2004). The culture of picking a mate based on parental approval is still inherent in modern China's practices of matchmaking (Zhang 2011). Marriage markets are a testament to the amount of influence parents still have on the marital affairs of their children. In other words, marriage markets do not just showcase, they also cement the role of parents in partner selection, a surprisingly archaic traditional role.

One respondent explained, 'With marriage markets, parents have the ability to screen potential spouses before introducing them to their children. This way, the potential spouse will already have my approval even before my daughter gets to consider him. It is easier than having to decide whether or not I approve of a stranger who she has already fallen in love with.'

'Parents' Meet-up' involving the parents from both sides still signifies something significant today. It indicates that the relationship is mature and ready for marriage. Han (2012) discusses the implications of not having the approval of both sides of the family: arguments may break out and may cause disharmony within the family and the relationship. With marriage markets, this aspect is satisfied from the start to avoid changes that fail to obtain parental approval.

The influence of this norm is reflected in the response of another of the interviewees, who said, 'I like marriage markets because we get to interact with the parents directly. The parents are equally important in a union, as we will be family after the union of our children. If the mother is shabby or not cultured, surely their child will not be much better. If the parents dress well and pronounce Mandarin properly, their child should be more refined and suited to my son.' Sometimes, therefore, parental approval also extends to the parents of their child's partner.

Conclusion

The combination of popular, inherent cultural practices which have been passed down for centuries in China is still ingrained in the older Chinese generation. The archaic matchmaking cultures of parents actively seeking and relying on introductions as a legitimate source of matchmaking, combined with the tradition whereby parents decide their children's partners, have made marriage markets and *baifaxiangqin* very accessible to the parents who participate in them. The influence of past matchmaking norms has helped shape *baifaxiangqin*, where the convenient combination of pre-parental approval and introductions is put into practice. This could explain why marriage markets and the practice of *baifaxiangqin* are acceptable, accessible and imaginable to parents in China today. With the accumulation of two very traditional cultural templates and precedents for matchmaking, it is understandable how this form of matchmaking still seems sensible to China's older generation.

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'TELL ME HOW YOU MOVE, AND I WILL TELL YOU WHERE YOU ARE FROM'

THE EU MANAGEMENT OF MIGRATION AS AN INSTRUMENT OF OTHERING REFUGEES AND RE-CONSTITUTING THE MEANING OF 'EUROPEANNESS'

SARA BENCEKOVIĆ[1]

The researcher volunteered in refugee camps along the Western Balkan refugee route in order to join the refugee flow at several places and gain access to refugees willing to be interviewed.

INTRODUCTION

This paper should be taken as a semi-fictive and critical effort aimed at making the reader feel the refugee 'other' battling the systematic violence, inequality and discrimination that are present in the current 'refugee crisis.' The particular refugee whose memoirs are recorded on these pages, Ahmad Waleed Rahimi, is in fact a composite, rather than a real person. Ahmad was born out of numerous interviews with refugees of all sorts of nationalities, genders,

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classes and ethnicities. The narrative follows the commonest themes and concerns I heard in these open-ended and semi-structured interviews. Indeed, the motifs reproduced in this paper have come up in most if not all the interviews. I decided not to use the narrative of a single person for two reasons. First, I wanted to be sure of protecting any one refugee's identity and security. In the present circumstances, even a record of a refugee passing through a specific place at a specific time could potentially result in push-backs and deportation – no academic would want to be liable for endangering any refugee's journey and safety. Secondly, my goal was to provoke rather than represent, describe rather than analyse. Thus, I aimed at achieving the great depth of the refugee experience, which can more easily be achieved through multiple voices condensed into one than through the lone voice of a single refugee. I understood and accepted the problematics of such an approach, which reduces the multiplicity of contradictory experiences to a single experience. However, while I would not necessarily take this approach in researching other social groups, I found it strikingly beneficial and constructive in representing the reality of a refugee's life along the Western Balkan route. Throughout my research, one observation would always dominate the field: in order to regulate and govern movement and migration, the EU turns plurality into a body. Hence the title, 'Tell Me How You Move, And I Will Tell You Where You Are From': by channelling the refugee flow in a particular way, Europe establishes refugees as particular types of subjects, as non-European, non-liberal, undocumented and undeserving subjects. Thus, I found that the plurality of refugees can indeed be condensed into a refugee body, the body of an Ahmad Waleed Rahimi, who narrates the everyday situations and events of an average European refugee-citizen.

Admittedly, there are clear political reasons behind this kind of work. The EU is, for the first time, reacting to a global impact in an utterly uncoordinated and disintegrating fashion. Some talk about these circumstances as the end of the EU. Nonetheless the chaos of this crumbling system generates a need for new understandings. This, I believe, is the crucial moment in which we can redefine 'Europeanness' and accept refugees as the 'New Europeans.' In my opinion, the EU remains the most accomplished experiment in economic, social and political integration in human history, and the challenge of the present moment is to accept and integrate refugees as, not the European Other, but Europeans in the making. In this process, moreover, refugees are not Europe's passive victims, but agents in its construction. It is important how we write history.

MEMOIRS OF AHMAD WALEED RAHIMI

Born June 19th, 1995

'Ahmad Waleed Rahimi'. Credits: Jinsub Cho.

November 2nd, 2015

A smuggler driver, whom I contacted two months earlier, rang in early November and demanded, 'Are you ready?' 'When?' I asked. 'Tomorrow.' The call startled me; it saturated me with chilling panic, confusion and disbelief. I stood in a dreamlike stupor, while the world was spinning around me. The whirling sensation of my head reflected onto the room, which started pirouetting around me, spin and twirl, spiral and swivel. Just like my body, my breath stood with a deathly still, as if the air thickened and obstructed my bronchial passages. Almost inconvincibly, I stuttered in a response, 'I am ready; *merawaam*, I am going.'

   In fact, I could not have been readier. My family sold our small stitching shop for $2,000 USD; my brother sold his taxi for $1,500 USD; and my mother's brother gave me $1,000 USD he had in savings. In total, I was given $4,500 USD. That is four times the average price for a plane ride to Europe. I wished I could take an airplane. My cousin told me the world looks very different from up there. However, my father explained why taking a plane to Europe is out of the question. Strictly speaking, I could reach the airports, I could afford to buy a ticket, but I could not leave. This is a decision of Europe, my father said – one cannot

fly without a visa. Following this legislation, the airlines insist on visas as they would be heavily fined for allowing me or anyone else to board a plane to Europe without such a permit. 'You will need to walk, *pesar*, my son' my father told me. 'There are also buses, boats, trains and taxis; take those to speed up your journey.' 'How long will it take me,' I asked my *baba*. 'As long as what's the will of Allah,' he replied with calm and poise.

The distance I was to transverse was 6,000 km in length. I have never travelled that far. As a matter of fact, I have not spent more than three months living outside my home town, Mehtar Lam. Those three months of expatriation I spent in Kabul. I hoped Kabul would give me an opportunity for education. I wanted to learn business and mathematics, so I could expand my father's stitching business. Initially, Kabul seemed like the right place for my ambitions. We used to call the city *Kabubble*, for its reputation for isolation from violent realities the rest of Afghanistan was facing. In those days, Kabul was known as the city of freedom, safety, food, entertainment and enjoyment. Soon enough, however, *Kaboom* became a more suitable moniker than *Kabubble*.

Explosions and shootings became a part of life. I navigated my way around the city based on avoiding the suicide-bombing hotspots. I could have endured all of these hardships, but I couldn't fight the Taliban evil. The Taliban visited me every two or three days, aiming at drafting me into their military troops. I wanted to go to university, not the army. However, in Kabul, anyone who was fit to fight was now in the army, in the process of joining it, or escaping from it. The Taliban threatened me, and they threatened to harm my family. A month into my move to Kabul, the Taliban killed my best friend's father and older brother in the family's tea shop, after my friend refused military recruitment. I was terrified. Indeed, life in Kabul was one of the constant alarm and terror.

I could have joined the Taliban and end all the uncertainty, but who was I going to fight? I don't want to fight anyone. I don't want to kill. I don't want to be killed. The security the Taliban is offering is a lie. What would happen to my family if I joined the Taliban, rather than ISIS or the government? Or would the Taliban insult my family if I fought on the side of ISIS or the government? Once one joins the army, whichever army it is, he places himself as the enemy of all those opposing the army's efforts. The enemy doesn't care one joined so one's family could have peace. I do not support any militarist ideology. I do not take an interest in the rights or wrongs done by any of the Afghan power figures. I am a simple man. I want peace and safety. Thus, I decided to flee Afghanistan. 'I am ready,' I repeated to the smuggler on the other end of the phone; this time, however, with reassuring confidence and firmness in my voice.

November 3rd, 2015

My arduous journey from Afghanistan to Germany started on the outskirts of Kabul, at the Ahmad Shah Baba bus depot. The Ahmad Shah Baba service is among the most popular ones, having gained a reputation for fast and daring driving that can finish the first step of journey, to Iran, in twelve hours. The way to the border-town at Nimruz led through Kandahar and Helmand, the two scariest and deadliest Afghan provinces. The closer we went to these southern areas of Afghanistan, the more fires we saw and the more rifles we heard. However, the atmosphere on the bus did not echo any of these dangers. We became comfortably numb to the violence around us.

Refugees gathering at a bus terminal, determined to reach the EU. Credits: Jinsub Cho.

Small bribes were paid in dollars, Afghanis[2] and cigarettes as we progressed from checkpoint to checkpoint. Despite the strict prohibition, the driver was continuously sipping a bottle of local wine while at the same time, munching on a bag of American chips. The chips were the Cheetos kind. The white Taliban flags, *al-liwa'*, were flying intimidatingly from poles, trees, and the buildings around us. The flag of the Taliban Caliphate is no longer entirely white, as I remember it from my childhood. There is now black Islamic writing on the

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[2] The Afghan Afghani (AFN) is the currency of Afghanistan.

white flag surface. The Islamic text reads 'I bear witness that there is no god but Allah and that Muhammad is his servant and Messenger.'

Many other things have changed since my childhood. During an ordinary morning walk towards the school or office, one could always notice the Kabul streets overflowing in shops and stores. Afghan people are known entrepreneurs, always investing in their businesses to bring their families prosperity. However, the contemporary types of businesses are some we could have never seen before; among them, the IT and cell-phone companies, most certainly, dominate the landscape. Two things have not changed – violence remains a ubiquitous threat, and soccer remains the most popular sport.

November 4th, 2015

Power outages are the norm in Afghanistan. Flashlights are always at the ready since one never knows when they might be plunged into darkness. This is especially worrying seeing that one needs to carefully select routes to schools and offices; some routes are safe and others are deadly, even more so when unilluminated. I do not think Europe has a problem with power outages, but I took a flashlight with me anyways.

I have always wondered how it feels to live without such concerns and due precautions in mind. How does it feel to always have light and electricity, water plumbing and a toilet inside one's home, a full stomach, and an annual vacation? I have only seen such a lifestyle on Hollywood movies, which I indulged in at every free moment I found.

When Facebook came in 2004, I connected to thousands of people from everywhere in the world. I have a friend from almost every country around the globe! They often ask, 'How is it to live in such a dangerous place like Afghanistan? What is the war like?' How is it not to live in a dangerous place, I wonder in turn.

While I asked questions about every country in the world, Germany has always peaked my attention the most. Germany is a single country that is uniformly spoken of as the country for good living. In Afghanistan, many eyes light up at the very mention of the country, and those who have visited Germany are talked about as local heroes. Indeed, even along the refugee route, when I asked others about their destination, the answer was almost without an exception 'Germany.'

Germany is also where I headed. I have a cousin living in Germany. It is important to go to a country where one already has family or connections. Family helps with information, jobs and housing, and it makes it easier to adjust to new places. Otherwise, I would have had a very difficult time settling in Germany. I do not know much about the country. I only know

that Germany has good people, and that too only as a hearsay. The more I thought about Germany, the more I realised how unfamiliar I am with the country. What is their food like? Do they have buses or trains? Do children wear school uniforms? Are there any mosques in Germany? My head was spinning under the swarm of questions. My eyes were closing, and soon I fell asleep on the bus that marked the first step on my way to this unknown European country.

Afghan refugees resting on a bus in preparation for the rest of the long journey to Europe.

November 5th, 2015

I woke up as my head hit the window when the bus stopped abruptly. We arrived at Afghan-Iranian border in the middle of the night. I looked through the window. The only thing I could see in that pitch darkness were roofless Humvees, waiting for us across the border. The cars' lights revealed that the border was just a small patch of sand mounds, marked by the wired fence. The driver, who was not the smuggler I initially contacted but the smuggler's working staff, told us to leave the bus. We obeyed his order and waited on the roadside until he 'checked out the situation.' He looked for any potential guards, I presume.

The terrain was 'not clear.' So, the smuggler took us to another place, just a few kilometres further. After repeating the terrain-surveying procedure, he returned and told us to run. We scaled the sand mounds, crept through a hole in the wire and reached the Humvees. My

backpack was ripped open by razors in the wire fence, and the only two shirts I had brought with me were destroyed. I kept them, nevertheless. The winter is coming, and there are many mountains to be crossed, I thought to myself. I will need all the extra clothes I can get, I calculated, even if ripped.

42 of us crammed into three, four-seater Humvees. I squeezed with four others into what I believe was a modified trunk space. The smugglers aimed at fitting as many people as possible by the removal of the trunk railing. To them, more people means more profit.

The cars started moving. I was gasping for oxygen; there were so many people breathing so little air. Luckily, I thought to myself, I have athletic lungs – I went to the gym daily; I am healthy and enduring. However, there were few old men and some women in my car. One of the women was pregnant. 'In which country will the baby be born?', I wondered, while looking at her visibly large stomach.

Another abrupt emergency stop made my head bump into the window. With a finger placed over his mouth, the driver turned to us and made the 'ssh' sound, signalling us to be quiet. We sat in dreadful silence for few slow-passing minutes, only hearing the wind playing with the sand below our Humvee.

Suddenly, a loud gunshot pierced through the air. The agitation and distress creeped among us like flesh-eating maggots. Indeed, fear eats the soul. The driver pressed the pedal to the metal, as hard and far as he could. Everything around me was motion-blurred and seemed surreal. 'Is this really happening? Is someone really shooting at us?'

The Iranian police fired at our car. The border police often lie in wait to intercept 'irregular migrants' crossing the Afghan-Iranian border. My father warned me of the Iranian police specifically. 'They will not accept bribes; they just want to get rid of you. Avoid the Iranian police at any cost!' These words kept running through my head as I looked at bullets cutting through the foggy air.

Many gunshots missed our Humvee, for the smuggler was making reckless, quick and short turns, as if we were slalom skiing. However, the sound of bullets hitting the metal and the plastic was frequent and persistent. We were chased. I thought I was going to have a hysterical breakdown. Then, smack! A bullet hit the window, right in front of my nose. The bullet made a circular pattern in the glass; it looked like a giant snowflake that got stuck inside the glass. I have always liked snowflakes. This one came as a God-given salvation from the nerve-racking state of panic I entered.

The bullet-snowflake reminded me of my childhood, when my days passed in playing *aaqab* and *khusay* with other children from our village. *Aaqab* is a tag game. One child is the

eagle and sits on a rock. The other children are pigeons and stand on the safe area. The pigeons leave the safe area, pretend to be pecking at the ground for food. The child who is the eagle leaves the rock and chases the other children. When the eagle touches a child, that child is out of the game. The game continues until the last pigeon is out. Another eagle is then chosen. *Khusay* is a bit more complicated to explain. It is a game of race with obstacles, one could say. Each player holds their right foot up behind the back with their left hand. When someone shouts 'Go!', the players in each team seek to reach a place designated as 'the goal' while preventing the other team from reaching it. The players stop their opponents by making them lose their balance, to stand on two feet or fall. The players who lose their balance are out of the game. A player who touches the circle on the opposite side wins a point for his team, and the game is over when one of the teams scores ten points.

I hope that, one day, my children will also play *aaqab* and *khusay*, be it in Afghanistan or in Germany. All the more so, I hope that snowflakes will not remind them of bullet marks. I hope they will play with kites and dolls, which are now banned under Taliban rule. I especially hope for the former, as I used to be a very skilled kite-runner as well. I wish to teach my children all the secrets and tricks of kite-flying. 'Are there kite-flying competitions in Germany? Is Germany windy?'

At that thought, a strong wind hit my face. A bullet pierced through the window, shattering the glass. The car stopped. Without delay, the doors opened. Several flashlights blazed in my face, hurting my eyes. Then the light went away, instead illuminating the faces of my co-passengers. The flashlights belonged to the Iranian police. This was my first arrest.

The weak sun started rising above the horizon by the time we reached the police base on the outskirts of some city. The outpost accommodated barely a handful of policemen, however, they were heavily armed and threatening, as if there was an army of officers. The four officers who brought us up to the station lined me and my co-travellers up against the wall. The remaining officers approached us swiftly and forced us to kneel on the concrete floor; some of the officers pushed us, the others hit our calves with batons, but all shouted and yelled to accompany their chosen method of assault. Hereafter, they took us one by one into a separate room for interrogation.

As the first to be interrogated, the police officer seized a young girl. She was about twelve years old. In Iranian law, female children as young as nine are deemed culpable and, thus, potentially reprehensible and held liable. Not even a child is innocent.

Following the girl's return to the waiting room, the police forcefully separated the pregnant woman from her family, who was in outright distress and worry. They silenced them with

threats to hurt the woman. By their speech, I recognised that this family are Hazara. Hazara are Shia Muslims and are, thus, targeted by both the Taliban and al-Qaeda. Regardless of sharing a Shia religious denomination, Iran is also extremely unsafe for Hazara; this is true even for Hazara of Iranian origin. The reasons for hatred are often obscure, but many Iranians will say that the hatred is historical and racialized. Due to Hazara's Mongol face-features, many Iranians deem them a hated reminder of the Mongol subjugation of the region in the thirteenth century. The Iranian hatred towards Hazara is probably what caused such grave concern in the woman's family. The cases of Hazara dying in Iranian detention were everything but rare.

My turn. The Iranian police have a reputation of being extremely cruel and brutal, perhaps, even more so against Afghan people. However, this was my lucky day.

As I sat opposite to the interrogator, he offered me a cigarette and asked, 'Where are your documents?' I unzipped the little bag I carried around my waist and handed him my passport. 'Why is there no Iranian visa in your passport?' Iran charges Afghans over $100 USD for a one-month tourist visa, while a business visa costs over $3,000 USD. Besides, it may hinder one's asylum-protection claim if one has previously been granted a tourist visa. 'I came as a refugee,' I replied; 'I am heading to Europe because life in Afghanistan is very difficult.' The officer smirked at me, 'We cannot let you do that. You violated Iranian borders. We are sending you back.' That was it, I thought. I was stopped at the very beginning of my journey: how on earth could I hope to cross another eight borders? I lowered my head and remained silent. The guard who previously stood in the left-front corner of the room approached me and escorted me back to the waiting room.

Back in the waiting room, I sat still while the rest of my co-passengers were being questioned.

The remaining passengers included an old lady who was travelling with her middle-aged son. Five young, 20-25-year-old men, and three older men, who must have been in their 50s. There were twelve of us in total. The Humvee driver was arrested with us as well; however, unlike us, he was put in a jail-cell immediately. Rather than instantly deciding what to do with us, the surprisingly humane main officer ordered for us to be temporarily imprisoned. I spent two days in prison cell, with little water and almost no food.

November 7th, 2015

Sometime during my third day in jail, an officer came to my cell and gestured to me that it is time to move. I was jailed with two other men of my age. I expected them to be released as

well, however, that was not the case. As I left the cell, I realised that my other co-passengers were not in the waiting room either. 'Am I the only one being released?'

Without a saying a word, the officer signalled me to follow him. We walked down the mountain for about forty minutes. There were thousands of thoughts running through my head, not a single one complete and coherent. It was a moment of paralyzing and overwhelming uncertainty; I felt light-headed and as if my head will explode under pressure at the same time, my heart was racing and stopping, my feet were heavy as lead at one time, and I could barely feel them just the moment after. Then, I resigned; I stopped thinking, I stopped feeling, I stopped hurting. I just followed the officer and blind faith.

The officer led me back to the exact border pass where we were intercepted and captured. I could still see the patches of fabric at the place where my backpack caught in the razor-wire. The officer pushed the barrel of his rifle into my chest and ordered me to go back across the border. I walked across the border.

I knew that, by returning to Kabul after an unsuccessful flight, I would be in a greater danger than ever.

Hidden in the bush, I waited for three to four hours until sundown. When the darkness ensured my concealment, I found a new place to cross back into Iran. This time, I travelled on foot. I walked for two days across desert-like mountains, until I reached an Iranian city from where I could continue my journey to Europe.

Refugees walking together along the motorway in a bid to reach the Iranian border. Credits: Jinsub Cho.

From this moment on, my life became structured around movement. My days were reduced to thoughts and strategies about where and how to move. Respectively, for the states through which I travelled, I was merely a dangerous moving object, nothing more. I was reduced from a human being to a moving body, a moving body that needed to be stopped and expelled. However, stopping and expulsion mean death for me. I decided to live. Thus, I continued to move.

November 9th, 2015

I walked for two days, without any water or food, until I reached the first city, a city in the Sistan and Baluchistan province of Iran. This is a well-travelled route, embarked upon and talked about by thousands and thousands of Afghan refugees. By the time I made a journey, I knew the route like the back of my palm.

Once I reached the city, I phoned the smuggler who organised the failed trip across Afghan-Iranian border, as the price of my smuggling package included him getting me to Qom. I wanted to reach Qom because I had a cousin there, Adnan. I knew that he wanted to leave Iran. I hoped he will come with me.

The smuggler sent me to the city's downtown bazaar. At the bazaar, there were vendors selling freshly squeezed pomegranate and sugarcane juices, sweet and ripe grapes, furniture,

radios, TV sets, cupboards and other household goods, all at bargain prices. Among the vendors, smugglers were just as numerous and easy to find.

So called 'travel agencies' were mushrooming from every corner, and although they offer regular travel packages as well, not many Afghans approach these shops as tourists but as refugees wishing to be trafficked into Europe. Indeed, using a trafficker is the safest way to Europe; a trafficker knows what he is doing.

I entered the first 'travel agency' I liked, approached the agency's worker, and delivered the code name of the smuggler to whom I paid my dues. These agencies worked more like a network rather than independent, competing shops. Thus, it didn't matter which one I entered; each agency, taking this smuggler's code, would have pointed me to the same place – the bus leaving from the bazaar's parking lot that afternoon.

I spent few hours until departure eating, washing myself and praying. I rested a bit, and was on the road again. I boarded the bus in the afternoon, and had about sixteen-hour-long journey ahead.

November 10th, 2015

I arrived in Qom mid-morning. There are many Afghan people living in Qom, yet their life remains difficult. Police are continuously harassing Afghans, and the harassed must bribe the police to be left in peace. Furthermore, being given a status is an impossible mission. Even those born in Iran, but to Afghan parents, are without citizenship and their respective rights.

Among the missing rights, the most difficult one to manage without is the right to work. One enters a paradox of needing to bribe the police to be allowed to work. Word for word, as I was told, Afghan refugees, their children and even grandchildren are paying to be able to work, earn money and support their families, just to give the earned money away as bribery. What is more, sometimes, one doesn't get paid for the work they have done. If an Afghan doesn't get paid, who can they complain to? 'None of our business,' authorities say.

Undocumented Afghan children are not allowed to enrol in schools, so children spend their days working in the streets. If someone gets hurt or ill, they have no medical insurance to get the treatment.

Initially, I thought I could stay in Iran, rather than continue to Europe. However, by walking the streets of Qom and looking at the Afghans suffering, I shook off the thought and continued to search for my cousin's house.

I found the address fairly easily. I am familiar with these narrow and curvy streets. Indeed, Qom is not much different than Kabul; it only lacks checkpoints, barricades and sounds of gunshots to entirely mirror Kabul.

Upon reaching my cousin's house, I noticed that he had already emptied out his small apartment and sold all his belongings, including the bed, the carpet, the kitchen utensils and the TV. My family notified my cousin about my arrival and, to my pleasure, he was more than ready to flee with me. People rarely seek refuge alone; fleeing is a dangerous endeavour.

A street dealer paid my cousin $1,500 USD for all the household goods. Additionally, he borrowed $1,000 USD from relatives, which we hoped was a sufficient amount for the trip from Iran to Germany. We went back to another 'travel agency' at the downtown bazaar and purchased a smuggling package to Turkey's Izmir. This cost us $1,000 USD each.

November 16th, 2015

Early in the morning, the trafficker called with a message that everything is ready for the trip. 'When are we leaving?', I asked. 'In two hours,' the voice on the other side of the phone replied; 'No delay.' 'There is nothing left to wait for,' I replied; 'We are coming.'

The trafficker then explained that we will take a car to Iran's border with Turkey. Then, we will cross the Iranian-Turkish border on foot, or, if we wish to pay $300 USD extra, on horses. After these costs, the remaining $1,500 USD felt barely enough. We still had left to pay for a boat journey to Greece and for in-Europe transportation to Germany. We declined the horses.

The car journey took twelve hours. An Iranian family of five squeezed in with us in that Toyota Corolla – three young children and, presumably, their parents. Despite being cramped in an overcrowded car, this bit of the journey was its easiest part. I slept half of the way, and spent the rest of the time playing with the carefree and chatty children. This ride, at least for a short while, returned a sense of normalcy into my life.

The Iranian-Turkish border is the place where many Afghans lose their lives. Some die due to exhaustion, but many more due to Turkish police gunshots. The trafficker said that he gets caught in a curtain of gunfire on a rather regular basis; 'I still need a job,' he added. Indeed, the hike to Turkey was a perilous and onerous odyssey, twisted and perverted in its wryness from everything I thought about the life before. If the soul grows by leaps and bounds, as they say, mine came to its full stature within those hours in the Iranian-Turkish mountains. Nothing will ever be the same.

Benceković, 'Tell me how you move...'

The sun had already set once we started walking across Iranian border to Turkey. The trafficker led the way. The path that led into Turkey was surrounded by thick undergrowth and scrappy bushes. My feet kept getting stranded under thorny branches and bunches of entangled grass. Some parts of the pass had a foot of snow. My feet were freezing. Every so often, I would hit my toes onto a rock hidden by the layer of snow; my feet were bloody, scratched and bruised. Not to mention my shoes ripped open, exposing my feet even further to the cold and injuries. I kept stumbling and falling. The trafficker would hit me, Adnan and even the children with sticks whenever we were so exhausted that we had to stop walking. The gunshots kept firing at other groups of refugees around us, often followed by screams of pain and grief. We walked for sixteen hours; sixteen dreadful hours. This was the first time I questioned whether the whole trip was worth it.

November 17th, 2015

Once we reached Turkey, we took a day-long bus journey to the Aegean port of Izmir. Both me and Adnan slept for the whole bus ride; that was for almost 24 hours.

Izmir is where the Turkish and international elites build their summerhouses. Ironically, it is also the city from where refugees embark on boats to cross the Aegean Sea to Greece – the first EU country, the first trace of safety, the first speck of a lull.

Before setting sail to Greece, however, me and Adnan decided to spend few days with our uncle who lives in a village adjacent to Izmir. We were too tired and too disturbed to continue the trip immediately. Besides, our uncle was thrilled to see us. We greeted our uncle, ate well, slept some more, and then left the house to search for a smuggler.

While walking the streets of Izmir, we saw refugees and their tents scattered all around the city. The Basmane neighbourhood, however, was the refugee hotspot. Namely, the neighbourhood's Hatuniye and Çorakkapı mosques were the focal points of Turkish people bringing their donations, and refugees receiving them, as well as thriving money exchange, sales and trafficking businesses.

Benceković, 'Tell me how you move...'

Refugees gathered in front of the Çorakkapı mosque. Credits: Sakip Sakir.

Refugees receiving aid in front of the Hatuniye mosque. Credits: Sakip Sakir.

Upon reaching the Hatuniye mosque, I found myself in shock. Up until that point, we had travelled only with other Afghans and, perhaps, several Iranians; in Izmir, however, we met

refugees from many countries – Syria, Pakistan, Morocco, Algeria, Iraq, Kurdistan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia, Nigeria. Taxis appeared quickly to pick the people up and take them to the boat launch sites. We can search for smugglers on the day we wish to leave, other refugees advised us. There was no need to make pre-arrangements, boats leave every day.

We spent quite some time with other refugees. This was a great opportunity to get information we needed for the rest of the journey. In Izmir, I realized that I am a part of the 'European refugee crisis.' I just never understood what made the crisis 'European.' Refugees are the ones in crisis, not Europe; that is why refugees are coming to Europe, because Europe is not in crisis. I cannot say that I fully understand this logic even today.

The animosity against refugees in Turkey was strongly felt. Unlike us, many of the refugees had an official status in Turkey and have spent some months, or even years, in several of the country's cities. They speak of working for sixteen hours a day in textile sweatshops, scavenging the streets for discarded cartons they can sell for few liras, and selling tissues at traffic lights. What is more, in such circumstances of unregulated labour and black market jobs, refugee labour is exploited. Refugees are taken advantage of, overworked, hungry, and often fail to be paid on time, if at all.

It wasn't until mid-January, 2016, that Turkey finally granted refugees the right to work legally. The right to work came five years after the influx of refugees from Syria to Turkey began. A little bit too late, if you ask me.

Although the law seemed to be a positive change, not many refugees managed to obtain the promised work permits. The Turkish bureaucracy is massive and sluggish, and, while refugees are spending their days in never-ending queues, their dependants are hungry and uncared for at home. Thus and so, many refugees opt out of seeking work permits and either work illegally, or continue to Europe.

The refugees spoke, in a similar fashion, of other discrepancies between the promised and the obtained. For example, the official refugee status in Turkey formally allows refugees to obtain education and medical care. However, instead of going to school, children are often forced to bring income for the family as well. Solely the parents' income does not suffice for ensuring family's survival. In regards to medical care, the services are often denied to refugees by health care workers themselves. Most of the refugees in Izmir have the temporary ID card, which comes with a promise of health care upon the refugees showing the card to the hospital personnel. However, a striking number of refugees testify that their cards were rejected for 'looking fake,' or for their serial number not being found in the database.

A refugee ID issued by the Turkish state. Credits: Sakip Sakir.

Strikingly, the pressing issue for many refugees, especially for women, was not even getting asylum or the right to work, but having safe access to a clean bathroom. Indeed, I thought, I had a chance to wash myself twice during the two weeks of my travel, and that only because my cousin and uncle lived on the refugee route and in proper housing. Many refugees don't have such luck. Where do women change their babies' diapers, I wondered; where do they wash their children who wet themselves, where do they wash themselves during the sensitive days of the month?

Women on the move. Credits: Jinsub Cho.

Other than refugees, I noticed the presence of another peculiar group of people in Izmir – volunteers. Up until then, I believed that donations and aiding are strictly religious matters. These people, however, were largely independent of mosques or any other religious institution. They came from all over the world, America, France, Sweden, Serbia, Greece, and many other countries I have not even heard of. They were doctors, students, teachers, hairdressers, dentists, housewives, just regular people 'wanting to help.' I still cannot say I fully understand such a motive, nevertheless, volunteers seemed to be helping refugees a lot.

During my days in Izmir, an organization called MedVint was responsible for providing medical care for refugees. There are always different organizations and volunteers at any one time, they come and go. This organization was doing a good job, and I hoped for it to stay until the crisis is over. The MedVint volunteers would bring a mobile ultrasound doppler to tents and advise pregnant mothers on the progress of their babies. They also treated various infections, old war wounds, sprains, dislocations, diaper rashes, malnutrition, diarrhoeas and skin conditions. If they couldn't treat a refugee in their tent, they would take the person to hospital. Doctors were much more likely to treat refugees when they were brought by a volunteer than if refugee were to walk in by themselves.

In addition to medical care, volunteers also brought with them food, phones, diapers, hygiene necessities, toys, tents, sleeping bags, clothes, shoes, praying mats and baby carriers.

Benceković, 'Tell me how you move...'

They introduced Wi-Fi and phone-charging stations to many areas where Internet and electricity were inaccessible, such as Izmir streets and squares. Many volunteers asked refugees what they needed and, thereafter, passed on these lists of things to their shortly-arriving friends.

A refugee receiving new shoes.

The most striking thing about volunteers, however, was their mobility. They were more mobile than refugees. They were passing borders with all the freedom, the same borders that were closed for refugees. How could that be?, I wondered.

November 29th, 2015

About two weeks after our arrival in Izmir, me and my cousin decided to continue our journey to Europe. Our uncle prepared us a big breakfast, we drank tea, kissed goodbye, and left his place with a hope and sorrow never to return to Turkey.

We have heard rumours that the Turkish coastguard was waiting in ambush for refugees embarking on boats and forcing them to return. These rumours have later shown to be true, as the Turkish coastguard actions were a preparation for what will later come to be known as the EU-Turkey deal. In this joint action plan, Turkey agreed to accept the rapid return of the majority of refugees crossing from Turkey into Greece. Furthermore, Turkey and the EU also

agreed to continue stepping up measures against smugglers and have welcomed the establishment of the NATO activity on the Aegean Sea. What has Turkey gotten for this Devil's deal? Money, lots of money – six billion euros, as well as the re-opening of negotiations for membership in the EU. Everyone feared the Turkish coastguard and police. We did too.

Early in the morning, we bought life-jackets from the downtown bazaar. Neither me nor Adnan knew how to swim, thus we firmly decided to choose the safest option, no matter its cost. One would have thought that life-jackets will be a hard find, as they are a specialty merchandise. However, there was not a single store or shop, from grocery stores to barber shops, that were not selling life-jackets. Thereafter, we caught a taxi just outside the Hatuniye mosque and asked the driver to take us to the boat launch sites. Without any sign of hesitation, the driver knew exactly where to take us. He must have driven this route thousands of times.

The driver brought us to a place called Çeşme. Çeşme lies on the Aegean coast, just six miles from the Greek island of Chios. Thus, Çeşme makes for one of the shortest routes to Europe. Once we reached it, we found the smuggler fairly easily. He gave us the price, another $1,000 USD, which leaves both me and Adnan with $500 USD each in our pockets. We agreed to the price; we had no other choice. However, the weather was poor that day. The wind gusts went up to 35 km/h and the waves were 0.9m high. That meant we had to wait. The smuggler told us that some refugees are staying in hotels in Çeşme, while others were hiding in forests near the seaside. With the lack of money, we opted out for the latter. This has later shown to be a better choice as, that night, the police stormed several hotels and threatened the hotel owners with heavy fines if they allow refugees to stay. Hereby, many refugees who have already paid their stay were forced to sleep outside anyways.

We spent four nights at the shores of Çeşme, waiting for the sea to calm down.

November 30rd, 2015

While lying on the beaches, I looked out at the sea separating me from Europe. I wondered how long it would take to swim across that few kilometre strip. Not that I knew how to swim – Afghanistan is a land-locked country, and swimming is on no one's mind; swimming is no one's priority. Still, I thought, if I knew how to swim, I would have considered it as an option. Swimming four kilometres cannot be very different from running them, can it? I ran so many kilometres in Afghanistan, uphill and downhill, across and beyond any bounds. Many more kilometres than four at any one time.

There are generally less crossings from Turkey to Greece in the winter, as the weather conditions worsen at that time of the year. However, I could see countless boats being prepared at the shores that evening. That means that the weather forecast has foreseen calm winds and waves for the night.

Not being able to swim was my greatest fear. What if we sink, plunge into the freezing Aegean waters? I feared our boat leaking or capsizing, as so many of them had before. I had a life-vest, but it hasn't significantly reassured me of my safety. Just a month ago, one Izmir company was caught selling faulty life-vests. Not only they were not floating, but they were made of sponge and suitcase fabric, the materials that become heavy when soaked and would have cause their wearers to sink. The police decided to raid life-vest producing factories, following several events of bodies of refugees being washed ashore while still wearing life-vests that were supposed to prevent them from drowning. Ironically, these life-vests were being made in factories employing refugee women and children. Refugees themselves were making the instruments of their own death. Can this situation be any more twisted? It can, indeed. In search of a safe life-jacket, I found out that the official life-jackets can cost up to $150 USD in Turkey; that is, ten times the cost of cheap alternatives one can buy on the streets of Izmir. Some people could not afford either.

A refugee mother taking a piece of polystyrene from her daughter's body, which, lacking money for a life-jacket, served as hoped-for protection from drowning in case of their boat capsizing.

I remember this story of the *Wilhelm Gustloff*, a ship that sank in the Baltic Sea after being hit by Russian torpedoes in 1945. The ship was of capacity to hold about 1,400 people, but, since the passengers were desperate WWII refugees fleeing the advancing Soviet army in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, 9,000 of them boarded the ship. Only the lucky ones slept on the cabin beds; the majority of the others slept on mats in the dining room and the music hall, in drained swimming pools and shower stalls. It is difficult to imagine that Europeans were once refugees. To be fair, it is also difficult to imagine that I am now a refugee. None of this strange new reality feels as if it could be mine.

The *Wilhelm Gustloff*'s refugees, in the middle of a night that was not unlike the one when we embarked on our trip to Greece, perished in the freezing water of the Baltic after their ship capsized. 9,000 people were thrown in the water, so easily, so simply. The story was so similar to that of the *Titanic*. I haven't heard the *Titanic* as a story; I watched it as a movie. Indeed, I have seen it once as a beautiful romantic movie, but all that was coming to my mind

back then were the scenes of people chilling to the bone, benumbing, descending into the water and drowning. I was awfully scared of our boat capsizing and myself freezing to death or drowning.

Graves of refugees who drowned at the Mediterranean, buried on Greek island of Lesbos. Credits: Jinsub Cho.

This was the day we sailed to Greece. The smuggler's voice sobered me up from my thoughts saying, 'You, you, you and you, move!' He stood above us holding a rifle. Then, I realized, there was no going back. The smuggler called to my cousin and me, and another three families; they were Syrian and Iraqi Kurds, as far as I was able to surmise based on their clothes and bodily features. One family was fleeing with their five children, one barely older than another, and all of them not older than five. The other family had a baby which must have been born in Turkey; the baby could not be older than few days. The third group were four young men, boys; they were travelling from Homs.

It was pitch dark. We travelled at night, largely to avoid the Turkish coastguard. Yesterday, the Turkish Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu struck a deal with EU leaders to prevent refugees from travelling to Europe in return for six billion Euros in cash, a deal on visa-free travel for Turkish citizens, and renewed negotiations on Turkey joining the 28-nation EU bloc.

Since the deal was in preparation, we heard stories of Turkish coastguards firing guns and water cannon at refugees at sea, thus killing them and sinking their boats. The night before, I

saw an online video of the Turkish police slamming the pole against the back end of the eight-metre dinghy carrying refugees and, thus, trying to stab the engine and dislodge the fuel line. While police were trying to disable the engine with a pole, a young girl that was sitting right beside the engine was hit on the head multiple times. The police also tried using the mooring rope hook, but nothing worked as the dinghy that was carrying the refugees was rather good at zigzagging and avoiding interception. Unfortunately, however, that was not enough. The small police boat apparently called for help. Soon enough, a bigger police boat showed up. The larger police vessel started making circles around the refugees' boat, thus creating dangerous waves that were intended to flood the engine, but could have also capsized the boat. Luckily enough, the refugee boat soon reached Greek waters, which meant that the Turkish coastguard had to pull back. The video stops here, and there was no information about whether these refugees reached Greece and how hurt the hit girl was. I wished I knew what happened to them. I wished I knew what will happen to us.

December 1st, 2015

After midnight, and some additional waiting at the shore, the smuggler pointed his rifle at us again and said 'It is all clear. You are going now.' 'You?' I was confused; 'Is the smuggler not coming with us?' He was, indeed, not coming. Another shock was another group joining us. Up until now, we were made believe that it will be the fourteen of us boarding the boat, however, another thirty people joined us. I thought they might be giving us a bigger boat then, seeing the increase in the number of passengers, but they did not. The 44 of us started hopping on the boat.

   Our vessel to Europe was a rubber boat, a small but seemingly firm dinghy. I sat at the left-front of the boat. I felt the safest there; 'I will spot any danger from here easily and be the furthest from the water if the boat starts leaking,' I thought. The boat had a small engine. The smuggler briefly showed a man sitting next to the motor how to push the transmission lever for the boat to go forward and to twist the throttle to accelerate. Then he pointed to the island saying, 'Drive in that direction. Do not zigzag, you will not have enough fuel. If you are in danger, scream for the coastguard, but only after you reached the Greek territorial waters; you do not want Turks bringing you back, because all of you will be jailed and beaten up. Now go!' The smuggler yanked the start cord on our outboard and the motor started revving loudly. The just-graduated refugee driver pushed the transmission lever and our dinghy started to steer in the direction of Europe.

The journey lasted about four hours. It was rainy, windy, and the waves kept carrying us off the course. The water was entering our boat, be it waves or the rain; most of the time we could not tell which one was it. The people around me had pale and frightened looks on their faces. I wondered if I look that panic-stricken as well.

I was soaked to the bone. My feet were cold, and I was shivering under the below-freezing wind-chill. I tried to distract myself with thinking what Europe will be like. I always thought of it as the shining light at the end of the tunnel. I imagined it as a safe and peaceful place, with good schools and fair working conditions.

I have not had a chance to study much in Afghanistan, although I know how to read and write well. I also speak four languages; Urdu, Pashto, Dari and English. Well, almost everyone in Afghanistan speaks Pashto and Dari, but I am rather unique for knowing Urdu and English as well. I learned Urdu through my uncle's foreign bride; she is a Pakistani and took care of me for my entire childhood. In a way, I learned English from her as well. She discovered for me a world of Cartoon Network, Roald Dahl, Beatrix Potter, Harry Potter, nursery rhymes and other heroes of American and British cultures. She was familiar with these, as she had studied for her undergraduate degree in psychology in Canada.

My father believed that this familiarity with the foreign world will make it the easiest for me to go, although I was not the oldest among my brothers. I have one older brother, two younger ones, and one sister. The plan was for me to reach Germany, work to save some money, obtain refugee status and then ask the German authorities to authorize family reunification visas to my parents and siblings. Two of my brothers are waiting in Iran, while my parents are with my youngest brother and sister in Afghanistan. I hope we will all be together soon.

I entertained myself with these thoughts and plans when I saw a flashlight and several cell phone screens' throwing light in our direction. It was clear that these people were trying to signal the path. Soon enough, we understood why.

Right in front of our boat were cliffs and sharp rocks. The people from the coast kept pointing their light towards the left side of the island. Thus, our driver changed the course and steered the boat towards the rear shore of the island. Indeed, the beach was much less steep and easily approachable from this side. The wind was also calmer, and so were the waves. We could have easily crashed on the rocks if we landed from the other side, I thought; *mashallah* for these people, thank God.

The signalling people turned out to be European volunteers who had organised themselves to come to Greece and help the 'refugee crisis.' However, as I was soon to discover, what is

happening in Europe is not a refugee crisis; it is a solidarity crisis. The European problem is not that there are too many refugees, but that they do not want refugees at all. Europeans fear migrants and refugees, those of darker skin or different religion. What they do not understand, perhaps, is that once a country or a union decides to build walls against outsiders, they start building barriers for everybody. At this point, the idea that people can live 'united in differences,' as the EU motto suggests, is dead. With the death of the idea of unity, so comes the death of the EU as a project of political unity. This is not a crisis anymore; this is a new regime, a regime of Fortress Europe.

Back to my arrival story. Our boat landed on the shore near the volunteers' housing area. A dozen volunteers approached us as soon as we came a few metres close to the shore. They entered the water up to their waists and started pulling our partially flooded boat. Some of them took children and babies into their hands and wrapped them into some paper-thin golden and silver metallic blankets. Maybe these blankets are some European technology. I could not see how can they possibly protect anyone from this harsh wind and the biting cold.

Afghan volunteer getting ready to help refugees disembark from a rubber dinghy. Credits: Jim Keady.

A volunteer trying to warm up and console a refugee baby that has just got off a boat. Credits: Jim Keady.

The boat became rather unstable in this chaos and commotion. I decided to jump off as well. The water was shallow, and I was getting impatient to finally step on European soil. I could also not wait to get off that boat, that executioner that showed me mercy.

A refugee jumping into the freezing water, in obvious relief that he has made it to Greece alive. Credits: Jim Keady.

I plunged into the water. The cold thrust the air out of my lungs. It was so difficult to move my legs towards the shore. I struggled through the water. Upon reaching the shore, a volunteer handed the funny-looking blanket to me as well. I put it on and, indeed, the European invention worked. I felt the wind striking my back, but I did not feel its chill. 'Where am I,' I asked. 'You are at Kaiga Beach near Skala Sikamineas on the island of Lesbos in Greece' a volunteer replied. We were supposed to arrive in Chios, I thought to myself; 'Maybe we went off course because of the wind.' It did not matter. I was in Europe. It did not matter where in Europe.

Benceković, 'Tell me how you move...'

Refugees discard their life-vests upon arriving on Greek islands. Credits: Jim Keady.

*Refugees shedding their 'skins'. Credits: Jim Keady.*

As I walked further into the island, I encountered another group of volunteers; they stood by the van, distributing tea and food. The tea soothed me so much, and I have not realized until that moment how hungry I was. A few steps further stood another van. The volunteers there distributed shoes, socks, coats, pants, gloves, and some more of those strange but effective foil blankets. The refugees crowded in front of this van. No one had socks. No one had dry clothes. Everyone's shoes were broken and soaking wet. My group emptied the volunteers' van with donated clothes and supplies.

Refugees receiving donations from aid organisations. Credits: Abraham Teran.

We were lucky to arrive early. There were no donations left for other groups and, that night, 2,462 refugees came in on boats according to official UNHCR figures, although independent volunteers are estimating 4,000 – 5,000 refugees to have arrived to the island by the end of the day. I always trusted the volunteers more; there was not one UNHCR personnel on the island, as far as I could see. They say that the UNHCR personnel have a small house away from the shores, but what good are they when hiding in the warm house while refugees are landing at the shores? It would have been better if the money for their paycheques was invested into purchasing more donations.
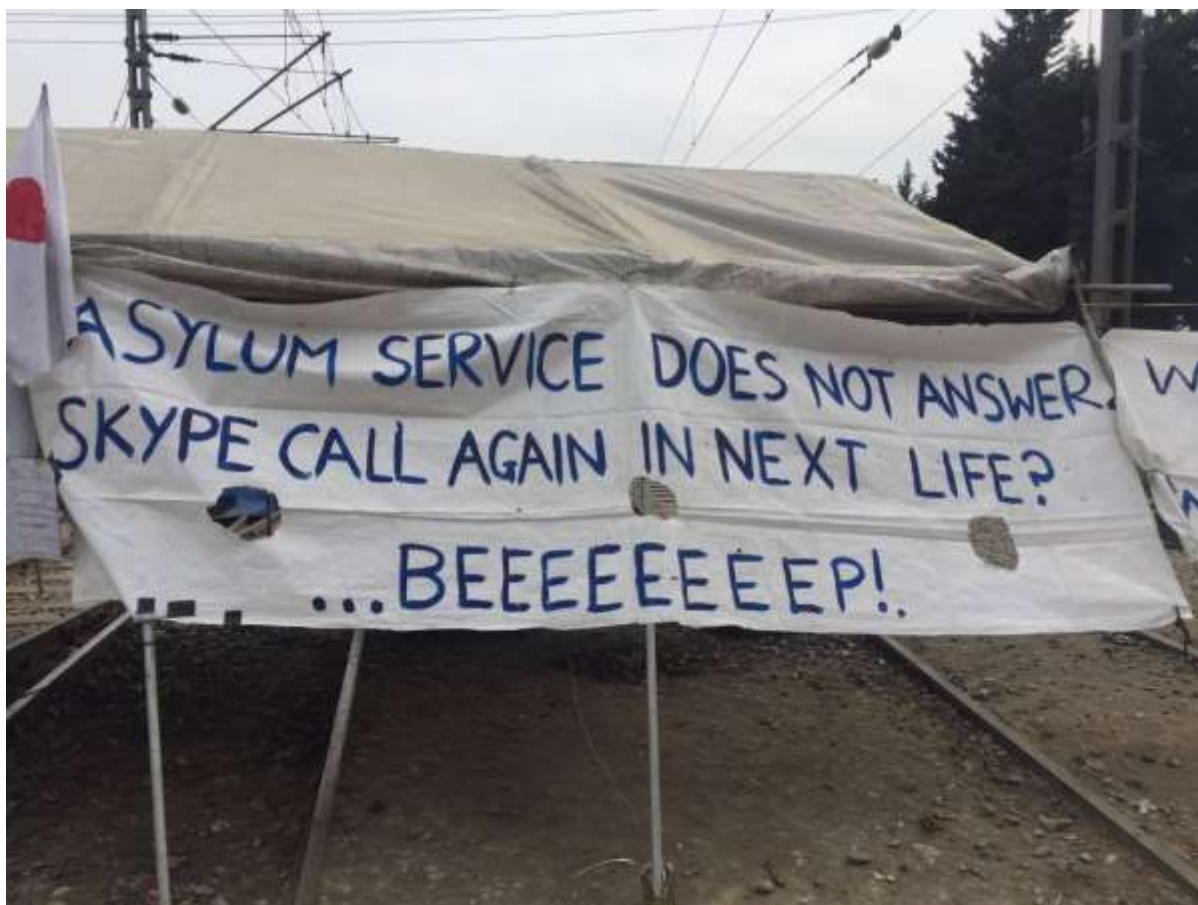
*Refugees cricizing the UNHCR for not answering their calls.*

As the time passed, volunteers started to give out garbage bags and cardboard boxes. They ripped holes in the bags and put them over the children who did not have jackets. 'Thank you, thank you for you; *shukran*,' the incoming refugees were replying.

Benceković, 'Tell me how you move...'

'They treat us like dogs. Why do they make us wait here in the rain? We have to wait like this everywhere. And here it rains, we are cold, this situation is very bad. My children are cold, my baby is sick. I would rather die in Syria with my family than here in this horrible place.' Credits: Jinsub Cho.

After some more time, the volunteers had not even had garbage bags left. 'No, I don't have shoes. No, I don't have a tent to give you. No, I don't have a blanket. Later, I hope; *inshaallah*. No, I'm sorry. I'm sorry; *mafi*. I know. It's awful. I know. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.'
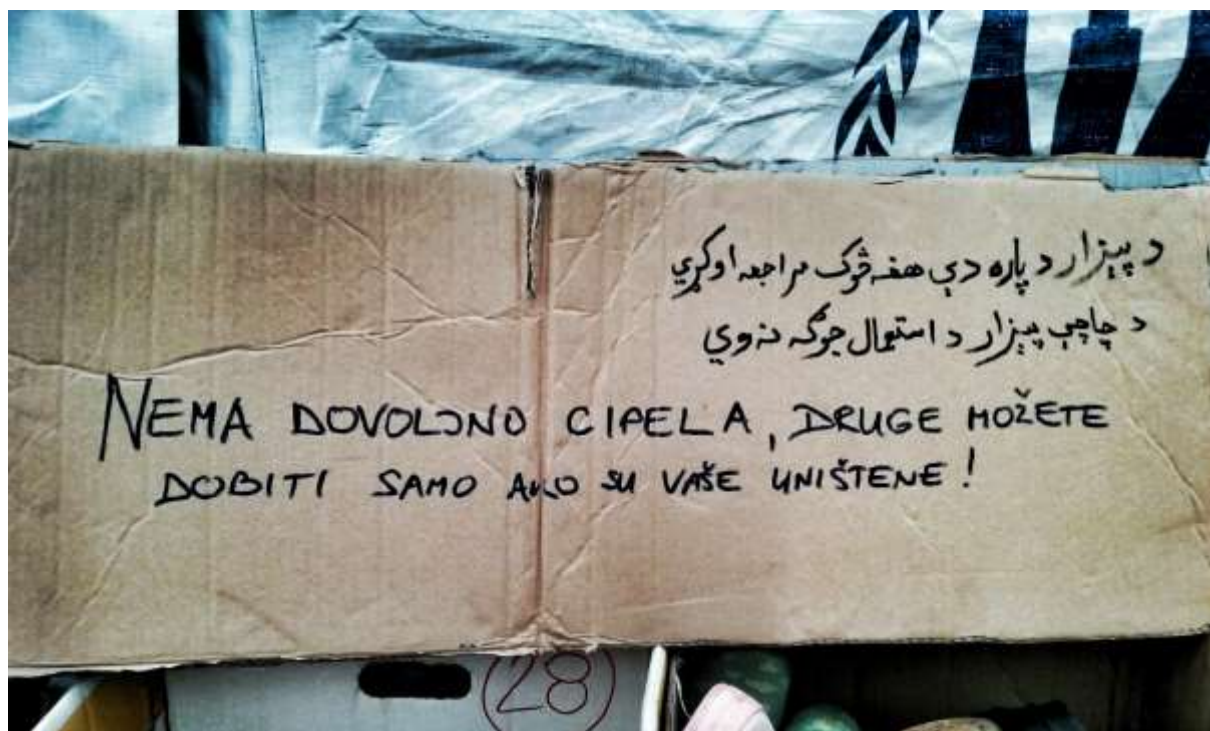
The sign reads: 'There are no enough shoes. You can get new shoes only if yours are completely destroyed!'

For every volunteer one could find 25 cameramen on the island. Everyone wants a photo opp with a baby or a crying refugee. It's difficult to know people's true intentions for being here. Grandeur? Help? Photos?

After few hours, local truck-owners arrived at the beach. They were volunteers too. They came to pick us up and take us to the nearest refugee camp at Matamados. Initially, I was rather uncomfortable with accepting this offer. Only few weeks back, I was warned about the Greek mafia promising to transport refugees to Moria camp for 100 Euros per person and, while en route, kicking the refugees out in the middle of nowhere if they could not pay more money. Many such incidents were reported in Lesbos. I kept reading about them in unofficial Facebook and WhatsApp groups, as well as Twitter initiatives, which were set up by either volunteers or refugees themselves; more often than not, the two groups cooperated in these efforts.

Benceković, 'Tell me how you move...'

Local truck-drivers picking up refugees on the shore and taking them to nearby camps. Credits: Abraham Teran.

These social media allowed me to know what to expect at each section of the route. One cannot be a refugee without a smart phone. Not only does it provide a link to an old life, but it helps in creating a new life too. I could keep in touch with my family back home. I did not have money to waste, so, instead of talking to them, I would merely ring their cell phones and, by the phone's country code, they would know where I am, they would know whether I am stuck somewhere or whether I'd made the next move. On the other hand, I received information on the safest route. For example, I hoped to avoid Lesbos due to information on Greek mafia operating in the island and tricking refugees, thus I asked for a smuggler who worked on the route Izmir-Chios. Although my trip did not go according to plan, I knew what kind of dangers to look out for. I thought twice before I hopped on the truck, as well as I asked the volunteers whether they are familiar with the particular trucker. Only after I was reassured of the driver's benevolence, I hopped on the truck and continued my journey.

On my way to Mantamados, I looked at the phone pictures of my family; my younger brothers and sister were smiling, and my father stood with the same seriousness and firmness he is known for at our birthplace. A picture of my mother stood independently. I took that picture at one of the local Saturday bazaars. She is holding a basket full of vegetables –

cucumber, tomato, eggplant, pepper, onions and garlic. The picture was taken in the summer, this year. There was never such a plenty in Afghanistan in winter-time. I heard that in European supermarkets one can buy any vegetable at any time of the year. I consoled myself with the plenty I expected to enjoy in Europe. I also comforted myself with a thought that my family will join me in Europe soon, I just need to work hard to bring them over.

My phone, I was always holding it. I was holding on to it like I was holding on to an identity of my own. That phone represented a connection to my family, to my place of birth; it also held the pictures of my passport and identity card, my high-school diploma and achievement certificates. There were many paper documents I knew would get wet, dirty, soiled, muddy, stained or, in any other way, ruined beyond recognition. Thus, I brought their pictures instead.

I used my phone for many practical purposes too. For example, when we were discussing whether to call for coastguard's help once the water started flooding our boat, I used the GPS on my phone to locate the boat, to see whether we were in Turkish or Greek territorial waters. If the weather had worsened and if the boat continued to flood at the greater pace, I would have been able to contact the coastguard through my phone. The map function on my phone was crucial, indeed. At each new country, I bought a SIM card and activated the Internet to download the map to locate myself. I would never have been able to arrive at my destination without my smartphone.

Some refugees use their phones even more extensively than I did. One can find a smuggler online, such as on Facebook pages 'Smuggling into the EU,' find out where to receive donations and how to reach camps with sleeping tents, learn asylum claim questions up front, and pool together money to share transportation. That little smartphone is what brings down international borders.

Benceković, 'Tell me how you move...'

Smartphones are a lifeline for refugees. Credits: Jinsub Cho.

The ride to Mantamados was brief, 15-20 minutes long. I located the camp through Google Maps and only then realised how far off the course the currents took us. Not only had we arrived to the wrong island, the one to which the disembarkation point is near Istanbul, but to the completely opposite side of the island, north rather than south.

Mantamados was, however, a well-developed refugee camp. The change in course, thus, came as a lucky mishap. Namely, in Mantamados, volunteers had established a camp where they provide shelter, medical services, a children's play area and safe space for mothers, as well as they provided food, water and blankets.

The dawn was already breaking as we entered the camp. I ate, and then I slept throughout the day and night until the next morning.

December 2nd, 2015

Mantamados was only a transit camp. This means that I could not have been registered there. When I woke up a whole day after my arrival, I went to ask volunteers for some food, upon which they asked for my registration papers. 'I don't have any papers,' I answered. The volunteer handed me a bag of food and said, 'Eat now and then go to the bus at the east exit of the camp; it will take you to the registration camp at Moria. You will not be able to continue your journey without registering in Greece.'

The Medicines Sans Frontières (MSF) bus waited outside the camp. It would leave as soon as the bus was full, which did not take that long at all. Moria was spoken of as the failed UN camp. The camp had barracks that could hold about 300 refugees. However, when I arrived at the camp, there were about 5,000 refugees present. The camp was overcrowded beyond belief. There was no food other than biscuits. People slept on the frozen concrete, looking for a safe place for their wives, a warm place for their child. There were not more than 200 blankets in the whole camp. We were burning plastic bags and what there was of dry branches to light fires and warm ourselves up. People were asking for a toilet, a doctor, a blanket, a cup of water. Human faeces were everywhere; scabies infested the area.

I saw many refugees before, but not this type of refugees – a kid travelling alone, a young man with a broken arm, an old lady with frostbite on her feet, a pregnant woman travelling with her two toddlers to her husband in Germany. All of that enclosed within a ten-metre-high barbed-wire fence and riot police. I did not expect to live this life in Europe.

Refugees living in deplorable conditions in Greece. Credits: Jinsub Cho.

Police were so many in Moria. The registration was carried out by Greek police units. It consisted of fingerprints, photo taken and some questioning if refugees are not lying about their origin. The UNHCR, which I saw for the first time there, coordinated the protection of refugees.

As borders closed for certain nationalities, refugees would often discard their documents and tried registering themselves under other nationality, more often than not Syrian.

I have not quite understood what the registration process was. There was no one to really explain it either. The wait for the registration was long and exhausting; it meant weeks of standing in queues, just to be told that the registration is closed for the day and the queuing was in vain. At the same time, I desperately looked at buses with new refugees continuously arriving and the most vulnerable refugees, such as the sick, the pregnant and the families with young children, being allowed to skip the line.

Benceković, 'Tell me how you move...'

Refugees waiting to register. Credits: Jinsub Cho.

The gossip in the queue among the refugees claimed that the European Union is threatening to start legal action against Greece for failing to correctly register migrants, the same being experienced by Italy and Croatia. Thus, Greece has started to register refugees more carefully. For us, that meant strict restrictions and prohibitions, control and ordering, long waits and exhaustion. I am unsure if the strict registration deterred any refugees. It pushed them to smugglers, perhaps, but it did not deter anyone from their attempt to reach safety. The wave has started, and everyone recognised the moment as the right one for joining the stream. I spent almost three weeks queuing in that camp.

There were only a handful of volunteers in Moria camp. The few that were there told me in secrecy that the supplies on the island are many, but the authorities did not allow them into the camp for 'safety reasons.' 'How safe were we, cold, unsheltered, ill and hungry,' I wondered; what kind of unreasonable logic was that?

About a month later, a refugee baby died in this camp. They said due to natural causes, but there was nothing natural about Moria; the camp was subhuman, out of this world. I remember the medical team officially had a 24-hour schedule for doctors on duty, but all too often the medical huts were closed. At night, the sound of children coughing and babies crying would rise through the pouring rain. I slept, or I tried to sleep, on the soaking wet blankets that others used to line their tents. 'Was this my big dream? Europe was the big

dream. I just wanted to be safe. And this, what is this?' Such thoughts of disbelief lulled me into sleep every night for the next few weeks.

Refugees' pleas for help.

December 22ⁿᵈ, 2015

By the time I managed to register, Moria has become pretty calm and fairly empty. While I waited, I spent time volunteering to shorten my time: translating, helping distribute food, maintaining order and cleanliness in the kitchen, checking on other refugees and volunteers at night. The remaining refugees were largely young Moroccan men who had no idea what their fate will be, since Morocco has been announced a safe country to which the refugees can be returned.

A sign at the entrance to Moria camp stating that Moroccan, Tunisian and Algerian refugees will not be registered or sheltered.

I became great friends with one of those Moroccan men, Said. Later on, Moroccans were separated from refugees of other nationalities and taken to a closed detention camp in Korinthos. Said told me that, in Korinthos, he and others were beaten by police in order to give fingerprints and sign deportation papers. I have not heard from him thereafter.

Benceković, 'Tell me how you move...'

A refugee sneaked a phone into detention to let his friends and volunteers know where he is located. He was held illegally. When volunteers find out about particular 'rightful' refugees being detained, they urge the police to release them.

The narratives of such forced returns or deportations were heard at every step of the route. Each nationality seemed to have been targeted by a different country. For example, while Afghans were largely being deported from Greece and Germany, Syrians were being evicted from Turkey, and African nations, such as Eritreans and Sudanese were deported from Egypt and Israel. One Syrian man, Joudallah, whom I met in Moria, tried crossing the border with Turkey twice, as the Turkish authorities deported him the first time. After the first crossing, he was staying in a camp at the Turkey-Greece border in the town of Edirne. He was trying to travel legally across the land border into Greece rather than risk his life in illegally crossing by boat across Aegean Sea. 'There were thousands of Syrian refugees there, thousands,' Joudallah said; 'We were all camping together at a local stadium.' Before they were able to cross, however, they were all cleared away by the Turkish police. Joudallah did not know to where the other refugees were taken. He and the handful of others were sent to detention centres in Aydin, and later to Tekirdag. 'I was beaten badly in detention,' Joudallah said, showing me bruises that have not disappeared even a month later. 'I sat in that cell without

any charges and without any access to lawyers or a trial. Then, one day, they drove us to the border and forced us to sign a piece of paper on which it was written "I want to go back to Syria",' he told me while showing me the Turkish exit stamp on his passport. 'A few others did not want to sign, and they were taken back to Erzurum prison. I bet they eventually resigned under the beatings.'

One refugee's opinion of racial and national discrimination at EU borders. Credits: Gabriel Tizon.

Under the 'non-refoulement' principle of international humanitarian law, a state is prohibited from deporting individuals to a war zone. This fact, however, means nothing to Europe. 'This is why, in the end, I had to spend even more money and embark on the even more dangerous route, the one across the sea, which brought me here to Lesbos,' Joudallah said. 'But Moria Camp is where Afghans, Iraqis and other refugees of non-Syrian descent are detained,' I stated in confusion. 'How did you end up in this particular camp rather than in Kara Tepe,' I asked. 'I don't know,' Joudallah shrugged his shoulders.

With the end of the Joudallah's story, the two of us entered the registration tent. He was called by the official on the left, and I was called by the official on the right. My cousin Adnan was next in line. The registration papers allowed me to move within Greece for a limited period of one month. The registration process included being fingerprinted and questioned, with the information being stored in the European database of new arrivals.

Registration centres all over Greece were overcrowded and in squalid condition. Refugees waited for days and weeks to get registered. During my wait-time, I considered travelling to another registration centre, but the problems were to be found everywhere.

In my last days in Moria, the temperatures have dropped below 0°C, and the cold wind was blowing; people, refugees and volunteers alike, were freezing. Refugees huddled on the ground under thin blankets, pressing together for warmth, burning trash and hiding behind dumpsters. Many refugees have already been very ill, but the volunteers now started reporting many cases of hypothermia and frostbite. All of that was accompanied by the lack of medicine, blankets, tents, food and water. The camp was basically a dirt and rock field, covered with garbage, ranging from cans of food to life vests. No amenities. No one has even thought of putting up a simple garbage bin.

Refugees were stuck in such camps anywhere from days to indefinitely. Only in February, as I later found out, had Greece set up additional registration centres for refugees, drafting in the army to help the lack of registration officers. The openings followed criticism from the European Union, which accused Greece of not doing enough to stem the influx of migrants. The new registration centres were set up on the 'hotspot' islands of Samos, Lesbos, Chios, Kos and Leros near the Turkish coast, where refugees leaving Turkey tend to arrive, just as I did.

The time I spent volunteering was rather insightful, to say the least. I got to see the crisis from the European and aid agencies' perspective. Greece was giving priority to Syrians when it came to providing refugees with registration papers and allowing them to continue towards their destinations. I wondered what happened to the principle of non-discrimination stated in international human rights law and the Refugee Convention. Was the principle just something written on the paper? 'Syria yes, Afghan no. Why Afghan no?' I kept asking. No answer.

Be that as it may, Afghans still had it good at this point, unlike the numerous Moroccan, Algerian and Tunisian refugees. Greek police would separate Moroccan, Algerian and Tunisian refugees from others, refusing to register them or to provide safe shelter for them. Many were left sleeping on the streets, largely in Athens' Omonia and Victoria Squares, where a few hundred people squatted with nowhere else to go. On Christmas Day 2015, 273 refugees, including ten minors, were locked up in detention centre in Corinth. Most of them were Moroccans, many of them sent directly from the Greek islands after being arrested for their nationality.

Benceković, 'Tell me how you move...'

Refugees sleeping rough on the streets of one of the many refugee hub-cities. Credits: Jinsub Cho.

Police are especially brutal to the non-Syrian, non-Iraqi, and non-Afghan refugees or so-called non-SIA. Volunteers from Idomeni camp reported to the Greek volunteers' WhatsApp group that the police were refusing the injured and sick access to doctors. Namely, the police were allegedly coordinating with bus drivers to charge non-SIA people more money for bus tickets that take refugees to hospitals. If the refugees had no money for a return ticket to Athens, the police threatened them with jail. What is more, the police were reportedly refusing to let injured non-SIA people rest in the camp. The sick refugees were forced to sleep in streets, merely because they were of the wrong nationality.

Volunteers were, moreover, reporting police abuse of non-SIA people who try to enter Macedonia on foot. They were regularly being caught, beaten up and pushed back to Idomeni. Those who were caught with smugglers were taken to detention in Gazi Baba, one of the worst detention centres on the Balkan refugee route. This was, officially, for witnessing against the smugglers, but the detained refugees experienced the worst treatment at Gazi Baba, bordering on torture.

Due to these circumstances, at that point and up until today, there was no safe passage for non-SIA people. But I am not a Moroccan, Tunisian or Algerian; I am an Afghan and, thus, I was allowed to pass. My fellow nationals were not of such luck even a month or two later, when the EU closed its borders to Afghan nationals as well.

Benceković, 'Tell me how you move...'

Refugees protesting at the closed borders, demanding to be let through. In desparation, some refugees started a hunger strike, while others laid down on the train tracks, set themselves alight or sewed their lips together. Credits: Jinsub Cho.

'Fleeing war is no crime! You are keeping us here without any rights!' Credits: Jinsub Cho.

Moria, that huge complex surrounded by concrete walls, high chain-link fence and barbed wire was now behind me. Right after registration, the police showed me the way towards the coach bus that was to take me on the next step of my journey – to the port from where I was

Benceković, 'Tell me how you move...'

to embark on a ferry to mainland Greece. Although the police gave no information, I knew from the time spent volunteering that the Moria refugees are taken to either Athens or Idomeni. I hoped for Idomeni, as it is closer to Macedonian border.

A bus packed with refugees who, more often than not, have no clear understanding of where they are being taken. Credits: Jinsub Cho.

Benceković, 'Tell me how you move...'

A group of activists protesting against the conditions in which refugees were being kept in Spielfeld, Austria, even on Christmas Day, a holiday sacred to a great number of refugees.

December 23rd, 2015

The following morning, I travelled to the mainland Port of Piraeus near Athens. The ferry was massive, weighing in at about twenty tons, with the capacity to hold over a thousand people and travel upwards of 24 knots. That boat was, indeed, very different from the rubber dinghy I came into Greece on. I paid 25 Euros to travel on that boat. That's almost 2,000 AFN. My head would go dizzy if I tried converting the Euro to Afghanis.

Benceković, 'Tell me how you move...'
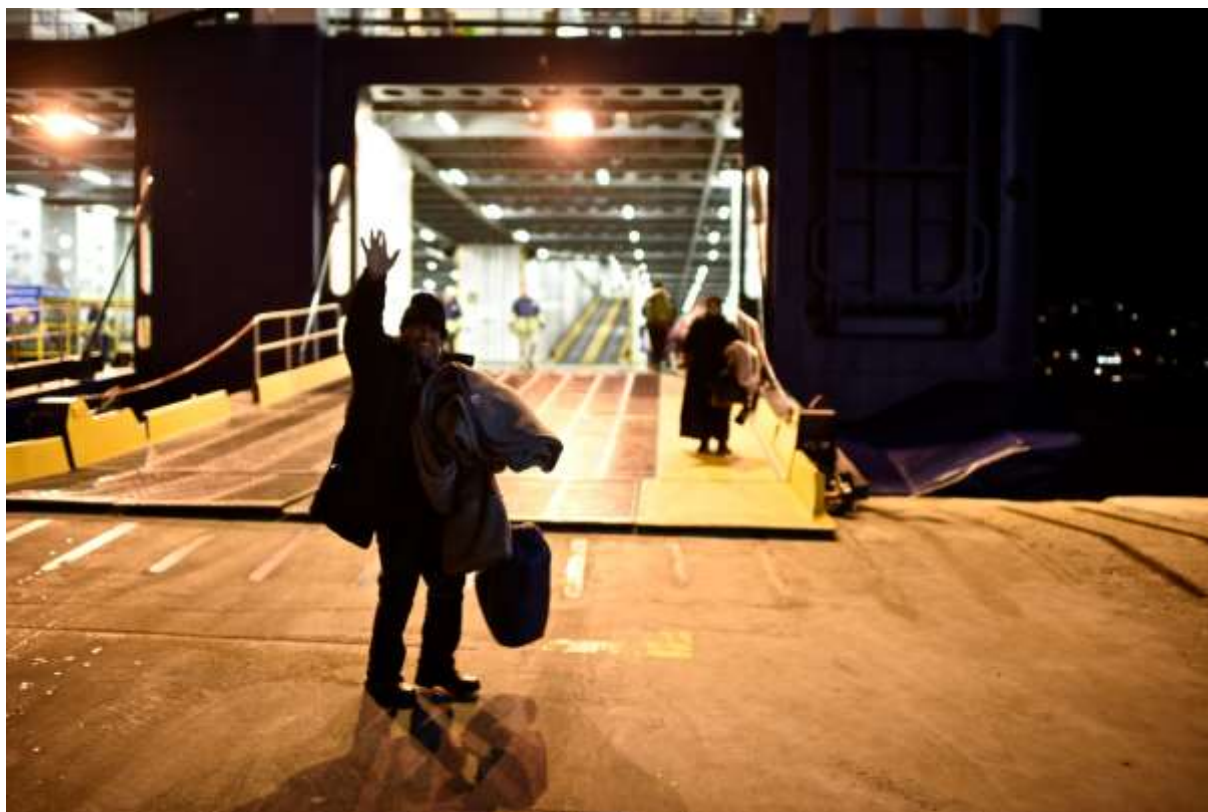
Slika 1A refugee waving goodbye upon leaving Greek islands for the mainland Greece. Credits: Jinsub Cho.

I spent several weeks at the E1 gate's tents at Piraeus before I continued my journey. The E1 gate was, in fact, the only gate where refugees could stay for a longer period of time. More specifically, soon after my departure the Chinese shipping company COSCO had retained control of gates E2 and E3, thus demanding the refugees to be gone. Another difficulty in Piraeus hosting refugees was that the port is, in fact, a tourist terminal and the main gateway to the Aegean Sea islands. Thus, the refugees had to leave before the tourist season begins. E1 was able to offer shelter for a little longer as it was not privatized, and tourist boats don't dock there. There were some demonstrations against the port privatization in Piraeus while I was there, but these pleas have not been heard far.

E1 was overcrowded with tents. I remember not having showered for weeks. Many refugees were sick; the ambulance kept coming, although largely for women in labour. 'Born a refugee – what a bizarre identity!', I thought.

In such overcrowded conditions, tensions between refugees flared. Many fights broke out during my time at Piraeus. One in particular was massive. It broke out between a group of Syrians and a group of Afghans. Tens of people from each side were beaten on and throwing stones at each other. Some windows were broken, and people were hospitalized.

The media wrote about this fight as if it has emerged out of Syrian and Afghan cultural differences, but I cannot agree with this – if one is hungry, one will fight the other for food; if

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one lives with thousands of others on few hundred square metres for weeks, people will fight. That is not cultural; that is human. I do not believe that French, British and German people would not start a fight if they lived like we did for weeks and, later, months on end.

I stayed at Piraeus longer than intended, as I was helping a translator in return for some money. I learned a lot about Greece and decided that, although it is a European country, life here would not be good.

Greece has been a country of forced destination for refugees for years. Northern Europe has used Greece as a container for refugees, from where they select the most qualified ones. Indeed, Europe seems to need a certain number of migrants to survive, economically and demographically. Moreover, Greece is a country based on tourism, and Greek tourism is based on employing migrants in the black market. At Piraeus, the officials were claiming that, for the national economy, it is vital that the port is cleared out, yet it seems that the national economy cannot survive without refugees either. The paradoxes and ambivalences in European relations with migrants appeared at every step. The greatest factor why I did not want to stay in Greece, however, was the high unemployment; refugees find no jobs.

January 30th, 2015

Suddenly, everything started moving so fast. I was bused to Athens right after sundown. There, refugees squatted on Athens' squares and stadiums. SIA refugees and non-SIA families were provided with an official shelter, modest though it was, while single, non-SIA men were left in the streets with no protection. Indeed, racial profiling and ethnic segregation were ongoing, and registration was extremely slow.

I knew that Athens will be overcrowded with so-called 'economic migrants,' who are in fact refugees, escaping the same type of aggression as I was, but of non-SIA nationality. While volunteering at Piraeus, I heard that at least 3,000 refugees at the Greek-Macedonian border had been labelled 'economic migrants' and were therefore sent away from the border's Idomeni camp. This purge included everyone except Syrian, Afghan and Iraqi refugees. For three days, these 'economic migrants' have been receiving written warnings to leave the camp. Additionally, police officers were walking around the camp and advising people to take this warning seriously. Free trains were provided to take 'economic migrants' back to Athens, and officials were promising there is enough accommodation for everyone. Since the trains could not take all the refugees, buses were also employed for this purge. The buses heading for Thessaloniki were charging ten Euros per person, while those driving to

Benceković, 'Tell me how you move...'

Athens charged thirty Euros per person. 'Refugees paying for their own eviction – what a paradox that is!'

Exhausted refugees being returned from the border. Credits: Jinsub Cho.

Trains often did not allow food and water on board, regardless of some journeys lasting for hours on end. Credits: Jinsub Cho.

Our bus stopped in front of Victoria Square. As Victoria Square is not an official camp, I expected to see thousands of single men, those 'economic migrants,' but the square was overflowing in women and children. I was confused. We were told that we will spend the day there and continue with the bus towards the Macedonian border as soon as night falls.

The square was as alive as any Middle Eastern bazaar. Cookies, tea and cigarettes were the most precious possessions, along with the fake Afghan passports, which were being sold for 1,000-1,200 Euros a piece.

Languages and dialects were many, and I was always surprised when I heard a Syrian dialect of Arabic. 'Why are you here?' I always asked; Syrians were the one to whom European compassion was reserved, or so I thought. 'I don't have a passport. Who could I ask a passport from, Assad?' some replied. 'My passport expired on the way to Europe, and I was told it is invalid proof of my Syrian identity,' claimed an unbelievable number of others. 'I have a passport for myself, but my child does not have a birth certificate. I would not be able to take my own child with me.' Reasons for the lack of birth certificates were many – due to children being born en route, more often than not in Turkey; or due to Syrian nationality law, which permits fathers but not mothers to pass citizenship to their children. Because so many fathers have gone missing, have died or were fighting in the conflict, they were not present to

register their children with the Syrian government and, without proof of a Syrian father, children were not able to assert their claim to Syrian nationality. Finally, the last major reason for the Syrians being pushed back was failing the 'language test.' One woman exclaimed: 'A translator in Serbia, who speaks the poorest Arabic, told the police I am not Syrian because my Arabic is bad. A blonde, European translator who learned Arabic second-hand said I do not speak my own mother tongue! Disgrace!'

I knew that some refugees were trying to pass as Syrians to better their chances of getting asylum, but European governments have come up with a very problematic system to identify 'real refugees.' You are what you speak? But the Middle East is such a linguistically diverse region. The crying woman was Syrian, indeed, but different parts of Syria say things differently; does Europe have that many linguists who are that knowledgeable about all the Middle Eastern dialects? Furthermore, languages don't follow man-made borders. There are Afghans who only speak Urdu and were thus mistaken for Pakistanis, for whom borders were closed. The consequence – pushbacks.

The pushbacks were being conducted as a joint effort of the Austrian, Slovenian, Croatian, Serbian and Macedonian authorities. The reasons for pushbacks were many: not having Syrian, Iraqi or Afghan identification documents, failure to pass a language test if one is being suspected of not being an SIA national, wrong answer to final destination (must be Germany or Austria), wrong answer to reasons for migration (must be war), many arbitrary decisions, such as suspicion of translator not being politically neutral, a refugee not being recruited in the military, not knowing the date of some religious holiday, discrimination based on the national, racial, linguistic characteristics of a person.

The pushbacks occurred without regard to official procedures or international protection rights. The route of return was: Šentilj (Austria) – Dobova (Slovenia) – Zagreb (Croatia) – Slavonski Brod (Croatia) – Šid (Serbia) and/or Belgrade (Serbia) – Macedonia – Greece. A refugee could attempt to re-enter the route. Indeed, many refugees redid the route a few times before they were finally granted asylum, which only tells they had the right all the time, but the European regime denied it to them.

After two hours of sitting on bus and being left with no activities but to sleep or observe, the driver opened the door, and we were allowed to get out. I decided to rent a room for the night at some hotel, so I could shower and get a good night of rest. This was, however, much more difficult that I thought. Hotels were routinely saying that they are full when they clearly were not, and others were overblowing the prices.

Benceković, 'Tell me how you move...'

I then checked the Airbnb, an online apartment rental market place; some ads were explicitly saying 'No refugees.' Humorously, a family of Syrian refugees in Athens put their tent on Airbnb, promising scorpions, dehydration and broken promises. It was later removed from the website. In a statement, Airbnb said it had removed the listing because it was 'not permitted under our terms of service.' This brought some laughter to another night I was to spend outside, in the cold.

January 31st, 2016

The refugees enter Macedonia through only one border crossing – Idomeni-Gevgelija, stone 59. Thus, I had to find a way to reach Idomeni, which is about 550 km from Athens. Transportation was not hard to find – there were organised buses that were taking refugees to Idomeni for 45 Euros per person.

I took the bus in the morning, after I managed to find a motel where I rented a room for three hours to shower and rest a bit. The bus ride was peaceful. I slept for the most of the ride.

Riot police preventing refugees from boarding a bus at the border between Serbia and Croatia. Credits: Jinsub Cho.

The number of refugees entering Macedonia was significantly reduced in the last 48 hours by the ongoing strikes of Macedonian taxi-drivers and blockades by Greek farmers over pension reform. Both groups used the refugee crisis for their benefit. Due to these ongoing

protests on both sides of the border, up to 5,000 refugees have been waiting for almost two days to go from Idomeni in Greece to Gevgelija in Macedonia. That walk, if not halted by the European protesters, would take only ten minutes. Instead, it was unclear when we would be able to continue our journey.

Idomeni, above all others, was not a place where one would want to get stuck. I have never seen that many kids. Some leaflets were shared among refugees, reporting about people with hepatitis A among us; this is a virus transmitted through the ingestion of contaminated food and water, or through direct contact with an infectious person. It is normally associated with a lack of safe water or poor sanitation. A Syrian baby born in Greece ten days ago died today in Skopje (Macedonia) hospital, following severe health complications. None of this was surprising, seeing the Idomeni camp's conditions.

By the afternoon, the camp became even more overcrowded. Since Idomeni was full, many refugees were stopped at EKO and Polykastro gas stations, just within a reach of Idomeni. That very afternoon, the refugees stuck at the Polykastro gas station decided to walk to Idomeni, after buses refused to take them. Around 800 people were on the highway towards Idomeni that afternoon; we could see them coming by climbing the highest hill of the camp. The border remained closed for everyone that day.

Refugees walking along the highway after refusing to wait for borders to open. Many left most of their personal belongings

February 1ˢᵗ, 2016

I woke up to news that, in the night, a pregnant 27-year-old Afghan woman, her 17-year-old sister and their cousin drowned while attempting to cross the river between Greece and Macedonia. Their drowning caused an outrage among the Idomeni refugees. Leaflets appeared during the night, condemning the border closure and inviting refugees for collective action. As a result, a big group of around 3,000 Idomeni refugees attempted to make a collective crossing on the same spot where the drownings took place. Refugees started marching from Idomeni camp to the Suha Reka river in the morning, with many volunteers and journalists following them on what they called The March of Hope. After a 6 km march, tens of international volunteers have decided to help the refugees cross the river. The river was very fast and dangerous due to recent rains. Nevertheless, the desperation pushed people into the strong and cold river, and as many as 1,400 refugees managed to cross the border. However, no one was allowed to continue their trip further.

I stayed in Idomeni camp and witnessed the returns. 600 refugees were returned to Idomeni by military trucks at around 10 p.m. Macedonian police cut a hole in their border fence in order to force the rest of the refugees back to Greece. The remaining 500 had to wait in the Macedonian fields, deep into the night, for their push-back to happen. These refugees had it worst. They spent entire night trapped between a swollen river and Macedonian soil, soaking wet, with zero humanitarian support.

Volunteers who helped refugees were punished as well. While both river banks where volunteers were helping the refugees to cross the water were on Greek soil and, thus, accessible to volunteers, some of the volunteers and journalists accompanied refugees while crossing the nearby green border, thus making an illegal entry to Macedonia. About eighty international volunteers and journalists were arrested and detained by Macedonian police. They were penalised with 260 Euros fines, and a six-month ban on entering Macedonia. For those who refused to pay the fine, the ban on entering Macedonia extended up to five years. Police advised both volunteers and refugees to avoid making the same attempt tomorrow.

Indeed, similar penalties made many volunteers reluctant to help refugees. I stumbled upon one of the non-penalised volunteers crying behind the tent. He regretted not following the refugees; he called himself as a coward. 'I don't blame you,' I said; 'We are all scared of police.' He then told me that 31 refugees drowned in front of the eyes of volunteer-rescuers

few days ago. 'The volunteers were unable to help refugees due to laws regulating smuggling,' he explained. Maritime law states that refugees must cross borders under their own steam and that anybody assisting them in doing so by piloting or towing vessels could be charged with people-smuggling. Due to these rules, rescue workers usually only assess refugee boats from a distance while waiting for them to cross maritime borders unaided.

Lifesavers were in international waters while the sinking boat was stranded on the Turkish side of the sea, with volunteers unable to assist the refugees until the boat had left Turkish waters. Then, it was already too late for 31 persons. I feared that today's arrests of volunteers would have led to many volunteers fearing to act.

February 2nd, 2016

The strikes were over. The Greek pensioners haven't gotten their requests met, but the Macedonian taxi-drivers have. To put it briefly, the taxi-drivers were angry at being cut out of the lucrative business of transporting refugees northwards through Macedonia to the Serbian border. Thus, the local taxi-drivers have staged days of protests that have largely blocked the Greek border and halted the flow of trains northwards.

Before the protest, most refugees were transported northwards from the Greek-Macedonia border by train; it was only recent that the taxis were demanding to be allowed a share of the business. To continue the refugee flow, Macedonia allowed the taxi business.

The taxi prices were more than fair. The train price and the taxi price were the same – 25 Euros per person. The train was unheated, freezing, old and rocky, and taxis gave some comfort. If a taxi transported four people, the driver earned 100 Euros for a four-hour drive to the Macedonian-Serbian border. Still, was it fair to profit from people fleeing for their lives? Taxi-drivers were small players in this. The Macedonian state transported about 1,500 refugees per train, and that in horrific conditions. They were the big profiteers. Due to this agreement, however, we were finally allowed to walk into Macedonia.

The Macedonian border camp at Gevgelija was about half a kilometre away from Idomeni. While entering Macedonia, each one of us had to possess documents for registration from Greece, or any other document by which will be confirmed our nationality. The entrance to Macedonia was allowed only to the refugees from Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. We waited in groups to enter the camp. Things started moving fast again. The waiting time was about three hours. Once in the camp, we lined up again for registration; I waited to get registered for about one hour.

During that time, I received complete humanitarian aid – various organisations and volunteers jumped in to give me new shoes, a sweatshirt and a jacket, scarf and gloves. I was given some food, a can of fish, bread and a banana; it tasted better than anything I ate in months. One volunteer then walked around giving out chocolates; she gave me three. All of this was free.

'We are not terrorists, we are just crossing the borders.' Credits: Jinsub Cho.

I stayed in the camp until the train came. The wait lasted for less than an hour. I was tired due to not being able to rest at all, but I was glad about my journey passing so quickly. The train was to take us to Tabanovce, a camp at the Macedonian-Serbian border. We boarded the train around midnight.

Bencekovič, 'Tell me how you move...'

Refugees boarding a train.

February 2nd, 2016

The train ride was terrifying. Several smugglers boarded the train with us, and they were taking fifteen Euros from those sleeping on the floor. 'Stand like everyone else or pay for taking extra space,' they threatened. 'This is too much! You're taking fifteen Euros for sleeping on the floor! At least make it ten,' one young woman complained. 'This is the only choice you have,' the smuggler replied. 'Or, there is another choice. Maybe you could come with me to an empty berth.' In obvious lack of money, the woman got up and put her two crying toddlers on their feet too. 'We will stand,' she said with horror in her eyes.

Me and Adnan leaned on the window and were able to sleep a bit, but we never slept at the same time. One of us always stayed awake. The chances of getting robbed were nearly absolute. To be honest, even when it was my turn to sleep, I couldn't. I was always afraid something may happen. I was so tired. That 171 km took four to five hours to be passed.

When we arrived in Tabanovce the sun was shining, but it was bitterly cold in the camp. All the arriving refugees huddled together in large tents warmed by patio heaters. There were no beds, just wooden benches and grey blankets on the floor. The blankets hid the traces of refugees who previously travelled the same route – bread and cookie crumbs, oil from fish cans, spilled drinks, used tissues, abused shoes, discarded clothing; these items laying

abandoned like the skin of a disappeared species. Volunteers walked among refugees inside the tent, asking if anyone needs shoes, clothes, baby food, or a doctor.

I laid down to sleep, but was awaken by heavily armed police starting to line the refugees up in a queue within twenty minutes. I was confused as I could see no buses nor trains that came to pick us up. At the exit of the camp, the police asked for our documents by which they could confirm our SIA nationality. Non-SIA refugees were segregated and placed at the eastern corner of the tent; the SIA were allowed to pass. Later I found out that the non-SIA had only one option, ask for asylum in Macedonia, or they were to be returned to Greece. The police, however, did not inform the non-SIA about the asylum claim opportunity and, thus, almost all of them were returned to Greece.

Refugees being registered. Credits: Jinsub Cho.

The rest of us, the SIA nationals, were told to walk across the Macedonian-Serbian border. This was a three-kilometre walk, which felt like an eternity under that exhaustion. I have not slept in two days. We were continuously pushed: 'Go, go, go! *Yalla, yalla*!' Those were the only Arabic words the police knew.

Following the walk, there was a seven-kilometre bus ride to camp Miratovac. The buses waited for us right across the border. There were that many buses that the scene looked like a forest-built central bus terminal. Nevertheless, the buses were overcrowded.

Miratovac felt exactly like Tabanovce. We spent about half an hour at a poorly equipped tent. As I realised, Miratovac served as a container where refugees were held until the previous group has been registered at Preševo, a registration centre another seven kilometres down the road. Indeed, after a brief stop, buses picked us up in front of Miratovac. They took us to Preševo. 'Finally, a sign of civilisation,' I exclaimed upon arriving to the camp. This was a place with good facilities – free Wi-Fi, mobile phone charging facilities, a local shop, some tea, food that is not just a can of fish and some bread, a separate tent for child-care. Indeed, the further in we went into Europe, the better care we received.

Registration at Preševo was unlike any previous registration. Refugees were obliged to sign papers indicating which country they want to seek asylum in. This information was then written on our papers, and the question will be asked again at every border. Indeed, I was questioned about my destination at every border crossing along the route, all the way to Germany. Volunteers informed us that, unless refugees said they want to claim asylum in either Austria or Germany, they will not be allowed to continue their journey.

There were reports from different border crossings that border authorities ask trick questions to find out whether one really wants to go to Austria or Germany. They ask for example: 'Do you have family in a different country who you want to join?' Or, 'Where do you want to go if Germany and Austria are full?' If one answered any of the questions that one wanted to go to a country other than Austria or Germany, one was not allowed to continue onwards. One should have always said they want to go to Austria or Germany, even if they were to continue to another country. Unlike in other such situations, however, volunteers and translators informed us well about these circumstances.

I didn't know why it was decided this way. The governments rarely told why they made their decisions. However, since my wished destination was Germany, I had no problems with this decision. Some refugees, on the other hand, had spouses and children in Italy, France, UK and Nordic countries; this decision was a grave problem for them. Were they not putting up with the entire journey just to be reunited with their families and loved ones?

On that day only, the Slovenian authorities refused entry to 154 refugees who, allegedly, provided false claims about their origin and destination, and returned them to Croatia. Austria rejected 54 refugees for the same reasons.

I registered within an hour. It was 5:30 p.m., which meant that the 5 p.m. train to Šid, a camp at Serbian-Croatian border, just left, and I had to wait for the second daily train, which was leaving at 11:30 p.m. 'I will finally get some sleep,' I thought to myself with relief. I

slept for hours, until the police started waking us up and queuing for the train. I paid twenty Euros for that train ride.

A war-injured refugee getting ready to board a train to safety.

February 3rd, 2016

The train ride took twelve hours. It was snowing in Šid, and last night the temperature fell to -15°C. I cannot say much more about Šid. I remember it only as a place where we switched trains for Croatia. The registration was quicker than ever. We exited the train, passed through the registration tent, and made a move towards the other train waiting on the other side. That train took us to the Slavonski Brod camp in Croatia, this time for free. Actually, from this point on, all the transportation was free, which I was grateful for, since my money started to run out. I worried how will I settle in Germany with so little money left.

Benceković, 'Tell me how you move...'

Refugees crowding on to a train with a capacity of 900. Regardless of the capacity, the trains usually carried between 1,400 and 1,600 refugees. Credits: Jinsub Cho.

Waiting for a train in the cold. Credits: Jinsub Cho.

Soon enough, I was back on the train taking me to another such transit camp. Everything in Slavonski Brod resembled my Šid experience. We exited the train, registered and exited the tent, only to re-enter the train and continue the journey. I was tired, extremely tired. However, the train that took us from Šid towards Croatia and further to Slovenia was heated and rather comfortable. It was not even that crowded. The number went down from 1,500 refugees per train to about 900-1,000. The very same day, I continued my journey towards Slovenia. 'If we arrive today, I will be crossing five countries in two days,' I thought to myself.

February 4th, 2016

The train had reached Slovenia in the late evening hours of the previous day, however, the Slovenian police waited in early morning hours and thick dark to transport us to Dobova camp. Dobova was another fast registration and transit centre. Everything there was so well organised; the organisations made a maze of services through which they guided refugees. As we exited the train, we entered a tent where we were handed a bag of food. Thereafter, we entered a heated tent, while grabbing a blanket and a mat that were piled up at the entrance.

After dropping our heavy bags, we exited the rest tent, only to enter another tent, specialised for registration. After registration, the maze took us back to the rest tent. There

were three rest tents, and the police guided refugees towards the next tent as soon as the previous one filled up. All three rest tents were connected with the registration tent and, as soon as the tent number one was done with the registration, tent number two was full and ready for registration, while tent three was just starting to be filled with refugees.

In Dobova, I met an interesting and curious woman. She was an anthropologist from England who asked me to tell her about my journey. I did not know what "anthropology" is, but she told me 'Don't worry, no one does.' She said that anthropology studies human societies and social life, and that she studies 'a society of refugees.' 'Can refugees be thought of as a society? I guess we can, we experience very similar realities; we have very similarly structured life opportunities and trajectories.'

However, she did not only ask what it means to be a refugee, which I answered her thoroughly. She asked, 'What does it mean to be German to you? What does it mean to be European?' I was unsure how to answer that in a more thorough way than to say, 'By receiving refugees, the ultimate challenge of Europe will be to transform from a community of shared blood towards a community of shared ideals. We are the new Europeans, but all we want is safety, peace, work and education for our children.'

I am scared of German rightist propaganda. There is a growing rhetoric that, faced with refugees and different cultures, Germany must propagate Judeo-Christian or 'truly German' values. Under such an umbrella of beliefs, refugees are either to stay out or adapt. I believe, however, that we can live together, 'united in diversity,' as the EU motto suggest. That is the promise of Europe that refugees came for. We can adapt to Europeans, but can Europeans adapt to us? I parted from the anthropologist as a friend. I promised to keep in touch on my way, and I did. I managed to reach Germany, but I decided to move to England. 'It will take a while to learn German,' I thought; 'I'd better go to an English-speaking country.' I wanted to enter university so badly. In England, I got that opportunity.

The Balkan route to central Europe officially shut down in February, stranding more than 53,000 people since in Greece. I was one of the last refugees who managed to reach safety and get protection.

Benceković, 'Tell me how you move...'

Which direction will the refugee crisis take? Credits: Jinsub Cho.

KINSHIP THROUGH THE PARALLEL LINES:
PROBING THE SOCIAL AND BIOLOGICAL DIVIDE

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Introduction

In entering the debate on whether the foundations of kinship are biological or social, we have, in the following pages, undertaken a thought venture in which we imagined ourselves as anthropologists stationed in a hypothetical field of interaction with a group of people claiming kinship affiliations. In making sense of our field observations, we turn to the literature on this debate on kinship. The engagement with the literature is not exhaustive, but is intended to make sense of the field encounter and to offer some clarifications for the debate.

Our first consideration refers to the distinction anthropologists make between textualized knowledge and the various processes that produce the text and its underlying field-based data. The distinction serves as a reminder that various theoretical propositions are entertained in so far as these are allowed to return to ethnographic contexts – in our case, the imaginary encounter – pointing to references within and across the paradigmatic divide.

In pursuing the debate, we would like to retrace the imaginary trajectory of a field-based anthropologist attempting to reconstruct kinship. What we observe in the field are a group of people sharing a common space for living, loosely termed a 'household'. This is the observer's first port of reality. Subsequently, the reality of kinship is constructed on the basis of the relational claims the members of the group make. To understand this concretely, we draw upon Sylvia Vatuk's description of a household (1972: 49), where the fieldworker encounters a group of people who share living quarters and eat food cooked at a common hearth or stove, as a living group of which they are part of their 'house'. One can imagine subsequent rounds of interviewing and observations the anthropologist might have undertaken to find out that the group of people in the household had kinship ties: parents and children and sometimes a widowed grandparent or an unmarried uncle or aunt. Thus the reality of a

household is evident where members are residentially aggregated and characterized by commensalism and co-operation. It is important to remember that togetherness or the growing together of adults and children is crucial in spawning bonding between parents (actual or surrogate) and children. However, it is difficult, if not impossible, to establish whether social relatedness would have been absent without genetic relatedness. This is to point out that a household is not purely a matter of kinship. In a household, the genetic and social relations do not necessarily overlap. In the anthropological literature, the non-kin members of a household who are addressed by categories of kin relations are treated as fictive or practical kin (Bourdieu 1977: 34), which are mostly pragmatic ties in the making of a household. Yet precisely because the reality described and investigated by social-anthropological analysis is that of the respondent's accounts and behaviour, its fictional elements remain an important part of the social fact.

It is possible that the network based on claims to kinship may be residentially dispersed, yet share the larger agnatic lineage over several generations. Here, the distinction between the household and kinship may or may not overlap in a given situation. Understandably, a field observer can scarcely assume the precise extent of the overlap between the kin group and the household in a given field.

Suppose our anthropologists were able to document the household whose members live together and cook around a shared fireplace. According to the narrative that would emerge, the group of people in question would make claims to their common genealogical affiliations as demonstrated through their emotional, relational and social proximity. In such a situation, the ethnographers would be interpreting claims to kinship relatedness, argues Parkin, in terms of both biology, or biologized idioms. At the same time, the field observer must be receptive to the possibility that the social realm of relatedness, notwithstanding the householders' claims, may or may not be anchored in biology. (Parkin 1997: 129).

Here a question arises: What if the group's claim to genealogical relatedness is contradicted by the biological-physical anthropological data? Here the field poses a mismatch between the actor's self-dependent data drawn from interviews, observations, and participation, and the actor's self-independent data based on blood samples, DNA tests, the wider genetic pool etc. Would a social anthropologist be able to distinguish between the interpersonal bondings that are based on biological

relatedness and those that are not? The question is clear, but to work it out in the field seems cumbersome.

An ethnographer confronts a household in the field, not kinship: the former is a construct closer to an observer's first encounter in the field, and kinship is a derivation, a representation and a codification in memory or text fixing claims and counter-claims regarding genealogical proximities, blood ties etc. So if the kin ties may be fictive, so may be the genealogies. There are accounts of fictive genealogies being charted out in deference to given social compulsions. In Indian society, M.N. Srinivas coined the term 'Sanskritization' to show how marginalized castes, while undergoing social mobility, sometimes reinvent their genealogies as part of remaking their ritual status in the caste hierarchy. Thus, Srinivas points out: 'One of the most important functions of the genealogist and bardic castes was to legitimize mobility from the ranks of lower castes to the Kshatriya by providing suitable genealogical linkage and myth' (1966: 9).

In their immediate grasp, our field-based anthropologists are seeking to make sense of what we would like to call 'projected kinship'. This kinship may be defined as a construct the respondents develop for, or throw at, the anthropologists in response to their queries about kinship. In conceptual terms, we would like to distinguish between projected and 'actual' kinship to say that the former is a construct based on the claims respondents make, while the latter emerges when the 'projected kinship' is matched against a more in-depth probe into kinship-as-lived, which is not easily evident in the first field contact. Even so, the representation of kinship based on the projected and the actual constructs would still not be able to furnish an ideal logic applicable in every other field context.

The biological basis of kinship

Our imaginary anthropologists are drawing upon the perspectives on kinship and turning their attention to both the biological and social aspects in order to develop a more inclusive view, assuming this helps explain kinship better. Let us begin with what they stand to learn from the biological perspectives. They would like to ask: How does the biological view interpret kinship, and on what evidence? If some evidence can be marshalled in its support, how does it contribute to the anthropologists' attempt to understand the basis of a group centred around claims of kinship ties? Furthermore, our anthropologists would like to enquire if the evidence

from the biological sources could be transposed onto understanding kinship in different social and cultural contexts. Presumably not. One apparent merit of including the biological explanation is to give the anthropological perspective a universalistic-scientific gloss. However, our social anthropologists are aware that it is much easier for an evolutionary biologist than for a social anthropologist to universalize findings from a specific set of data. For purposes of moving further in the thought venture, let our anthropologists respond to the searching questions when the need arises. For now, they might like to understand how the geneticists and evolutionary biologists help explain the anthropologists' field experience.

To further dwell on the biological approach on behalf of our imaginary anthropologists, we turn to some anthropological theories on kinship. In this respect, Parkin (1997) points out how biological approaches treat mating as a means of procreation, and regard it as being more important than marriage as an institution. For social anthropologists, the reverse is the case (Parkin 1997: 137). Yet, anthropologists like Ernest Gellner (1960) and others have tried to balance the biological and the social aspects of kinship. Gellner argues that social kinship is a function of physical kinship, where function is a rule specifying the connection (Gellner 1960: 189). Parkin takes a different view, and distinguishes the biological from the social in the following manner: '[a]ll human societies have kinship, that is, they all impose some privileged cultural order over the biological universals of sexual relations and continuous human reproduction through birth' (Parkin 1997: 3). Furthermore, Parkin clarifies that, regardless of the validity of the biological approaches to kinship, one is still not able to know how people on the ground see kinship (ibid.). He then goes on to argue that the debate between biologists and anthropologists is largely based on misunderstandings. Yet, he holds, there is still a difference between the study of culturally neutral scientific facts (biology) and the study of culturally specific social facts (social anthropology). He thus implies that they must be seen as independent (1997: 3 f.). He observes that the problem for biologists is that they do not have the means to test genetic relations in the field, for instance, by means of laboratories. The version of kinship based on respondents is the only thing social anthropologists are (or should be) interested in (ibid.: 4).

Is genetic relatedness reflective of social relatedness?

Let us suppose our imaginary anthropologists conducting a field study of kinship are hired by the state to examine the genetic basis of kinship with the support of already existing, large datasets on biological information about citizens in various countries. Let us further imagine that this team consisted of social anthropologists and biologists working together with the financial support of a big donor to determine the genetic relatedness of a high-status individual or a member of an elite family. Suppose the stakes in the given situation relate to the inheritance or transfer of wealth through channels of genealogy. There are no constraints on procuring an expensive instrument, or affording a large team of field-workers to locate patterns of togetherness in the given households. Here we would like to enquire about the outcome of the joint project in explaining how the biological and social factors co-constitute kinship. Hypothetically speaking, our team of researchers was able to establish a pattern of relatedness in given groups representing a mix of kin and non-kin categories. No matter how well the rigorous standards of validity and reliability are maintained in the description of the genetic and social relatedness, one would still be lacking sufficient grounds to explain how the specific kinship pattern is derived from the generalized dataset in the biological realm. Now, what is it that can or cannot be reasonably stated about the nature of kinship with the help of the biological perspective? At least one could state that it is the stakeholders in the domain of the 'social' who would direct the commerce of kinship relations between the 'biological' and the 'social' divide. What is selected for special attention in the sphere of biology of kinship usually comes from a salient concern in the social realm. It is the practical issues of everyday genetics that direct and signify the probe into the social-biological divide. It is the social actors who decide what is or is not worthy of being attended to in the matter. Where social actors have no issue to settle over the social-biological divide, the social realm, during this period, may seem relatively autonomous and transcendent (e.g. Parkin 2013).

What is the biological argument? What is the nature of the evidence that establishes such an argument? These questions have to be answered in different ways depending on what is meant by 'biology'. For the purpose at hand, the biological argument can mean two things. On the one hand, 'biology' can be used as a synonym for genetics; on other hand, the term 'biology' acts as a rubric for the evolutionary course of kinship development. Thus, in the former view of kinship, individuals are

related genetically, i.e., they share the genetic substance. This refers to 'physical kinship' that acts as a substrate wherein social kinship is anchored. The presence of physical kinship, near or far from the social realm, is often expressed in a biological idiom, in its varied background presuppositions of descent, genealogies, blood ties, marriage and parentage. The physical kinship exists independently of how it is recognized in the social realm around fertility preferences and alliances, and around the issues related to birth and lineage. Surely, no human science, sociology or social anthropology included, would dispute the generalized significance of procreation, genetic relatedness, or the scientific methods used in investigating biological data.

Where biology takes the route of genetics, the individuals themselves choose to express their kinship in biologized idioms following from social or cultural requirements. It is the cultural beliefs and preferences that drive the use of technology to determine genetic relatedness. The 'social' side of kinship selects what is worthy of being attended in the biological matters. Those volatile issues around inheritance, succession, fidelity, etc. push the social actors to the biological basis of kinship for the ultimate validation of rival claims. If the determination of the biological basis of kinship is deemed important, it is because of the human communities who are validating their normative principles. There is nothing self-evident about biology (McKinnon 2005). Contributing to the critique, Parkin observes how today's science is limited in two ways. It is limited scientifically in that its current amount of knowledge is more limited than its prospective one. Its knowledge is '*knowledge as it exists now* [...] the essentially Western scientific world view is no less partial and incomplete than non-Western world views, though for different reasons' (Parkin 1997: 5, original emphasis). And it is limited technologically in that its methods are still imperfect with regard to establishing genetic fatherhood: paternity tests are not always reliable due to occasional mistakes. 'For the layperson in Western societies, therefore, knowledge of this sort is a matter of faith in experts, of belief engendered ultimately by an essentially socially determined attitude towards reason and science as superior to all other forms of knowledge.' Even if scientific laboratory tests establish genetic relatedness, it must not be forgotten that such a fact is relevant only because the knowledge it produces serves the already established social relatedness and its imperatives. Paternity and kinship thus 'remain matters of purely social definition' (Parkin 1997: 6). We must therefore be critical both of the 'despair of the cultural relativists' and the 'pretensions of the scientific universalists' (Parkin 1997: 8).

Social kinship as reflective of evolutionary adaptation

The aspect of biology that takes the route of evolution warrants closer examination. All evolutionary approaches to kinship today accept that kinship is largely social. However, their explanations of the 'social' remain contested. But the view persists that some of the underpinnings of kinship are in some way or another tied to evolutionary forces, and that 'social kinship' is therefore still influenced by evolution through biology. These positions have prompted both critique and support by social and cultural anthropologists. Those with a more endorsing stance have argued that they are incommensurate but similarly valid analyses of related phenomena (e.g., Parkin 2009). Others have gone further and declared certain neo-evolutionary approaches to be not only complementary to but important extensions of anthropological studies of kinship (e.g., Hewlett 2001). It is these that warrant further consideration for our purpose.

If we return to our hypothetical scenario and consider biologists teaming up with social anthropologists, what would be their take on the example at hand? And what would be their contribution to understanding what is happening in the field? It is important to keep in mind that the scope of neo-evolutionary theories is to formulate ultimate explanations. These are accounts of how given forms of togetherness contribute to maximizing the number of copies of an individual's genes passed on to the next generation for promoting 'reproductive fitness'. By contrast, questions surrounding the social, cultural, psychological and endocrinological factors deal with proximate causes (Hewlett 2001: 94). They are thus complementary at a more speculative level that is distinct from the level of detail in the close-quarter observations in an anthropological fieldsite. Furthermore, neo-evolutionary theories include non-genetic aspects such as reciprocal altruism (tit-for-tat patterns of interaction) 'with non-genetically related individuals' (e.g. Axelrod 1984) to account for social phenomena like friendship, alliances and cooperatives. This is mostly seen in terms of adaptive practices contributing to the environment of evolutionary adaptation.

Hewlett (2001) distinguishes between three strands of neo-evolutionary theory: behavioural ecology (BE), evolutionary psychology (EP), and dual-transmission theory. While all of these generally argue that evolution and therefore genes play a role in kinship, they differ on the nature of their role and influence.

Behavioural ecologists view culture itself as an adaptation that enhances reproductive success. Robin Fox (1980, 1989a, 1989b) and others (cf. Stone 2001: 9) have argued that kinship originated in the evolved capacity to classify, which was then transposed to questions of who to mate or not to mate with, how to avoid incest etc. In this regard, kinship is a cultural strategy to tackle survival issues for the species, a strategy which is based on an evolved trait. Similarly, William D. Hamilton (1964, cited in Stone 2001: 9) hypothesised that because altruism towards kin increases the number of copies of one's genes that are passed on to the next generation, kinship altruism, and therefore the ability to recognise kin, are adaptations. While this may not lead directly to kinship systems (Fox 1989b: 174, cited in Stone 2001: 9), the fact that their cognitive underpinnings are evolved is believed to influence them to the present day (cf. also Hewlett 2001: 99 ff.).

To dwell briefly on the logic of the biological argument, we take the example of how polyandry is sometimes explained. The fact that polyandry exists is equated with the assumption about the reason why it exists. This is explained in behavioural ecology as a case of adaptation to a certain environment. The structure of this logic parallels that of earlier functionalist accounts in anthropology, the difference being that the phenomenon is reduced to serving a function not at the level of society (or social cohesion) but that of an individual as member of a species, perhaps for promoting reproductive fitness.

Another variant of the above example where forms of social kinship are equated with adaptation is an illustration from a marriage custom among a Ladakhi community (Bloch 1992). This involved the symbolic capture of a bride in one household by the groom of another. Bloch engages with the view that explains the phenomenon as a form of fertility preference for the purpose of following the strategy of adaptation. Bloch locates the two groups in their ecological environment, where they practice reciprocal intermarriage, thereby producing familiarity and trust and the distribution of material resources in the environment. While the ecological argument operates at a valid level of analysis, Bloch highlights the attendant social life and its independence from the physical world. If left to itself, the argument of adaptation would explain away the ritual of reciprocal intermarriage between two groups as well as the attendant cosmology as an epiphenomenon that subsumes the aspect of physical adaptation. The explanation around the actor's immediate calculation or rational

interests is too limiting. Clearly, it does not explain how the biological resource develops and ensures the collective survival of the group in the social realm.

Explanations of the social side of kinship in terms of adaptations to evolutionary processes employ data that seem to produce a pre-prepared conclusion: that the phenomenon at hand furthers the reproduction of the species, and that this is why it exists. We encounter patrilineal inheritance, then, in communities that allow the accumulation of resources, because there is higher 'reproductive variance in males than in females' (Hartung 1976, cit. in Hewlett 2001: 99). These scenarios, however, remain completely removed from any living context. The argument only works if we treat humans as biological machines operating in a social vacuum that is both contemporary to and precedes the hypothesised scenario.

Furthermore, the notions of adaptation and 'strategic thinking' are employed to explain how evolution or genes select the best traits for the survival and propagation of a community. The explanation assumes some kind of non-falsifiability, and as such it enjoys equal plausibility whether it is confirmed or refuted. So, for instance, if the phenomenon of 'endogamy' as a case of kin preference in mating emerged at a particular point in our evolution, then surely it must have to do with adaptation; the same if endogamy leads to what Shaw describes as genetic risk (2009), in which case it would be a maladaptation that must be rectified through amended kinship practices. In this slippery explanatory field, one may look for other ways to interpret the phenomena at hand. Rather than employing the principle of genetic or evolutionary choice regardless of its compelling confirmation, one may rather turn to Gregory Bateson's distinction between 'adaptation' and 'addiction' (1979:172-4) to show that natural selection may not always be as ingenious as strategic rational choice thinking makes it out to be. Adaptations may not necessarily confer survival value; instead it may be a move towards pathology, or according to Kršiak (2011), an instance of 'useless biology' to refer to behaviour around, say, aesthetics, or religiosity, or opting out of fertility in favour of a professional career. These behaviours have a questionable survival function or role in the multiplication of one's genes.

Regarding genealogies and descent, Parkin, too, emphasises that any society only has a limited number of options available to it when it comes to tracing descent, and that it is these that the anthropologist who investigates notions of biology and descent should study (Parkin 1997: 26). The biologist is not (and cannot be) concerned with these. Moreover, the strength of the ties of what is encountered in the field often

depends much less on (claims to common) descent anyway. Instead, '[s]ocial groups are often defined not through descent but through common residence, property holding, unity in conducting marriage alliances, effective political or social action, co-operation in economic activities, possessing a common name, gift exchange, partaking in a common ritual (which may in part be directed towards a common ancestor), and so on. It may also be the proper discharge of marriage payments […], not descent that is decisive in determining group membership for the children born to a marriage. Note that none of these attributes can be either explained by, or assimilated to, any biological notions' (Parkin 1997: 27).

In a similar fashion, evolutionary psychologists are convinced that evolution shaped culture (Hewlett 2001: 103), and, by implication, kinship. Hrdy (1999, cit. in Hewlett 2001: 102), for instance, advanced the hypothesis that women evolved mechanisms to enable them to get several men investing in their offspring by inventing the concept of social fatherhood. Contrary to behavioural ecology (BE), evolutionary psychology (EP) holds that the former cannot account for certain kinship patterns such as polyandry as there is nothing about polyandry that advances reproductive fitness. Thus, while it may be culturally adaptive to a certain environment, polyandry cannot possibly be a product of our bio-evolutionary past (Hewlett 2001: 98 f.). The link to biology is thus clearly broken, yet the notion of cultural adaptation remains entangled in the same reductionist structure of sociocultural functionalism.

Finally, dual transmission theorists (DT) study the ways in which kinship and marriage structures such as polyandry and patrilineal inheritance came about in correlation with a certain environment and how they may have been transmitted. Contrary to what emerges in BE paradigms, often statistical correlations between a kinship structure and its environment are not due to evolution per se, but because the phenomenon almost exclusively occurs in one geographical region (Hewlett 2001: 103). Following BE accounts, polyandry should occur in the South American highlands the way it does in the Himalayas, yet no such cases exist in the former region (Bourguignon and Greenbaum 1973, cited in Hewlett 2001).

Biological positions display universalizing tendencies (not only because they are dealing with the same species), but in doing so they do hypothesize about the cultural variations which anthropologists accept in principle while checking them against the particularities of the non-biological context. In biological evolutionary explanations,

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the 'nature-to-culture' leap appears more speculative than empirical. The leap is not anchored in an actually observed transition from the biological to the social. In terms of what is available as supporting data, for all practical purposes an anthropologist remains confined to the domain of projected kinship, which the respondents express in their testimonies and oral accounts.

The evolutionary perspectives intervening in the debate on kinship have the support of propositions whose fragment of observation (say, 'kin preference in marriage') and the context of its genesis (the moment of evolutionary adaptation) are separated by the long evolutionary time scale. Such a mode of biological-evolutionary imagination seems appropriate where immediate data of validation are hard to come by. A different magisterium (improvising on Gould 1997) directs an ethnographic representation of kinship, holding different standards of ethnographic validation. This is scarcely comparable to the speculative imagination in evolutionary perspectives that conforms to a different level of significance. An ethnographer familiar with observing the subjects of study at close quarters, mindful of their voices, would be disconcerted at the manner of arguing in which genes hold views based on the processes of evolution as though a person were engaged in strategic thinking, constantly choosing between options for survival. Thus, Dunbar (2008), with reasonable conceptual clarification for evolutionary anthropology, refers to 'gene's-eye view' and 'the strategic thinking' implicit in 'the way evolution works' (Dunbar 2008: 131-32).

The epigenetic variant of the biological basis of kinship

The field of epigenetics has seen biologists themselves giving primacy to social factors in some respects. The studies have demonstrated how, in a sense, culture, behaviour, experiences, diet, and so on impact on physical biology and are in turn altered by these impacts.

Each human cell has about 22,000 genes, of which only a very small number are active. This activity is referred to as gene expression, and it lies at the heart of most of the body's processes. Epigenetics pertains to methyl groups, molecules which are wrapped around the DNA (hence 'epigenetic'), and which regulate the access of transcription factors to the genetic code and thereby regulate what the DNA does (gene expression). Modifications of the epigenetic makeup alter gene expression

without changing the genetic code per se. The formation of these epigenetic structures, as well as changes in the, are susceptible to non-genetic factors.

What has emerged over the years is that epigenetic changes can come about in various ways and throughout the lifespan of an individual. They can be passed on from previous generations as part of both the maternal and paternal genetic make-up. In a seminal study by Eric Nestler (see Berton et al. 2006), the offspring of mice that had been bullied as infants showed hypersensitivity to stress and were more socially withdrawn and more prone to developing depression.

Other studies have shown that a mother's environment during pregnancy can lead to life-long epigenetic changes in her offspring. One landmark investigation by Heijmans et al. (2008) showed that Dutch women who were pregnant in the third trimester while suffering from famine during World War II later gave birth to children who, even sixty years later, were nineteen times more likely to develop obesity, diabetes, hypertension and metabolic syndrome than other individuals of that generation. In a similar vein, a study by Malaspina et al. (2008) found that children born to Jewish Israeli women who were pregnant during the Six Day War of 1967 displayed a significantly higher incidence of schizophrenia later in life.

Even more strikingly, an individual's experiences during childhood and adulthood can alter the epigenetic make-up, which can then be passed on to their offspring genetically, during pregnancy, through their parenting behaviour, and generally throughout their lives. A study by Meaney (1997) showed that the mothering style of rats can modify the expression of genes associated with stress hormones. Rats that received a lot of maternal care right after birth grew up to be healthier and bigger, and showed the same parenting behaviour. In humans, Szyf and Meaney (McGowan et al. 2009) conducted post-mortem examinations of epigenetic differences in parts of the brain associated with stress response. They found more methylation in suicide victims than in the control group, and an even higher degree of methylation in those victims with childhood abuse than in those without. In a later study, Szyf and Meaney (Borghol et al. 2012) also compared individuals from wealthy backgrounds with individuals who grew up in poverty. They found that more than 6,000 genes differed significantly, depending on living conditions during early childhood.

The many sources of epigenetic change may include drugs and food as well. In a laboratory study by Waterland and Jirtle (2003), female mice received a diet with a

large amount of methyl groups, which caused not only a permanent change in the fur colour of later generations, but also a drastic decrease in their otherwise high susceptibility to diabetes and cancer later in life.

The environment (in any sense of the word) can have a life-long impact on biology. This environment does not start at birth, and is not even limited to the individual in question. Rather, it stretches back in time to include the living conditions and life experiences of one's ancestors, which can leave their marks in their grandchildren. Looking at the biology does tell us something about the social, and vice versa. Thus, at the level of certain propositional statements, social kinship and biological kinship are not as separate and independent as is sometimes posited. Instead, there is a conversation between the two: environment, culture, child-rearing practices, food, the traumatic experiences even of one's grandparents all have an effect on our behaviour and psychology – through our genes. In other words, biology matters because culture matters. Looking at biology can tell us something about the social, and vice versa. The only problem is that this may be an interesting point at a high level of abstraction in a debate between parties claiming kinship for the exclusive realms of either biology or culture. For the anthropologist in the field, these facts are of rather limited use.

More importantly, even prior to anthropologists and biologists musing over the relationship between epigenetics and kinship, lay people have views on how the two domains are connected. Sometimes, the social-biological divide around kinship may be merged in folk perception to show how the epigenetic transmission of knowledge takes place. To understand the folk view of the biological-social relation, one may turn to mythologies (one site where popular views are reflected over time) that expound on the ways in which pre-birth learning experiences in the womb influence the postnatal cognition of the child. This alludes, in a general sense, to how the biological domain influences the social life of a person, an allegorical reference to how genetic relatedness modulates the social forms emanating from it. Such stories show, to some degree, how human communities have a view of the continuous interaction between the biological and social domains, regardless of their scientific validity. For purposes of illustration, we select a story from the Indian epic the *Mahabharata.* It features the account of Abhimanyu, a heroic character who was trained in the art of war and was privy by birth to the knowledge of a particular technique for breaking into enemy grids (the *chakravyuh*) and exiting them safely

after defeating his opponents. According to the narrative, Abhimanyu had this special ability as he had learnt the art when his mother Subhadra carried him in her womb. His father Arjun, a great warrior, used to talk to his wife about the subject. While in her womb, Abhimanyu could hear the description of how to break into the enemy *chakravyuh*. But the knowledge of the other half of the art, of how to escape the grid, the foetus could not learn because his mother had fallen asleep halfway through. The partial knowledge of the art got Abhimanyu trapped and killed in the *charkavyuh* at the hands of his enemy. The mythological narrative allludes to how knowledge is transmitted epigenetically from a father via the mother to their unborn son.

Kinship communities may develop an awareness of the biological facts of genetic relatedness, as well as of their varied appropriations in the social realm. There are emic notions of biologized kin ties in terms life fluids such as semen, blood, or milk. Also, the view is sometimes informed by the 'factual' level of biology as determined by paternity tests and genetic genealogies. This knowledge is usually gathered in response to the imperatives on the social side of kinship.

The active use of science in kinship matters

Social scientists and particularly ethnographers have compiled a corpus of literature detailing ideas of human relatedness mainly from the vantage point of cultural socialization. By coining terms like 'new kinship' (Carsten, 2004; cf. Clarke 2009: 48 note 1), social anthropologists have co-opted the geneticised model of the new reproductive technologies (NRTs), keeping in mind that it is the condition created by the social setting in which biological models are invoked and not the other way round. Local communities draw upon technology to serve their kinship goals or kinship-driven social imperative. What is the social context of science that creates or generates the imperative to know about genetic relatedness? One could speculate about a social situation in which some aspect of social relatedness is questioned, say, whether the son is actually related to the given father in relation to a property dispute or any other social issue. The driving motive that creates the need to turn to biochemical evidence of genetic relatedness seems to lie in an already established social relatedness.

Technology, then, is not something purely biological or genetically given, but has important socio-economic conditions attached to it. Kahn's (2013[2000]) ethnography of NRTs in Israel highlights the importance of context. Many current models of

kinship claim that 'as soon as reproduction gets technological, biogenetic relatedness inevitably gains conceptual power' (ibid.: 7). She contends that 'state incursion into assisted fertility reinforces a set of cultural beliefs about kinship.' There is a shift from biogenetic origins to maternal parturition. In the halakhic view, the person providing the womb, as it were, not the egg donor, is the 'real' mother and produces a Jewish baby. In the context of Zionist ethnopolitics, the state is using NRTs for its own end (thereby 'reproducing Jews', which is also the title of her monograph). We have here, then, a social (and political) context for genetic technologies. This brings us to a 'chicken and egg' situation: technological advances (e.g., in medicine) also drive interest and ability. A social context is, in part, also created by the influence of these technologies. Thus a given context and the gene technology interact and intersect.

When parallel lines meet

Most anthropologists will now agree that the biological and the social are not in opposition but in tandem with each other (see Parkin 2005). Thus, it is not that the biological or the social basis of kinship is denied in any form. But for the most part, then, biological and social anthropologists treat each other's explanation as if they were more tangential than directly relevant. The two sets of explanation do not unseat the theoretical and methodological claims made by each other, but both enjoy objectivity in accordance with their research conditions. They have, however, little relevance in bringing to the other domain an expanded base of evidence. This is especially true of a biological explanation that seeks to explain kinship in a particular ethnographic context.

The social and the biological explanations of kinship seem to be referring to two different domains that act as parallel lines. They may meet for the actors, in the realm of symbolic reasoning, but not for the ethnographer with reference to the theories and tools of research. An ethnographer may observe the actors putting together different domains, the biological and the social, in their imagination. But this would entail biologizing the social, and socializing the biological. The experience of kinship in the social realm is limited to symbolic claims charted out in genealogies to represent relatedness. In the life of actors, it may happen that the 'social' taps on the door of the biological, generating curiosities, and finding tools for research and knowledge. In the world of actors, this intrusion of the social in the biological is mostly expected at the

time of a deep crisis in morality, legitimacy or some foundational breakdown of meaning challenging the very fabric of collective life. For instance, the crisis may demand that the parentage of a child be proved in response to some feud over the division of property, or a common genetic make-up to be established at the time of racial antipathies.

The social and the biological realms of kinship form a kind of asymptote, barely touching one another in normal times. However, they do come to loggerheads at times of deep social crisis, when the symbolic or material basis of group survival is challenged. In its absence, the social basis of kinship follows its routine track, largely subsisting on the major presuppositions about its rootedness in the biological. The social anthropologists on their own could scarcely open the door of the biological side of a group that makes claims to common kinship. Such scientific intervention, without the self-consciousness of the group in question, is less likely to make any meaningful contribution to ascertaining such kinship claims.

For the most part, the social anthropologists on one side and the biological and evolutionary anthropologists on the other treat each other's explanations as if they were only remotely rather than directly relevant. Does one explanation unseat the theoretical and methodological claims of the other? There seems to be an element of incommensurability between the two sets of evidence, the biological and the social, each holding claims to truth in accordance with their research conditions, but having little relevance for expanding the base of evidence in the other domain. Yet we have to go one step further and accept the fact that the two magisteria often collide and intertwine in curiously complex ways along their joint border.

Where kinship in a given context is explained with the backing of strong ethnography, then incorporating the biological or neo-evolutionary explanation calls for a cogent reason. It requires an understanding of the limits of the methods and perspectives employed in the anthropology of kinship. If the social side of kinship is shown to be on a biological leash, then a thick description is required of the state of its hold and the limits to its reach, the points beyond which the biological lines stop the social or even call for a serious social reconfiguration. Kinship as a phenomenon can also be imagined as a twig between the social and the biological, following from the image used by Marvin Harris in a debate on 'Heredity versus Culture': '. . . there might be some slight bending in one direction, but *it's* no trouble at all for cultures to bend them back completely the other way if there is sufficient ecological and

material, practical reasons for the twig to be bent back the other way' (Harris and Wilson, 1982: 465).

The biological side of kinship knocking at the door of the 'social' does not happen according to a linear logic. The 'social' accommodates the 'natural-biological' in a variety of ways. The social appropriates the biological within the limits of collective survival. A genetically deformed child may be 'read' as an incarnation of a deity. In 2008, a genetically deformed child in a village near Delhi came to be venerated by the villagers and related networks as a reincarnation of the mythical Hindu goddess Durga (who had three eyes), and even the legendary Ganesh (Clemens 2014). Surely, the emergence of genetic disorders on a larger scale in given communities – for instance, the emergence of genetic risks consequent on cross-cousin marriages – does cause public recognition and concern.

The genetic events unfold in the social and cultural space. These signify their second 'incarnation', showing how genetics gets geneticized in the social and cultural domain. It is the signalling of how the twig of kinship on the biological side is being pushed towards the social. The knowledge and technology that ascertain the genetic basis are also established in terms of their status as a trustworthy tool that helps resolve important social issues around parentage and genealogical descent. Freeman and Richards (2006: 68) examine the role of the state and its use of paternity testing conducted 'on behalf of the Child Support Agency (CSA) in determining paternal liability to regulate immigration. The need of the state to determine paternity is further developed with the 'commercial availability of "DIY" home testing kits'.

Rather than viewing kinship in terms of a biology versus social divide, as if it were located in an imaginary architecture of base and superstructure, one would rather map kinship on to a field of the biological and social reality in which scientific 'truths' about the biological basis intersect with the other biologized claims concerned – in the words of Carol Smart (2009: 565), 'with caring, relationality and the preservation of kinship bonds.'

Conclusion

One may imagine the social form of kinship (K) to be co-constituted by the biological (B) and the social (S) realities. Just how much of B and S are involved in a given kinship form may be formulated in a linear equation that puts K as a function of B and S. But the equation, in capturing the state of interplay between the values of B and S,

is limited to merely gauging causation and measuring the value of various factors. The anthropologist would be equally interested in the non-linear factors that modulate the equation. This refers broadly to the social actors playing an agential role in dealing with objective causation through selective recognition, the and attribution of value in terms of meaning as an overlay on the scientific explanation. Implicit in Parkin's observation is the primacy accorded to the social in directing the interplay of the social and the biological basis of kinship. This concurs with Gellner's view (1960:193) that social kinship is a function of physical kinship, where function is not identity, but a state of being continuously related. Of course, in the relationship, the social plays the active, regulative and agential side of kinship.

The social does play a role in the biological (e.g., epigenetics), and the biological plays a role in the social (e.g., evolutionary psychology). It is in the context of fieldwork that the two differ from each other in the way the reference to the 'social' is employed. Therefore we have to be more specific when we address their incommensurability. Is it about different perspectives holding different views on kinship as a function of their methods and perspectives, or about an emerging issue that needs to be explored from different perspectives for both the expansion of disciplinary boundaries and their respective self-understanding?

The debate on kinship, whether its reality is best explained in terms of social anthropology or biological evolutionism, has almost reached its point of saturation. As part of our tutorial session, the theme brought home that the biological and social side of kinship remain sovereign domains providing little explanatory material in support of each other. The aspect of transcendence in anthropologists' explanations (Parkin 2013), or the people's own experience (when they can afford to be indifferent to the biological basis of kinship) can be seen as a moment when the anthropologist or the kinship-based community can afford to take the biological domain as uncritically given, i.e., devoid of a serious issue deserving urgent attention. The social enjoys relative autonomy so long as the biological (its continuance, its reproduction and development) remains such an unproblematic given. But the social edifice of transcendence begins to break down when the biological realm knocks at the door of the 'social' demanding urgent attention, say, in a situation when a public issue involving genetic risk to health and morbidity arises.

As social anthropologists, our engagement with the biological and evolutionary perspectives allowed us to view our own position self-critically, as well as see the

limitations of our argument more clearly. After all, the ethnographic enquiry into kinship informs the missing facet in the larger narrative of kinship, without any obligatory acceptance of some universal truth. For instance, Parkin (1992: 3) highlights how human communities impose some privileged cultural order over the biological universals about kinship. Neither the biological nor the social bases of kinship can be gleaned in an a priori fashion from an actual anthropological encounter with a group of people ostensibly claiming kinship ties. A field enquiry into kinship would always yield variations on the common theme.

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BOOK REVIEWS

ARJUN APPADURAI, *Banking on words: the failure of language in the age of derivative finance*, London and Chicago: The University of Chicago Press 2016, 180 pp. ISBN 9780226318776.

Arjun Appadurai's latest book is a brief pamphlet on a social form called the 'derivative', which the author sees as central for understanding the way financial capitalism operates. The derivative can essentially be seen as a promise, made between two parties, about the future price of a certain asset – a profoundly secular phenomenon whose origins can be dated back to the mid-nineteenth century with the growth of insurance industry. In the spirit of good analytical anthropology, Appadurai is able to reduce this form of contract to its rudimentary elements and argue that the financial crisis of 2007-8 was ultimately a failure of language made possible by the increased use of derivatives that function as written agreements. Thus, Appadurai's undoubtedly original claim is to suggest that we can understand what went wrong within the financial industry by focusing primarily on language.

His suggestion is certainly compelling, but not defined well enough. Thus, over the course of the book, it becomes clear that Appadurai is talking about the linguistic form of the derivative and not necessarily about its linguistic contents. This enables him to synthesise authors like Durkheim, Weber and Mauss and apply their ideas to contexts that were in their infancy when these men were still producing their scholarship. Through Durkheim, he is able to position the 'market' as the totalized external force we used to call 'society'. Through Weber, he discusses how uncertainty – the unknown non-measurable future – is secularized into risk: the unknown but measurable future which enables risk to be treated as an independent source of profit. Through Austin, Appadurai is able to ground the discussion in its linguistic elements, pointing to the performativity of derivatives and the way any trade between two sides creates a market and thus the conditions of its possibility. Thus, it was the inability to make new promises in the face of all the failed promises in 2008 that led the world to the brink of collapse.

Nevertheless, Appadurai never addresses the linguistic contents of derivatives. While free of any financial jargon, the book features discussions on collateralized debt obligations, credit default swaps and the like, explaining their functions, but not problematizing their very linguistic

features. Language always appears as a background to most of the analysis carried out, but it is not tackled directly as an issue of power. Thus, in Appadurai's text, language was a condition of existence for the financial failure, but not necessarily a means, a strategy or a tactic that precipitated the crisis.

In addition to the analysis of the new financial social forms, Appadurai also advances certain political positions. At the heart of this project is his observation that the nature of the financial subject is primarily dividual, echoing the anthropological analyses from Melanesia. The financial subject is sliced and diced by quantifying the qualitative elements of a person's life in the form of loans, family and health crises, education etc. These can be bundled, repackaged and revalued, sold again and again, creating a chain of derivatives. He is simultaneously critical of political projects like the Occupy movement, arguing that they posit 'the individual' as their basic unit and claiming that only a project that assumes the dividual form will be successful in beating finance players. While I appreciate the analysis of the financial dividual, I feel this is the weak part of Appadurai's otherwise incisive book.

For one thing, it assumes that these political projects operate without any notions and conditions of dividuality, but in fact its endorsements of mutual aid, personal and social autonomy, etc. certainly have these elements. Secondly, even modern finance has to operate with some idea of the individual, if only to break it down into dividual parts – it seems that Appadurai might acknowledge this through his discussion of the ritual as that process which constitutes dividuals as individuals. Thus, the trading event can easily be seen as the ritual which consolidates the individual. Thirdly, it is not clear why any political projects based on individual subjects would be doomed to fail in the face of the financial dividual. This assumes that the financial dividual is already the hegemonic subject and not just an analyst's inference.

So instead of rejecting the debt-driven economy, Appadurai calls for the means for the production of debt to be seized, which has obvious Marxist undertones. I think it strange that the author does not offer some reflections on how this 150-year-old socialist project would develop along different lines. So while Appadurai does succeed in making certain processes legible , offers some interesting re-readings of anthropological giants and convinces the reader that the derivative form is creating contemporary society, his political positions are undeveloped, not entirely clear and remain only theoretical in their nature. Nevertheless, his ambition to develop a social science of calculative action may very well have a solid analytical basis already. Without

understanding its basic feature – the derivative form – we are by definition unable to understand the way finance capitalism works.

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LORETTA A. CORMIER and SHARYN R. JONES, *The domesticated penis: how womanhood has shaped manhood*, Tuscaloosa, Alabama: University of Alabama Press, 2015, 256 pp, ISBN 9780813718741.

The Domesticated Penis challenges the long-held assumption that, in the evolution of male and female humans, form follows function alone. Instead, anthropologists Loretta A. Cormier and Sharyn R. Jones argue that form is the bidirectional coalescing of social, historical, evolutionary, and cultural factors. Principally, they trace the impact of 'female choice' (9) on the modern male phallus. In this sense, Cormier and Jones argue against traditional prototypes of human evolution. It is not merely male preference among females that dominates human evolution; so too does female choice. And thus it seems that 'domestication' (7) – traditionally understood as human-directed change in the evolution of plant and animal species – can be turned on its head: according to Cormier and Jones, males and females can also come to co-domesticate one another.

A rigorous compilation of ethnographic evidence in the disciplines of cultural and medical anthropology, archaeology, primatology, and evolutionary theory, *The Domesticated Penis* is at once a history of the male penis and a narrative of human sexuality, gender identity, and patriarchy. The book itself is broken into five sections. Beginning with 'The Sexual Penis,' (pp. 9-44) Cormier and Jones describe the characteristics of the penis that are distinct to male humans, tracking the evolution of these traits to female preference and pleasure. In 'The Patriarchal Penis,' (pp. 45-87) Cormier and Jones work backwards, articulating links between agricultural societies and social patterns of phallocentrism common to so-called 'penis cults.' 'The Cultural Penis' (pp. 88-112) is a continuation of these trends, locating broad cross-cultural complexes in the way the penis has been conceptualized in ritual, mythology, and cosmology. In

'The Erotic-Exotic Penis,' (pp. 113-131) Cormier and Jones critique common tropes of indigenous and race-based human sexuality, situating nakedness and male/female sexuality as culturally defined concepts. Finally, 'The Domesticated Penis,' (pp. 132-146) drives the cultural relativism of anthropology home; it is here where Cormier and Jones investigate modern domestication(s) of the human penis, particularly in the area of technology and medical modification.

The case for 'female choice' is made most powerfully in 'The Sexual Penis.' Cormier and Jones describe a number of characteristics distinctive to the human penis (such as its spineless and flexible morphology, which contrasts the knobby bristles common to most primates). According to Cormier and Jones, the evolution of these characteristics reveals the impact of female participation: a smooth, non-irritating penis maximizes female pleasure at the cost of enhanced male sensitivity. This suggests that female agency in reproduction, and thus evolution, is often under-estimated. Indeed, it sits in dramatic opposition to the modern intrasexual trope of 'alpha-males' (pp. 31-35) competing with one another and thereby dominating the consequential genotypic lineages.

But Cormier and Jones also argue that 'female choice,' and the evolutionary legacy it leaves, is masked by the agricultural revolution and its associated changes in ownership, social hierarchy, and gender-based lifestyles. According to anthropologists, shifts toward farming led to concrete claims of ownership of land and possibly of people, thereby enhancing social stratification and interpersonal violence. The erosion of egalitarian relationships, replaced by the rise of patriarchal societies, may have sedimented the penis as a symbol of male authority and dominance. Cormier and Jones trace ethnographic analogues of hunter-gatherers and archaeological data among Ancient Egyptians, Mayans, Greeks, Romans and the Indus Valley civilizations to argue for a link between practices of agriculture and phallic cults. Although the argument sometimes appears simplistic, the depth of Cormier and Jones research, and its temporal and geographical cross-cuts, is impressive.

In situating the penis as a powerful tool to be deployed for the creation of productive societies, Cormier and Jones also have to cover the range of mythical, ritualistic, and cosmological powers the penis has come to assume. They do this well in 'The Cultural Penis,' which offers a comprehensive review of the deification of the penis across a range of human cultures. A difficult if not impossible task, the two identify particular 'complexes' (88) common

to the treatment of the penis. Simultaneously, Cormier and Jones maintain their focus on female choice. They highlight rites such as penis sheathing and modification (i.e. circumcision or castration, pp. 99-105): traditions that impart masculine qualities but that also change the penis in a way that can be viewed as a form of feminization (such as subincision, which gives the penis a similar appearance to the vulva). Although buffeted by their comprehensive range of ethnographic and ethnohistorical evidence, Cormier and Jones have to tread carefully here: their conclusions, while provocative, sometimes come across as generalizing.

Any risk of generalizing, however, subsides in the final two sections, 'The Erotic-Exotic Penis' and 'The Domesticated Penis,' which together debunk dubious claims about indigenous and race-based sexuality. In acknowledging anthropology's misguided tendency to eroticize 'the other,' Cormier and Jones note the dominance of this lens in analyses of human sexuality and reproduction. They argue that tales of exotic-erotic behavior, invented out of whole cloth by poor training and research, have been passed down for decades, perpetuating their way into modern interpretations of nakedness and sexual lust and in turn propagating an anxiety about the 'uncouth' subject in the first place. Ultimately, it is these tales that filter down into modern preoccupations with penile size, erectile dysfunction, and sex reassignment. It is this last section where Cormier and Jones may fall short. While erectile dysfunction and the like are characterized as 'culture-bound syndromes' of the West (akin to those proposed by Arthur Kleinman in 1987), an argument for Peter Conrad's medicalization, whereby regular and common human processes or actions come to be defined 'in medical terms, using medical language … and a medical framework', may have made more sense (Conrad 1992: 211).

That said, *The Domesticated Penis* is an astonishing treasure trove of ethnographic research and evidence. In transcending normative gender stereotypes, Cormier and Jones give balance to contemporary concepts related to biocultural evolution and natural selection. Most importantly, they steer clear of neatly packaged conceptualizations. Just as culture cannot be nearly described from biology, neither can the evolution of female and male form and function.

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PETER LARSEN, *Post-frontier resource governance: indigenous rights, extraction and
conservation in the Peruvian Amazon*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016, xiv, 185 pp. ISBN
9781137381842.

In *Post-frontier resource governance: indigenous rights, extraction and conservation in the
Peruvian Amazon*, Peter Larsen takes on a paradox all too familiar to those who study
environmental conflict, development and resource extraction across the global South, namely
that the past four decades have seen an intensification of processes of deforestation, rights
infringements and resource frontier creation, while simultaneous movements for territorial
reserves, protected areas, and the organization of indigenous rights have emerged. As Larsen
explains, in the present era of resource extraction at the world's frontiers, the issue is not so
much that notions of rights, conservation and sustainability are simply absent, but rather that they
are now embedded within the technologies, practices and institutions of contemporary resource
extraction (p. 2). This inconsistency lies at the core of Larsen's ethnographic description and
theoretical analysis, which take as their object of study what he calls the 'post-frontier', that is,
the recent emergence of 21st-century resource frontiers wherein new regulatory processes are
restructuring what was previously formulated through the language of extraction alone (ibid.).
The concept of the post-frontier, then, challenges us to view post-frontier closures, as Larsen
puts it, 'not merely as poorly implemented sustainability solutions;' instead we should
'interrogate the entanglements of post-frontier sustainability and frontier expansion' (p. 3).

Larsen's text emerges from extensive work outside of academia and, more specifically, out
of his experience with the development sector in the Peruvian Amazon. As such, he draws on his

professional involvement with the topic as a means of asking 'where and how the post-frontier is found', pushing beyond simple criticism of a failing post-frontier in order to track the shifting terrain of regulation and its effects on the ground (ibid.). This leads him to reject a number of simplistic assumptions about what exactly goes on in frontier and post-frontier regions. Larsen argues that the post-frontier is much more than merely a site of environmental chaos and disorder marred by unmediated capitalist forms of extraction, as previous anthropological depictions might have assumed; yet, he also challenges a more optimistic portrayal of the post-frontier as having been transformed by discourses around indigenous rights, conservation, sustainability and protection. Instead, drawing on Anna Tsing, he argues that today's post-frontiers are best understood as a site where both of these perspectives must be considered jointly, with the post-frontier as a locale where 'making, saving, and destroying resources are utterly mixed up, where zones of conservation, production and resource sacrifice overlap almost fully…' (Tsing 2005: 32, quoted by Larsen, p. 5).

How the dynamics described by Tsing are experienced and negotiated at the grassroots level by a range of actors situated differently in relation to post-frontier institutions is the question that lies at the core of Larsen's ethnography. In this regard, Larsen's work moves beyond the more theoretical or hypothetical explorations of scholars who have previously written on this topic, as his ethnography speaks to the experiences of state officials and NGO workers, as well as those of local indigenous populations like the Yánesha, whom Larsen researched. Larsen's work will be of interest to others concerned with a wide range of topics—indigeneity, conservation, governance, development—but especially those whose research emphasizes the 'frontier'. His work picks up where much anthropological work on the frontier has left off, proposing a new means of understanding the constellation of powers at play in modern-day environmental struggles—struggles that incorporate a range of discourses beyond just those of extraction and profit.

While a large portion of Larsen's text is historical in nature—tracking the formation of a Yánesha political organization and its outcomes in terms of new legal and environmental regimes—he does offer three particularly valuable theoretical proposals that scholars in the field will certainly find relevant to contexts beyond the central Peruvian Amazon. The first is, as referenced above, the notion of the *post-frontier*, which proceeds from former frontier narratives to take account of the ways in which contemporary frontiers are no longer simply chaotic,

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deregulated wildernesses, but instead are also ordered and regulated. This brings us to Larsen's second proposal, which is that 21ˢᵗ-century post-frontiers might best be understood as socially embedded *assemblages* in that post-frontier institutions cannot be evaluated simply as weak or poor instruments alone, but must be understood instead as particular modes of governance intertwined with specific social practices, moral economies and hierarchies of norms and practices (p. 29). As a result of this social embedded-ness, Larsen argues that scholars must take seriously a third proposal: that analyses of post-frontier governance must move away from assumed *linear* narratives of conquest, control, extraction and 'civilization' (p. 17). In this regard, Larsen aligns his work with the proposals of Latour and others in calling for a 'bottom-up ontological model' that does not take linear properties as its starting point (p. 152) but instead acknowledges the non-linear processes through which the post-frontier is created.

Larsen's book is a valuable piece of work, offering not only a close ethnographic reading of understudied reality—wherein calls for collective rights and environmental safeguards exist alongside continued accumulation and environmental destruction—but also a number of theoretically rich proposals as to how anthropologists might study the post-frontier moving forward.

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MARGARET LOCK and GISLI PALSSON, *Can science resolve the nature/nurture debate?*
Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press 2016, viii, 177 pp. ISBN 9780745689975.

Although the relationship between 'nature' and 'nurture' has been debated for centuries, since the discovery of DNA it has become popularly accepted that nature precedes nurture. However, in this volume, Margaret Lock and Gisli Palsson significantly challenge this paradigm. Not only do they argue that nature and nurture are so intricately intertwined that they cannot easily be delineated or separated, but they also make the case for reversing the dichotomy and placing nurture before nature. The book takes us through the history of the nature/nurture debate, up to, and ultimately beyond the point when DNA was discovered and came to be seen as determining the life of organisms. The account culminates in the 'major conceptual shift' (79) that is currently ongoing in the field of epigenetics, in which nurture is coming to be seen as 'the active, initiating force, to which the genome reacts' (79). According to Lock and Palsson, there is a growing recognition among researchers in the biological and social sciences that environmental, social and political relations significantly impact on the expression of DNA, creating changes in the human body that can be transmitted from one generation to the next. As they point out, this amounts to a paradigm shift that has the potential to revolutionize the field of biology.

While the book is written in a language that is also accessible to those uninitiated into the world of biology, this is firmly a book about medical anthropology. 'Traditional' anthropology – namely, anthropology concerned with the social body, and thus with nurture – only appears in the last chapter, where anthropological examples illustrate how historical, political and economic conditions affect the lives and embodied experience of individuals. A particularly striking example is taken from studies of First Nations in Canada, where the trauma of a colonization that started five centuries ago still leads to widespread substance dependence, depression, violence and high rates of suicide (140-145). Lock and Palsson point out that experiments in epigenetics are generally unable to account for complex influences on the body, such as those experienced by the Canadian First Nations, as social environments are usually 'miniaturized' in lab settings in order to enable the researchers to establish direct correlations between environmental stimuli and changes at the molecular level. On these grounds they argue that the nurture/nature debates cannot be resolved by science alone. Rather, they suggest that anthropologists and other social scientists are crucial to discovering how nurture affects biology, as anthropologists can

contribute historical, social and political background information for individuals involved in studies – information that researchers in epigenetics tend to set aside for practical reasons.

The book therefore reads as an urgent call to action for anthropologists who may be interested in how society 'writ large' affects the expression of DNA and the embodied experience of humans. For those who feel called to this undoubtedly important work, this book lays out the nature of the task ahead, although Lock and Palsson do not elaborate on how it may be accomplished. The cooperation of biologists and anthropologists across the disciplinary divide does indeed appear to be useful in order to create a more complete picture of how specific environments affect biology. However, the task of accounting for the effect on individuals' genomes of the complex and highly subjective understandings of each individual's specific historical, social, political and economic circumstances seems so painstaking and complicated that it inspires some sympathy for the epigenetic researcher who feels compelled to miniaturize environments for testing purposes. It also raises the question of how results may be generalized for the purposes of medical practice, for instance, if each individual's biology is uniquely shaped by his or her biography and subjective understanding of that biography. That is not to say that such anthropological work and cross-disciplinary cooperation is impossible or futile – quite the opposite. It is only to point out some apparent difficulties in accomplishing what Lock and Palsson envision.

Besides this call for action, the book also contests the traditional division between the biological and the social body that is built into the foundation of anthropology, traceable back to Durkheim. While anthropologists such as Mauss (1979), Bourdieu (1977, 1984) and others have concerned themselves with the relationship between the body and the mind, Lock and Palsson point out that 'these theorists do not delve beneath the skin; universal interiority remains intact – an assumed given' (121). The field of epigenetics, however, forms a significant challenge to anthropologists' habit of concerning themselves almost exclusively with the social body, as it demonstrates 'at the molecular level a fusion of the material and the social' (118). Lock and Palsson argue that this has repercussions not only for biology and medicine, but also for anthropology, which they believe needs to take more account of how the interiority of the body, and concepts concerning the body and its afflictions, are influenced by specific times and places to create 'local biologies' (128). Anthropologists seem particularly well placed to consider how,

for instance, the political decisions of governments affect such local biologies, as epigenetics rarely manages to look beyond the family unit or the household.

While this study serves as a compelling eye-opener with regards to how profoundly entangled the biological and the social are, it also perhaps confirms what many anthropologists already felt to be true, namely that the social should be given a greater role in understanding human 'nature'. As Lock and Palsson's example from the Canadian First Nations illustrates, anthropologists have long been aware that social circumstances and political events can be imprinted in the body for generations.

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ELENA MIHAS, *Upper Perené Arawak narratives of history, landscape, and ritual*, Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 2014, lxxix, 402 pp. ISBN 9780803245372.

The disruption of the world's most vulnerable languages has impacted the transmission of oral knowledge, making it critical to situate the historical memory of a people within their own voice. Elena Mihas has provided a valuable collection of narratives, offering insights into the passage of time as experienced by the speakers of an endangered Amazonian Arawak language called Ashéninka. Mihas explores the relationship of orality and personhood to the many transitions experienced by an indigenous population throughout their history, and also strongly writes about the relationship of place to identity: 'From the Upper Perené animistic perspective, landscape is not a mere static setting for people's daily lives, it is part of a dynamic process of their perennial

engagement with the outside world, inseparably tied to a complex web of relationships with its omnipresent spiritual beings' (Mihas 2014: 117).

Mihas explores how forced historical movement affected ways of knowing, and of understanding belonging. She strongly notes that the oral knowledge of stories and history are often bound into the landscapes of a people, with physical landmarks acting as mnemonic devices for linguistic transmission through storytelling. For a people, the sense of place is often integral to protecting and recalling the memory of profound interactions between human beings and their lived cultural worlds. Mihas also explores how performativity and landmarks are understood in a non-literate society that has undergone migration. The text is organized into three sections, each section describing what is understood about history, landscape, or ritual through the voices of the upriver people of eastern Peru. Each narrative is translated into both Ashéninka and English, being the first bilingual narratives specializing in the documentation of historical and linguistic memory for this population. Mihas begins each section by providing some context about what she has understood about the texts, and also the relationship of the narratives to the speakers of this language.

Mihas introduces the section on historical narrative by giving context to the relationship between the passage of time and history. She importantly notes the distinction between the ancient past (including the mythic past) and what has, by contrast, occurred within the realm of contemporary time: 'When there is talk about the past, a boundary will often be drawn between *pairani* (long ago) and *iroñaaka* (now), emphasized by the speaker' (Mihas 2014: 3). Oral narratives within this text are described largely as marking significant events and significant patterns of movement, though they are not necessarily woven together with a temporal precision that is marked by Western conceptions of time-keeping and history. They are instead indexed by their cultural significance for speakers. Interestingly, the beginning of modern times is perceived as being related to the destruction of natural landscape and heritage. It is also marked by heightened global market economies, early military conquests, the usurping of resources, and the dislocation of indigenous people from ancestral lands and into undesirable territories marked by dark and perilous figures like snakes. This movement affects the sense of belonging for a people, and also their interactions with oral knowledge. She notes that the Seer Inca, Api Inca or 'Apinka' is an important figure in the narratives.

In an opening narrative, we are introduced to the story of Apinka. He is described as a powerful force, and as a god with often contradictory traits. He is a fierce warrior, but he also limits the consumption of food for the people. He is described as a figure shrouded in power, and is esteemed as a force among the people. They fear him, yet also look to him in awe. The story describes his memory, and his downfall. A line on page 40 reads: 'When outsiders came, they took away the gold, it all ended, it disappeared, and we don't know where Apinka's gold is.' This is particularly striking, because it can be likened to the disappearance of aspects of cultural knowledge. Similarly, in the *Apapanani* story, the storyteller references the origin of the name of a river. He finishes the story with 'Now, I say, we are forgetting it…' (Mihas 2014: 72).

In the introduction to narratives on landscape, Mihas references the many ways people leave cultural traces in the places they inhabit. The section begins by noting the many ways people 'inscribe' themselves into their environments and references how landmarks and other environmental symbols are related to relevant sociocultural knowledge. This section also describes landscape transformations, human settlement and changing patterns of life among people. Much of the section also notes the struggles of human beings against spirits and other forces that are believed to interact with humans in the natural world: 'Oral tradition maintains that the spaces of the river, the hills, rocks, caves, lakes, and other landscape features are inhabited by supremely powerful beings, unsympathetic to humans' (Mihas 2014: 339).

Mihas follows landscape with a section on ritual and writes about the performativity used to reinforce cultural behavior. She notes that the word *Ametapintari* is used to refer to cultural behaviour that has become habitual with the Upper Perené people. The narratives included in this section describe rituals that were practised in the past, and also contemporary rituals to heal the afflicted. She describes ritual interventions used by shamans that are related to health, animism, and offerings to spiritual beings. Mihas notes that seasonal rights mark calendrical changes, such as changes in the light in the sky and agricultural habits. Much of the introduction to ritual focuses on the rituals involved in the transitional state between girl and womanhood. The difficulty in the onset of menstruation is accompanied by certain ritual activity, as well as by marriage. Mihas writes of 'the transitional state of her social existence' (Mihas 2014: 232) in preparing a woman for marriage.

This text offers the linguistic anthropologist an insight into features of orality and memory that have persisted through history, and also draws on the perceived relationship of Ashéninka

speakers to their linguistic landscape. Mihas successfully collected and translated meaningful narratives and participated in description that both embodied the words of the speakers and built upon her anthropological observations. I think that she could have more clearly defined traditions that were practised in the past, as opposed to the traditions that are still practised. However, the writing is marked by a precision that gives much rich context to the reader. A strong point in this text is her ability to communicate the interactions between language and place in a way that connects social memory directly to the relevance of landscape. The text is a strong text for any student of linguistic anthropology looking for an introduction to Upper Perené history as seen through their own eyes, and as spoken through their own voices.

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ANDREW RUSSELL and ELIZABETH RAHMAN (eds.), *The master plant: tobacco in Lowland South America*. London etc.: Bloomsbury Academic Publishing 2015, xx, 259 pp. ISBN 9781472587541.

The master plant: tobacco in Lowland South America is a collection of ten recent ethnographic studies offering different perspectives on the importance and meanings of tobacco use, specifically among different native groups in the Amazonian lowlands. Since Wilbert (1987) published his fundamental text *Tobacco and shamanism in South America,* little research has been conducted regarding the deeper significance of tobacco use among Amazonian Indians, primacy being given instead to other 'master plants' such as *ayahuasca*, which has been incorporated into Amerindian shamanism much more recently. Since the heavy commercialization and global spread of tobacco during the colonial period and the realization of the seemingly incommensurable health risks associated with the plant, tobacco has acquired a bad reputation and frequently been placed on the backburner of ethnobotanical and anthropological research in the Amazon. This collection of essays by various Amazonianists has re-taken tobacco by the hand and dragged it centre stage, where it belongs. This most recent work on the subject is strictly devoted to new anthropological analyses of tobacco in lowland

South America and new ways of looking at the past and present conditions of the plant that will spark new ideas for future research.

The book in divided into three parts. Part I is dedicated to new research regarding the origins and historical uses of tobacco, as well as archaeological data on the plant's ecology. Historical overviews are presented giving primacy to spatial and temporal domains and the changes and/or resilience of Amerindian uses and meanings of tobacco in both past and present contexts. Augusto Oyuela-Caycedo and Nicholas Kawa analyse tobacco's origins and its contemporary perspectives while including detailed charts of consumption techniques (taken from Wilbert 1987) and geographical distributions of the Nicotiana species in the Americas. The circulation and commercialization of tobacco from its global economic movement during the colonial period to its present uses and meanings in rural Amazonia today are discussed in fair depth. There is a detailed description of the plant species, with different arguments relating to the origins of its use and consumption, and descriptions of different techniques applied to archaeo-botanical remains. An archaeological weakness in the lowlands is stressed regarding the lack of primacy given to the floatation techniques 'that would allow for the recovery of the carbonized seeds' (32), which has consequently led to few findings of specific Nicotiana specimens. Different species of Nicotiana residue found in recovered pipes and artefacts have been left unidentified; however, the article importantly suggests that the spread of N. Rustica (the medicinal species used) from South to North America predates agriculture, hunter-gatherers having been responsible for such diffusion.

To complement this background, Peter Gow's case study uses a 'controlled comparison' to analyse the now different uses of tobacco among two Arawakan-speaking peoples, the Piro and Apurinã on the Purús river in Brazil. He defends a 'structural diffusion' approach showing that similar groups speaking related languages can express increasingly contradictory methods of tobacco use. The fact that the Piro have changed to smoking tobacco, while the Apurinã have retained the use of snuff, he suggests, is due to a dramatic change in shamanistic practice among the Piro. While using ethnohistorical data concerning specific instruments/pipes and tubes of tobacco use, Gow sees prior transformations of tobacco uses as the imperative reasoning for the adoption of *ayahuasca* 'by certain people and not by others' within such a 'general field of diffusion' (46). Such differences are presented not as '*ad hoc* borrowing or non-borrowings by two neighbouring peoples…but [as] complex transformations within systems of transformations

that are aware of each other at some level' (61). As Gow successfully argues, Lévi Strauss's 'neglected canonical formula' casts a new spotlight on such currently proposed ethnohistorical complexes and present shifts in tobacco use.

Similarly, Françoise Barbira Freedman, writing on 'tobacco and shamanic agency' among the Keshwa Lamas, also uses a combination of ethnohistorical and ethnographic sources to demonstrate the resilience of the plant's shamanistic and everyday uses against all the odds. Although shamanic practices have been subject to frequent transformations, tobacco has persevered and has even been ossified—in addition to being the stepping-stone to *ayahuasca* use— through the growing adoption of *ayahuasca* shamanism in the region. Freedman compares and contrasts present tobacco uses between hunters and shamans and finds ethnographic answers to its liveliness within ethnographic material of 'both indigenous and non-Indian syncretic "vegetalismo" as intertwined through centuries of diacritical oppositions yet of dialectic integration' (83). This chapter does a thorough job of incorporating the ritual use of tobacco for curing and illness treatment by blowing, conducts an analysis of shamanic agency within an animist ontological perspective, and of non-indigenous forms of shamanic medicine, transformation and body complexes, and explains psychosomatic alterations through tobacco smoke.

In Part II, 'Shifting perspectives' (89), Bernd Brabec de Mori guides us through the negative reputation of tobacco as having being associated with the bad side of shamanism (i.e. sorcery) for quite some time. Stressing the continuous primacy of *ayahuasca* studies in literature, he attempts to re-establish the importance of tobacco, giving primacy to Viveiros de Castro's perspectivist ontological approach within his analysis. Brabec de Mori uses an ethnomusicological method in his wonderful article, contributing to a new scholarly emphasis on tobacco use through an analysis of 'tobacco songs' that is directly linked to the act of smoking and blowing tobacco itself. Such tobacco-smoking represents major transformational significance, where the smoke directly represents the words or message of the song that is being used as a medium of communication to spirits, human, or non-human entities. Coinciding with perspectivism, Brabec de Mori stresses the importance of seeing from the 'other's' perspective. To cure or defeat an illness, one must enter into communication with the 'other'/the sorcerer who has inflicted the illness in the first place, and then symbolically defeat them in the battle to heal the patient. The argument, then, highlights a crucial reciprocal relationship between warfare and

sorcery on the one hand and curing and illness on the other, stressing a current 'morally ambiguous' position on perspectives regarding tobacco.

In the second article in the section, Juan Alvaro Echeverri uses two elders' perspectives to discuss tobacco use and meaning among 'the people of the center'. Here, indigenous awareness of tobacco consumption is key. Alvaro Echeverri shares with the reader the information that one of the elders had given him advice on smoking. Although Alvaro Echeverri had been a heavy smoker, the elder, Kinerai, did not tell him to quit in so many words, but had instead advised him to gain a perspective on the 'spirit' of the plant. This brings up crucial Amerindian ways of knowing, namely that 'a man *must* smoke and needs to know what smoking is for because tobacco *has a spirit*' (109). Within the people of the centre, since tobacco is mainly processed and made into a paste before it is licked—smoking is only secondary—such symbolic meanings and ways of making the paste are crucial in understanding the cosmologies and myths of these societies. Alvaro Echeverri shares an important myth marking the origin and dangers of tobacco and linking the latter with the predatory capabilities of menstrual blood. The significance of heating and cooling and the symbolic process of adding ash salt—representative of semen—to the tobacco juice—representative of the dangerous menstrual blood—is part of a larger binary relationship between gendered, double-sided, 'culinary spaces'. One of these spaces represents 'meat' foods and is categorized within a male domain also including coca and tobacco, while the other is symbolic of the women's 'non-meat' domain, and includes such items as cassava bread and chilli sauce. 'The chilli sauce is licked, as is the tobacco paste, and is complimented with coca powder…such complementation is attached to the proper construction of a person' (119-120). These ingested substances are thus fundamental to personhood, fundamental to the making of a 'true person'. Tobacco, coca and salt are harmful unless processed and subjected to the very specific and symbolic techniques of heating, filtering and pounding/ or cooling to render them safe and maintain 'a healing capacity in the heart' (125).

The final article in this section focuses on similar fundamentals regarding 'tobacco smoke blessings' and the process of making and maintaining a person and a body. Focusing on infant-'making' among the Xie river dwellers, Elizabeth Rahman stresses the use of tobacco smoke, spell-blowing and bathing as *longue durée* processes during stages of perinatal care in a unique and personal way. Such processes, which are concerned with the cooling and forming of the child, are fundamental to the technique used to protect babies' 'chronically unstable bodies'

(Vilaça 2005), whose souls—or *anga*—can easily be lost to many different phenomena, including fright and chronic crying. Rahman does well in providing vivid examples, including references to her own new-born baby and her 'fright' diagnoses, which were cured by a tobacco-smoke blessing given by a shaman. Assessing the 'mindfulness' refined within tobacco-smoking, how it is used and in what exact contexts also benefits the chapter. Tobacco smoke here is importantly witnessed as able to 'mediate domains of existence and facilitate relations with others, traversing borders and acting as a broker, in the same way in which a shaman does' (148). This demonstration of its affect towards people goes well beyond simple analyses of psychosomatics and symbolism.

The final section, Part III, eases itself in as central to identity and landscape and the role of tobacco in sociality. Renzo Duin focuses on the Wayana and their appropriation of commercial cigarettes. His central questions reflect whether or not commercial cigarettes have affected the present-day role of the shaman, and whether traditionally rolled *tamï ale* cigarettes have now been replaced with commercial cigarettes. Duin uses ethnographic and cinematographic material to determine the significance of both ways of smoking. He shows that smoking commercial cigarettes and *tamï ale* serve very different functions and both contribute to different social fields. Commercial cigarettes have not replaced *tamï ale* but have been incorporated into a changed expression of sociality: 'Tamï ale is directly related to the Guiana tradition of conviviality, whereas commercial cigarettes are mostly used by young individuals who have an insecure identity' (165). Thus, among the Wayana smoking commercial cigarettes is seen as merely recreational, not as having a deeper shamanic significance.

Similarly, writing on the Yanomami in the Venezuelan Amazon (Ocamo Basin), Alejandro Reig describes tobacco as an everyday recreational tool and indispensable product for building social and exchange relationships with other groups. Unlike many other Amazonian societies, tobacco use among the Yanomami is a non-ritual and purely social act. Here, 'consumption and sociality display complementary aspects' (168). In the bigger picture, Reig successfully investigates how such social relations between people, places and 'desires' through mobility are lubricated and fostered by tobacco. Such place- and relation-making further 'constitutes a marker of identity' (171) in contrast to neighbouring groups. These markers of difference are crucial, and Yanomami frequently visit other groups, which positively 'affords the possibility of incorporating the perspective of others, doing what they do, eating what they eat' (172). Such

ways of knowing heavily rely on the perspectivist approach concerning the maintenance of identity. While using examples of myths, smoking is stressed as a social and public act that is 'likely to be an aspect of the performance of a "civilized" individual' (179). The process of making bodies—an incorporation of otherness—and the need for commensality and exchange forms individual societies and identities within them. Tobacco is shown as indispensable to this process.

Juan Pablo Sarmiento Barletti also addresses the significance of different everyday uses of tobacco for Ashaninka well-being or *'kametsa asaiki'*. Unlike many other studies of the plant, Barletti concerns himself less with the ritual aspects and issues of personhood and more with its non-ritual uses. Tobacco has played an important role in reconstructing cosmological and social relations as a form of reconciliation for the bloodshed and displacement caused by the Peruvian civil war (1980-2000). The Ashaninka use tobacco as a way to attract the good spirits that were consequently exiled. Deeper meanings of the incorporations of commercial goods and cigarettes are very well addressed, suggesting a fault in acculturation theories and a representation which goes beyond mere utilitarian value. Deeper analyses of consumption, identity and modernity begin to converge but in unexpected ways when Barletti argues that tobacco is an empowering tool, and that cigarettes could be a tactical instrument for becoming both Peruvian and a civilized indigenous person.

Finally, Paolo Fortis focuses on the Guna people on an island off the coast of Panama, also adopting a perpectivist approach to assess the relationship between the uses of sweet and bitter *chicha* drinks respectively as part of an analysis of curing rituals. Sweet *chicha* is linked to notions of conviviality and body-making and is significantly associated with the sweet *chicha* of auxiliary spirits, which from the Guna point of view takes the form of tobacco smoke. In contrast, for the Guna, animals' bitter *chicha* takes the form of tobacco ashes. This also constructs important Guna associations of foods and anti-foods. Similar to other arguments described above, 'different ways of smoking correspond to different forms of sociality' (212). Commercial cigarettes have also been enthusiastically adopted in a way which has also come to fit within the structure, incorporating different modes of sociality and transformation complexes: 'Tobacco does at the metaphysical level what *chicha* does at the physical one; they both index consubstantiality with beings to be made similar and mediate predatory relations with 'others'' (213).

These ten chapters could have a fundamental impact on new anthropological, ethnobotanical and archaeological findings concerning the deeper meanings of tobacco use in Lowland South America. *The master plant* is a crucial read for those studying Amazonian peoples and/or the complexity of tobacco. The purpose of this book was to present new perspectives and shed more light on the importance of tobacco by introducing new ways of looking at the plant's uses at the present day. It is now up to future research to expand on these subjects of interest. *The master plant* can be used as an important stepping-stone toward the improvement of tobacco studies, not only in scholarly analysis, but also in acquiring a deeper understanding of the peoples we wish to learn from.

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