IntechOpen

Anthropology

History, Theory, Practice, and Engagement

Edited by Jack David Eller

Anthropology - History, Theory, Practice, and Engagement

Edited by Jack David Eller

Published in London, United Kingdom

Anthropology - History, Theory, Practice, and Engagement
http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.1008099
Edited by Jack David Eller

Contributors
Aslican Kalfa-Topates, Elizabeth Childs-Johnson, Hakan Topates, Jack David Eller, Mahmoud Alinejad, Mari Rysst, Minga Mbweck Kongo, Nelson Tivane, Sebastian Braun, Shivappa A. Awaradi

First published in London, United Kingdom, 2025 by IntechOpen
IntechOpen is the global imprint of INTECHOPEN LIMITED, registered in England and Wales, registration number: 11086078, 167-169 Great Portland Street, London, W1W 5PF, United Kingdom

For EU product safety concerns: IN TECH d.o.o., Prolaz Marije Krucifikse Kozulić 3, 51000 Rijeka, Croatia, info@intechopen.com or visit our website at intechopen.com.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Anthropology - History, Theory, Practice, and Engagement
Edited by Jack David Eller
p. cm.
Print ISBN 978-1-83635-361-4
Online ISBN 978-1-83635-360-7
eBook (PDF) ISBN 978-1-83635-362-1

Meet the editor

Jack David Eller is Distinguished Professor of Anthropology at Woxsen University, Hyderabad, India. His areas of specialization include the anthropology of religion, psychological anthropology, anthropology of violence, and anthropology of contemporary politics and culture. He is the author of twenty books and numerous articles, including most recently *Beyond Liminality: Ontologies of Abundant Betweenness* and *Apisteology: The Study of Not-Believing*. He has also edited or co-edited several volumes, including *The Anthropology of Donald Trump: Culture and the Exceptional Moment*, and, for IntechOpen, *Gun Violence and Prevention – Connections, Cultures, and Consequences*.

Contents

Preface

Despite its long, illustrious, and often controversial history, anthropology remains the smallest and most misunderstood of the social sciences. For instance, in the early 2020s, the United States produced just over 11,000 university graduates with anthropology degrees per year, compared to over 39,000 degrees in economics and 129,000 in psychology. Equally bad if not worse, few people outside the discipline actually know what anthropology is or what anthropologists do. The public often assumes that anthropologists excavate ancient cities (a job for archaeologists, who are usually reckoned as practitioners of one of the conventional four fields of anthropology, but likely the smallest of those four fields) or dig up the bones of dinosaurs (a job for paleontologists, who are not anthropologists at all). There have been no great popular representatives of anthropology since Margaret Mead in the 1940s and 1950s—nothing to rival the Carl Sagan and Neil deGrasse Tyson of natural science—although David Maybury-Lewis tried to raise the discipline's profile with his 1992 television documentary series "Millennium: Tribal Wisdom and the Modern World". Unfortunately, even that production tended to exoticize and marginalize anthropology, leaving the impression that it was still and fundamentally about "tribal" people and therefore of little real significance for the modern world.

The truth is that anthropology grapples intensely and profitably with the world of modern peoples, states, and global processes, long ago climbing out of what has been called "the savage slot"—if only because traditional or tribal peoples themselves have climbed out of that slot and never really occupied it in the first place. Anthropology has also become one of the most self-reflective disciplines, pondering its methods and mission, and sometimes questioning its very existence; arguably, no academic discipline has changed as much over the past century. Furthermore, most anthropologists today do not typically or stereotypically assume the role of academics and professors; instead, they apply their anthropological concepts and skills to careers in business, government, law, medicine, community development, activism, and various other areas.

No single volume can capture the full diversity of contemporary anthropology, but this present volume makes a commendable effort. Across the ten chapters, the contributions explore a range of topics, from relatively traditional to entirely modern and cutting-edge, encompassing both empirical and ethnographic studies, as well as theoretical and critical perspectives. Jack David Eller's introductory chapter surveys the history and numerous changes and theoretical reorientations of the field over its more than one hundred-year history. Nelson Tivane examines one of the most pressing issues of the day—refugees and forced migration—with a particular focus on Mozambique. Shivappi A. Awaradi takes us to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (site of some of the earliest modern fieldwork) to consider the welfare of indigenous peoples. Mahmoud Alinejad's study of nationalism versus Islamism in Iran explodes preconceptions about that country, while Hakan Topates and Aslican Kalfa Topates' offering combines the subjects of Iran and refugees, discussing Iranian refugees in Turkey through the lens of the famous Frankfurt School's conception of freedom. Rounding out the more empirical chapters, Elizabeth-Childs Johnson represents archaeology, asking what artifacts teach us about pre-modern beliefs in China.

The final four chapters of the volume highlight some of the most fundamental theoretical and self-critical aspects of twenty-first-century anthropology. Given contemporary anthropology's concern for the production of knowledge (including its own knowledge), Minga Kongo challenges us to think about disciplinary knowledge production outside of the hegemonic West. Jack David Eller engages the controversy regarding the relationship between anthropology and its signature methodology, ethnography. Mari Rysst follows with reflections on the future—and potential end—of ethnographic fieldwork within the strictures of new research ethics requirements. Finally, Sebastian Braun argues that our time of crisis calls for new and liberatory research and representational approaches, including humor, art, and poetry, which hopefully would and should also increase widespread awareness of what anthropology is and what it brings to our understanding of the contemporary world.

Taken together, the chapters provide a snapshot of a discipline very much in motion—one that has emerged from a preoccupation with small, remote, and distinctly non-Western societies to one that is fully engaged with the present globalized world and which has much to say about it that other disciplines do not and perhaps cannot say. Consider these chapters and the volume that they form as a retrospective, critique, and perspective on a science with a unique and informative past and a future full of promise.

Jack David Eller
Department of Anthropology,
Woxsen University,
Hyderabad, India

Chapter 1

Introductory Chapter: The Many Lives of Anthropology

Jack David Eller

1. Introduction

"It would be difficult to find ten anthropologists, who would agree on what anthropology is on close definition," uttered E. L. Hewitt in 1907, according to Juul Dieserud writing the following year ([1], p. 11). At that time, the field of anthropology was still quite young: according to Dieserud, in 1908 anthropology was just recently "well out of its teens," with "certain parts of its vast boundary... still only dimly defined" (p. 2).

For the present volume, which is conceived as a retrospective and prospective on, a celebration and critique of, the discipline of anthropology, Howell's and Dieserud's diagnosis is an interesting provocation and opportunity. Accordingly, this introductory chapter seizes the occasion to survey the territory that anthropology has trod not only during the past century since Malinowski and Boas established it firmly as an ethnographic science but from the earliest stirrings of what we could call the ethnographic impulse, the desire to describe—and more than describe, but to explain and understand—the nature of humanity through its diversity. The history of anthropology has, of course, become something of an industry, embodied best in the works of George Stocking, but there is abundant if not endless—and contentious—material for pondering the origins and evolution of the field, which is an apt undertaking for the book you are about to read. What we will find is many incarnations, in the past and the present alike, of anthropology—that it has lived many lives and displayed as much diversity as the humankind that it aspires to know.

2. Anthropology and the ethnographic impulse before 1800

In the same year that Dieserud wrote, the illustrious James George Frazer mused that, "Strange as it may seem, in the large and thriving family of the sciences, Anthropology, or the Science of Man, is the latest born" ([2], p. 3). This is not to say that a curiosity about fellow humans was totally lacking, although certainly any systematic study of humanity in its immense variety, especially a science of the present-day sort, was very late arriving. It is customary, in fact, to start the anthropological clock with Herodotus, the ancient Greek author of *Histories* around 450 BCE, whom Margaret Hodgen called "the first authoritative Greek ethnologist" ([3], p. 30). Not only did he describe more than two dozen peoples encountered during his travels, but according to Hodgen he did so from a distinctly objective and comparative perspective based on surprisingly familiar analytical categories such as "marriage customs, religious rites, burial practices, and food habits" (23). While by no means an exhaustive catalog of cultural topics, this list does indicate a sensibility toward standardized comparable classes of information.

There is some disagreement about what became of the spirit of ethnographic inquiry in the two millennia between Herodotus and the European Enlightenment. Hodgen, like most scholars, was pessimistic about ethnographic records from the Hellenistic, Roman, and medieval eras; in her estimation, writings from this long, dark period were burdened by repetition of the legendary and imaginative (if not nonsensical), obsession with the bizarre and exceptional, and, after the triumph of Christianity, conformity to dogma. Moreover, in a tendency that far outlived the ancient and medieval world, discussion of human diversity was typically bundled into the subject of "natural history," as in Pliny the Elder's *Historia naturalis* composed around 77 CE and jumbling anthropological observations with geography, zoology, and other subjects. It was only through the auspices of long-distance travel related to trade and commerce, proselytization and pilgrimage, and war that accurate and trustworthy (we could say, practical) accounts began to appear, as in Carpini's 1240s *Historia Mongolorum* and the chronicles of Marco Polo. Indeed, Hodgen asserted that Carpini organized his researches under four relatively modern headings, namely, bodily forms and living habits, manners, laws and customs, and religious or "superstitious" traditions ([3], p. 91). On the other hand, Fazioli [4] and Khanmohamadi [5] are adamant that the Middle Ages were not dark and sterile centuries for ethnographic inquiry, on the grounds of a few key figures like William of Rubruck, Gerald of Wales, and John Mandeville.

Whatever the case, the term "anthropology" is usually considered a neologism coined in 1501 by Magnus Hundt in his *Anthropologium de hominis dignitate* (Anthropology of Humanity's Dignity), which inaugurated the tradition of attending to humankind's dual-but-integrated nature as a physical and a spiritual (we would more likely say today, psychological or social) being. The term was adopted three decades later by Galeazzo Capra in his 1533 *Anthropologia* [6]. According to Haddon in his 1910 history of anthropology, it was another century before the word entered English via the anonymous 1655 *Anthropologic Abstracted; or, The idea of Humane nature reflected in briefe Philosophicall and anatomical collections*, which defined it as "the history of human nature" again in terms of the body or anatomy and the psychology or "rational soul" of humankind ([7], pp. 6–7).

Santing concluded that the "science of man" that was forming by the 1600s was a mélange of various and often incompatible genres, including "Bible studies, philosophical dignity literature, the study of Aristotle's natural philosophy, but also anatomical, physiological, and psychological investigations" ([6], p. 481). The anatomical/physiological side rose to the fore in the 1700s as the basis for typologies and theories of human difference, exemplified by Johann Friedrich Blumenbach's 1775 thesis *On the Natural Variety of Mankind*, which grouped human populations into five races (but happily one species)—Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American, and Malay. After logging the physical differences in fair detail, he attributed many of them to the effect of climate on the body, as well as to migration. Yet he made the very modern observation that humans are "destitute" in instincts, which opened a space for learning and what we would come to label as culture.

Around the same time, Johann Herder sliced humanity alternatively not as races but as nations or folks, each with its own special natural qualities or genius, its unique national soul, *Nationalgeist*, *Geist der Nation*, *Geist des Volks*, or *Seele des Volks*. As a natural subdivision of the species, each nation/folk was the bearer of distinctive customs or lifeways, expressed in its language, arts, folklore, and so forth. These customs or lifeways (again, in the modern vernacular, culture) were legitimate objects of investigation and preservation, and by implication not only European folks but non-European and non-Western folks possessed them. Hence, as Stocking reminded us, academic interest in the vanishing or forgotten heritage of rural (and presumably pre-modern) populations started to flourish, including practices of going into communities to collect this local knowledge [8].

3. The crystallization of anthropologies in the 1800s

The predominance of physical or racial hypotheses in the nineteenth-century history of anthropology, stemming from earlier habits of thought and exacerbated by colonialism and imperialism, has been well recognized. Less appreciated, Stocking contended, is the fact that pre-1800s scientists of humanity "did not conceptualize human diversity in rigidly hereditarian or strictly physical terms" ([8], p. 18). Moreover, the concept of "race" itself only gradually acquired "a clearly biological meaning" in the mid-1800s, as the term continued to be applied not just to the Caucasian race and the African race, etc. but to the English race, the German race, the Irish race, and others; consequently, the nineteenth-century science of man still evinced "a confusion of physical and cultural characteristics" (p. 63), often on the reasoning that the former caused the latter.

The other key piece of the coalescing field of anthropology was *progress*, the idea that contemporary "civilization" (that is, European society and culture) was the product of "the development of human ideas and institutions from some primitive or 'natural' state," represented by non-European peoples who, for some reason, remained at one of these more primitive states (p. 19). Hence the interpretation of the anthropological project as history or natural history. A precocious example was J. C. Prichard's 1808 *De generis humani varietate* (On the Diversity of the Human Race), which he followed with his 1843 *The Natural History of Man*. In between, William Lawrence likewise published his 1819 *Lectures on the Natural History of Man*; shortly after Prichard's second book, Robert Gordon Latham added his 1850 *Natural History of the Varieties of Man*.

The most famous and influential instance of speculative human social history was, of course, Morgan's 1877 *Ancient History*, which organized the ladder of progress into three major stages—savagery, barbarism, and civilization. More narrow or specialized studies focused on one particular social institution, like Maine's 1861 *Ancient Law* and 1883 *On Early Law and Custom*; Bachofen's 1861 *Mother Right*, McLennan's 1865 *Primitive Marriage*, and Morgan's 1871 *Systems of Consanguinity and Affinity of the Human Family*; and Robertson Smith's 1889 *Religion of the Semites* and Frazer's 1890 *The Golden Bough*.

While these sweeping natural-social histories were usually oversimplified and frequently fanciful, and while they tended to lean on classical Western sources rather than non-Western ethnographic ones, they did illustrate an important ascending consciousness of comparison, already detected in von Humboldt's 1797 *Plan einer vergleichenden Anthropologie* (Outline of a Comparative Anthropology). What was lacking was empirical knowledge of the alleged living representatives of those earlier states of humanity, or as von Humboldt complained, "What we need most right now is an individualizing knowledge of human beings" ([9], p. xii). In response, an overlapping—or parallel, or identical—enterprise of *ethnology* began to take shape. According to

Stocking, in England by mid-century, ethnology was understood as "the most general scientific framework for the study of the linguistic, physical, and cultural characteristics of dark-skinned, non-European, 'uncivilized' peoples" ([8], p. 47), precisely the populations most needed to complete the anthropology-as-natural-history project. (Lest one think that we have spoken too incautiously about the relationship between anthropology and ethnology, Haddon wrote in his aforementioned history that "'Ethnology' is a term which is often loosely used as synonymous with 'Anthropology,' to cover the whole field of the science of man" ([7], p. 99)).

Since ethnology, or anthropology construed as ethnology, was seen (then and for decades to come) as an appendage of sociology—essentially the sociology of "primitive" or non-Western peoples—it was (then and for decades to come) "viewed as a science of leftovers or residues…a fusion of diverse styles of inquiry, derived from the natural historical, the moral philosophical, and the humanistic traditions—in relation to a particular subject matter that was being excluded from other emerging human sciences"; ultimately, "ethnology was the science of savages in the sense that it was the only scholarly discourse that took them seriously as subject matter" ([8], p. 48).

Given this task, and receiving the popular conceptions and scholarly tendencies of the day, it is no surprise that anthropology/ethnology would persist, as in Pliny's time, as a jumble of biological/racial, cultural/civilizational, psychological, and often moral discourses and practices. On the subject of psychology, Buschmann stressed that thinkers like Bastian, creator of the notions of *Elementargedanken* (elementary/universal ideas/thoughts) and *Völkergedanken* (folk/local ideas/thoughts), held that "ethnology was above all a psychological endeavor… Ethnology became, in his view, an ethnopsychology (*Völkerpsychologie*)" ([10], p. 18). However it was conceived—as psychology, race, institutional history, or whatever—Buschmann reckoned that anthropology/ethnology underwent a shift "from globalism to localism," or we could say from grand conjectural typologies and histories to descriptive particularism, which "preferred small inquiries within clearly delineated areas" (p. 2). An interesting early attempt at this approach was Latham's 1859 *Descriptive Ethnology*, the first volume of which, concentrating on eastern and northern Asia and parts of Europe, contained short profiles of multiple societies and culture areas, each illustrating the familiar ersatz of geographical, racial, and social-cultural.

This transformation was gradual and never absolute, but it did further accelerate the multiplication of views of precisely what anthropology was. One of the best surveys of this terrain, written at a time especially close to the events, is Dieserud's tragically neglected 1908 synopsis of "the scope and content" of late 1800s/very early 1900s anthropology [1]. The book must be read to feel the full impact, but some excerpts provide a taste of the dazzling disagreement about what exactly anthropology was and how it should be organized or subdivided.

- Topinard 1885: two branches, one for racial variation (anthropology), the other for variation of "peoples" (ethnology); later dubbed "anthropology proper" as the science of human biology versus "ethnical anthropology" as the study of culture and custom, further divided into ethnology and sociology

- Hovelacque and Herve 1887: four branches—zoological anthropology, ethnical anthropology (comparative racial anatomy and physiology), prehistoric anthropology, and ethnography (description and classification of existing peoples/races)

- Brinton 1892: somatology or physical anthropology, ethnology or historic and analytic anthropology, ethnography or geographic and descriptive anthropology, and archaeology
- Powell 1892 and 1900: somatology, psychology, and ethnology (including archaeology)
- Haddon 1898: ethnography as the "description of a special people" like a tribe or nation as well as the classification of such groups; ethnology includes subtopics of sociology, technology, religion, and language
- Banhson 1900: anthropology and ethnography as distinct sciences, the former discussing natural history and the latter committed to cultural history

And so forth. In his own classification outline that fills much of the book, Dieserud broke anthropology down into *general* (basically physical) anthropology on the one hand, including zoological anthropology, paleoanthropology, "racial psychology," and "systematic or taxonomic" anthropology, and *ethnical* anthropology, encompassing folk psychology, ethnology or "culture anthropology" (a term he attributes to Holmes in 1903), archaeology also known as paleoethnology, anthropogeography, and ethnography. His category "ethnic sociology" circumscribed most of the terrain of contemporary cultural anthropology, from kinship and government to arts, language, material culture, religion and mythology, morals, and folklore.

4. Twentieth-century proliferations of anthropology

In its ambition to be a comprehensive science of humanity, nineteenth-century anthropology was unavoidably a dual (even a muddled) science of biology and culture, with arguably biology in the forefront, under the influence of characters like anatomist Paul Broca in France. E. B. Tylor is the transitional figure, whose 1871 *Primitive Culture* obviously privileged culture and provided the seminal opening definition as the complex whole that is learned and shared in a society. Still, the book followed the tradition of decontextualized comparison and "thin description," and his subsequent 1881 *Anthropology: An Introduction to the Study of Man and Civilization* conventionally commenced with prehistory, anatomy and physiology, and race classification before diving into cultural subjects such as language, tools, economics, religion, and "society" which covered kinship, property, law and government, rank and class, and war. So, it was well established that anthropology was going to be a broad undertaking, eventually evolving into the familiar "four fields" of physical/biological, cultural, and linguistic anthropology plus archaeology accepted by most if not all anthropologists today.

What was still lacking in turn-of-the-century anthropology, despite enhanced awareness of the cultural or "ethnical" side of the discipline, was what Geertz would later memorably call "thick description" of particular societies and cultures. In other words, anthropology was not yet a fully *ethnographic* science in the modern sense. This is not to say that there were no ethnographic case studies of particular groups or peoples; there were, of course, including Boas' 1888 *The Central Eskimo* and Rivers' 1906 *The Todas*. Research expeditions were being commissioned expressly for the purpose of collecting such information, even if those excursions only allowed brief stops among several peoples. Even so, in his 1908 lecture on social anthropology, Frazer emphasized the urgency of securing "without delay full and accurate reports" of the "perishing or changing peoples" in the non-Western world, declaring that "There is still time to send expeditions to these regions" ([2], p. 21).

Twentieth-century anthropology answered this call, best personified by Boas and Malinowski, who advocated direct and intimate knowledge of a people and their lifeways through long-term in-person fieldwork and participant observation, yielding an ethnography or written account of the fieldworker's experience. For some, like Frazer, this still entailed the nineteenth-century holdover of "discovering the general laws which have regulated human history" ([2], p. 4), while for others, especially Boas and his school, the goal was more particularistic and less universal, more idiographic and less nomothetic.

The history of anthropology from Boas and Malinowski to today is better known than the previous period, so we will dwell on it more briefly, but the key point for us in this introductory chapter is the perhaps unanticipated and undesired proliferation of anthropologies over the last century. Some may have hoped that the professionalization of anthropology, and its new seat in university departments, would unify the discipline, whereas the opposite happened.

The most fundamental disciplinary schism was between cultural anthropology and social anthropology, typically if loosely ascribed to Boas and Malinowski, respectively. Cultural anthropology, favored in the United States, predictably placed culture at the center of interest, often with a distinctly psychological bent; lacking its own psychological theory, it regularly absorbed psychoanalytic terms, concepts, and even tools (like the Rorschach test). Social anthropology, based more firmly in the United Kingdom, was construed by its chief advocate, Radcliffe-Brown, as natural science and comparative sociology (in fact, a branch of sociology); the mandate was not to study culture (which was invisible if real at all) but rather social relations and social processes, which were actually observable. Ultimately, Radcliffe-Brown's social anthropology sought Frazerian laws of society; it was to be a nomothetic and comparative project instead of a primarily descriptive or ethnographic one. Radcliffe-Brown overtly despaired of the ethnographic turn of the discipline.

Especially within the cultural camp, the propagation of multiple anthropologies accelerated. Some clung to Boasian salvage anthropology, collecting the remnants of indigenous cultures while they were still available (just as Frazer counseled them to do), often mixing in psychology and linguistics, as did Sapir. Others, like Boas' student Kroeber, adopted an anti-psychological stance, treating culture as an independent emergent level of reality which could and should be studied apart from the mere "carriers" of culture that were breathing human beings. At the opposite extreme, numerous American anthropologists partnered with psychoanalyst Kardiner to do essentially psychological analyses of entire cultures or societies; others like Hallowell took psychoanalytic theories and tests into the field. Across the Atlantic, British anthropology devised its own theories, such as Malinowski's largely individualistic functionalism and Radcliffe-Brown's more collective or institutional structural functionalism, which queried not what culture did for individuals but how it contributed to the stability and perpetuation of society—granting, as Radcliffe-Brown did, that when you think you are studying culture, "you are always studying the acts of behavior of a specific set of persons who are linked in a social structure" ([11], p. 106).

Within just a few decades, anthropology passed through the first of its crises and reformulations, as the next generation of practitioners expressed frustration with the disappointments of their predecessors. Consequently, the discipline struck out in new directions. One was the "culturology" of White, who as early as 1940 highlighted symbolic thinking, or "symboling," as the essence of culture; soon, he separated (and derogated) the study of behavior (which he dubbed psychology) from the study of culture or culturology, that is, the study of "real things and events observable, directly or indirectly, in the external world," materialized as/in symbols ([12], p. 235). He and Steward also revived evolutionism, although on a more quantitative and multilinear footing.

Another initiative launched around the same time was cognitive anthropology, componential analysis, ethnoscience, or what its champions called "the new ethnography." The aim here, as formulated by Goodenough, Frake, and Tyler, was to expose the knowledge that members of a society putatively had in their heads which made action in their cultural world possible. Critics like Frake accused prior ethnographers of naïvely collecting local words for things, while the new ethnographers "redefine the task as one of finding the 'things' that go with the words.... An ethnographer should strive to define objects according to the conceptual systems of the people he is studying" [13], p. 435). The output would be a folk taxonomy or classification scheme of relevant semantic domains.

Probably the most celebrated theoretical approach of mid-century was the structuralism of Lévi-Strauss. Drawing on recent advances in linguistics, he proposed treating culture like a language, comprising elements in "grammatical" relationships, such that meaning was in the grammar, not the isolated bits. First applying this approach to kinship, he turned to religion and mythology, where he literally suggested cutting myths into pieces or "mythemes" and searching for the recurring structural patterns within the pieces. More controversially, he proposed that cultural grammars could be understood as manifestations of a universal mental process of binary classification, with the mind constantly struggling to resolve the irresolvable contradictions spawned by such mentation.

Not to belabor the point, but other schools arose, often critical of the ones just mentioned, like symbolic or interpretive anthropology (associated with Turner and Geertz), hostile (at least in Geertz's mind) to the ornate but unrealistic theorizing of Lévi-Strauss. Inspired by philosophers such as Ryle, Cassirer, and Langer, symbolic anthropology put meaning and symbols at the core of analysis, encouraging anthropologists to read culture like a text. Simultaneously, the cultural materialism of Harris claimed to explain culture as the effect of practical visceral causes. Other anthropologists like Bloch and Godelier turned to Marxism to identify the class-based and ideological underpinnings of cultural domination. Another critical approach to anthropology was feminist anthropology, which labored to unveil (and undo) the sex/gender-based relationships and inequalities that pervaded not only cultures but the discipline of anthropology itself.

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, anthropology was experiencing a greater and more sustained crisis, leading to a variety of efforts to "rethink" or "reinvent" the discipline. The problem largely stemmed from the continuing identification of anthropology with non-Western, tribal, or worst of all primitive peoples: as late as 1950, in a series of lectures Evans-Pritchard opined that social anthropology was the branch of sociological research "which chiefly devotes itself to primitive societies" ([14], p. 11), while in the introduction to his 1952 collection of essays Radcliffe-Brown designated it "the study of what are called primitive or backward people" ([11], p. 2). By the 1960s, it was becoming unacceptable to label any group as primitive; further, those peoples had themselves changed dramatically, including becoming agents and subjects in their own right rather than mere objects of Western investigation, and anthropology's scope was expanding beyond those societies to include modern nation-states and global cultural systems. Subsequently, anthropologists launched an auto-critique in the form, for instance, of Leach's 1961 *Rethinking Anthropology* and Hymes' 1969 edited volume *Reinventing Anthropology*. This self-questioning extended to some fundamental anthropological concepts such as "primitive society" (e.g., Kuper's 1988 *The Invention of Primitive Society*) and "culture" (e.g., Wagner's 1975 *The Invention of Culture*).

Soon, another sacred facet of anthropology—ethnographic writing—came under scrutiny, in Clifford and Marcus' impactful 1986 *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*. The issue was and is the so-called problem of representation, and Clifford pronounced in his introduction to the volume that ethnography is not and cannot be a simple, positivistic representation of culture but "is always caught up in the invention" of its subject-matter, an exercise in poiesis or composition, a form of literature with its inherent genres, styles, and traditions, and therefore only partially "true" ([15], p. 2). It only took five more years for Abu-Lughod to dare anthropologists not to write culture but to write *against* culture, arguing that the culture concept exaggerates homogeneity and coherence and that anthropologists are better served by thinking in terms of "discourse and practice," "connections," and "the particular" ([16], pp. 147–150).

Among the most recent assaults on conventional anthropological thinking are multi-species ethnography (which emphasizes relations between humans and non-human life-forms) and Latour's Actor Network Theory (which views humans as only part of composite agentive networks that conjoin individual people, animals, plants, tools, machines, and objects). Finally, ontological anthropology, at least in the version promoted by Holbraad among others, also rejects the representationalist approach to culture, insisting that the very idea of culture *implies* representation. Such ontological anthropologists posit a more radical methodological agenda: rather than to describe "culture" in the sense of another people's representation of a supposed objective reality, the challenge is to find *their* reality. As Holbraad and Petersen explain it, the business of anthropology is to grasp the encounter with human difference as "not so much a matter of 'seeing differently'.... It is above all a matter of seeing different things" ([17], p. 6).

5. Christian anthropology

It is worth pausing briefly to consider that many of anthropology's key terms and concepts, like race and culture, are borrowed from everyday discourse, and this goes to a certain extent for the word "anthropology" itself. Professional, academic anthropology has no monopoly on the word, and other fields and traditions have used it with varying meaning and import. A significant example is Christianity, which conceives its own, religion-inflected anthropology. Clearly, Sachs was correct when he stated that the Christian faith "has a particular vision of the world and of humanity," one that is necessarily "founded upon the relationship between God and God's creation as revealed in the person and ministry of Jesus Christ" ([18], p. 8).

In a more recent treatment, Chathanatt and Mangai begin by stipulating that Christian anthropology, like all other iterations to an extent, pursues "answers to the fundamental questions about the origin, meaning, purpose, and goal of human existence"; the "two points of departure" for this singular enterprise are that "human beings are created in the image of God and human beings are revealed in Jesus Christ"

([19], p. 218). Much of what they actually say about the subject bears the tone of Christian existentialism from Kierkegaard to Tillich: humans are essentially relational beings, such that "To be human means to be interhuman, in relation, to be with, to be interpersonal" (p. 220). Their anthropology also shares with academic anthropology a recognition of the dual body-and-culture nature of humanity (viewed as body-and-soul in their case) as well as of the fact that as humans "we make language as we communicate; we create culture; we make history" (pp. 218–219). Where the two versions of anthropology part company is at the Christian-anthropological conception of humanity as the image of God, warped by original sin, saved by grace, and perfected in the incarnation of Jesus: in their words, "To be authentically and fully human is to be conformed to" Jesus (p. 223). Academic anthropology cannot go there, of course, because other societies and cultures have their own, non-Christian ideas of humanness.

This short diversion is important because, aside from the appreciation that much of pre-1900 scholarly anthropology was still under the influence of Christian doctrine, it illustrates that anthropology—if not exactly a *science* of humankind then notions and discourses about humankind—is not limited to and owned by the modern professionals. Indeed, it is a worthwhile reminder that every religion, in fact every cultural tradition, has its understandings of what it means to be human, for instance about personhood and who or what possesses it, how humans should organize and comport themselves, and what it is all about or for. Professional academic anthropology is only one among the world's (sometimes tacit) anthropologies.

6. World anthropologies

Finally, speaking of the world's anthropologies, there is a literal movement of *world anthropologies*, demonstrating that professional academic anthropology itself is multiple and various, related to the national or temporal context where it is known and practiced. Even within the West, anthropologies have been diverse; at the very minimum, as we noted, cultural anthropology and social anthropology long followed different paths. Other Western countries have their own histories, traditions, and interests in their anthropologies. Debaene notes, for instance, the French mid-twentieth century habit of writing two books on their fieldwork, one a "scientific" ethnography and the other what amounts to a work of "literature" [20]. Darnell and Gleach have written repeatedly on national formations of anthropology, as in their 2014 *Anthropologists and Their Traditions across National Borders* and their 2017 *Historizing Theories, Identities, and Nations*.

Some of the essays in the volumes edited by Darnell and Gleach touch on non-Western anthropologies too, but others make them their principal mission. Chief among these are van Bremen, Ben-Ari, and Alatas' 2005 *Asian Anthropology* (not anthropology of Asia but anthropology as done in Asia), Bošković's 2008 *Other People's Anthropologies* (subtitled "Ethnographic Practice on the Margins"), and most directly Ribeiro and Escobar's 2006 *World Anthropologies* (subtitled "Disciplinary Transformations within Systems of Power"). Even before them, Cardoso De Oliveira published a 1999 essay on "Peripheral Anthropologies 'Versus' Central Anthropologies," underscoring the issue of the dominance of Western, especially Anglophone, versions of the discipline [21]. Sadly, he died in 2006, unable to witness the efflorescence of his perspective.

Much of the impetus for world anthropologies has emanated from Latin America, and Ribeiro and Escobar may have said it best when they insisted that "the idea of a single or general anthropology is called into question" ([22], p. 1). Demanding not an overthrow or negation but a *provincializing* of Western/Anglophone anthropology, they rightly plead that anthropological discourses and practices as they have existed so far "are particular and historically located, not universal as it generally assumed" (pp. 3–4). To begin to make good on the promise of multiple anthropologies, the movement has institutionalized into several organizations including International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, World Council of Anthropological Associations, and World Anthropologies Network.

7. Conclusion

Given this perplexing but invigorating history, it is little wonder that anthropology has suffered from chronic identity crisis. Partly, this comes with the territory: humans are a multi-dimensional biological, psychological, and sociocultural species, so any science of humans will be multi-dimensional. Humans are also variable in all these domains, in the past, the present, and undoubtedly the future, so any science of humans will be variable. In short, everything that humans do, they do diversely, including their self-studies, their anthropologies.

Some aspects of the science of humankind have survived the ages, while others are new and unfinished. Anthropologists need not make excuses or confess shame at any of the mistakes or excesses of previous thinking; all of those ideas, as in any other discipline or endeavor, were products of their time and steps toward new and better anthropologies. These current and emerging anthropologies promise to exceed older ones, as they exceed the human itself, recognizing as we do that humanity is an inherently incomplete transcendent project and that humans are enmeshed with non-humans (animals, plants, machines, spirits, and more) in relational networks from which humans cannot be disassembled. It is with these points in mind, and contributing to their evolving insights and implications, that the chapters in this volume are offered.

Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Author details

Jack David Eller
Woxsen University, Hyderabad, India

*Address all correspondence to: jdeller@bu.edu

References

[1] Dieserud J. The Scope and Content of the Science of Anthropology. Chicago: The Open Court Publishing Co.; 1908. 200 p

[2] Frazer JG. The Scope of Social Anthropology. London: Macmillan and Co.; 1908. 23 p

[3] Hodgen MT. Early Anthropology in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; 1971 [1964]. 526 p

[4] Fazioli KP. The erasure of the middle ages from anthropology's intellectual geneaology. History and Anthropology. 2013;**25**:336-355. DOI: 10.1080/02757206.2013.849247

[5] Khanmohamadi SA. In Light of Another's Word: European Ethnography in the Middle Ages. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; 2014. 202 p

[6] Santing C. Early anthropological interest: Magnus Hundt's and Galeazzo Capra's quest for humanity. History and Anthropology. 2020;**31**:462-490. DOI: 10.1080/02757206.2018.1474353

[7] Haddon AC. History of Anthropology. London: Watts & Co.; 1910. 158 p

[8] Stocking GW Jr. Victorian Anthropology. New York: The Free Press; 1987. 429 p

[9] Gorrotxategi IZ. Introduction: Wilhelm von Humboldt and the Basques. In: von Humboldt W, editor. Selected Basque Writings: The Basques and Announcement of a Publication. Corcoran A, translator. Reno: University of Nevada, Reno; 2013. pp. ix-xlii

[10] Buschmann RF. Anthropology's Global Histories: The Ethnographic Frontier in German New Guinea, 1870-1935. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press; 2009. 234 p

[11] Radcliffe-Brown AR. Structure and Function in Primitive Society. New York: The Free Press; 1965 [1952]. 219 p

[12] White L. The concept of culture. American Anthropologist. 1959;**61**:227-251

[13] Frake CO. The ethnographic study of cognitive systems. In: Fishman JA, editor. Readings in the Sociology of Language. The Hague: Mouton Publishers; 1977 [1968]. pp. 434-446

[14] Evans-Pritchard EE. Social Anthropology and Other Essays. New York: The Free Press; 1962. 354 p

[15] Clifford J. Introduction: Partial truths. In: Clifford J, Marcus GE, editors. Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography. Berkeley and London: University of California Press; 1986. pp. 1-26

[16] Abu-Lughod L. Writing against culture. In: Fox RG, editor. Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press; 1991. pp. 137-162

[17] Holbraad M, Pedersen MA. The Ontological Turn: An Anthropological Exposition. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press; 2017. 339 p

[18] Sachs JR. The Christian Vision of Humanity: Basic Christian Anthropology. Collegeville: The Order of St. Benedict; 1991. 112 p

[19] Chathanatt J, Mangai P. Christian anthropology. In: Chathanatt J, editor. Christianity. Dordrecht: Springer Nature; 2023. pp. 218-227

[20] Debaene V. Far Afield: French Anthropology between Science and Literature. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press; 2014. 398 p

[21] Cardoso De Oliveira R. Peripheral anthropologies "versus" central anthropologies. Journal of Latin American Anthropology. 1999;**4**:10-31

[22] Ribeiro GL, Escobar A. World anthropologies: Disciplinary transformations with systems of power. In: Ribeiro GL, Escobar A, editors. World Anthropologies: Disciplinary Transformations within Systems of Power. Oxford and New York: Berg; 2006. pp. 1-25

Chapter 2

Conflict, Displacement and Legal Response in Mozambique: The Limits of National Legal Instruments in Fostering Social Cohesion and Preventing Social Conflict

Nelson Tivane

Abstract

Can Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)-related laws and displacement policies foster social cohesion and prevent social conflict? This chapter addresses this question using empirical evidence from the development and piloting implementation of the national Policy and Strategy for Internally Displacement Management (PEGDi) in Mozambique. The chapter tries to foresee and provide lessons on how displacement policies, if they trigger and compact on the nexus between humanitarian assistance and development investments, can alleviate social tensions by addressing social inequalities and promote social cohesion between and within displaced populations and host communities. This chapter is qualitative in nature. It has a twofold purpose. On the one hand, it contributes to the existing debate on conflict, displacement and social cohesion to help in understanding how exposure to war and violence affects the collective action of fairness, cooperation and other important aspects of social behaviour among affected populations. On the other hand, it would bring about the importance of policies in promoting social cohesion in low-income countries, and within low-income population; thus, to help actors and decision-makers in the work to design context-specific policies and interventions for recovery and reconstruction.

Keywords: mozambique, conflict, displacement, social cohesion, policies

1. Introduction

Mozambique is a country that is prone to natural disasters and is concurrently listed under the fragile and conflict-affected situation [1]. Since 2017, the country has been inflicted and is erupting under a new form of violent conflict. The conflict started in Cabo Delgado—a province located in northern Mozambique, rich with large reserves of natural gas [2, 3]. The conflict has been, arguably, labelled as terrorism, led by Ansar al-Sunna and the Islamic State of Mozambique [4]. Since the first attacks on October 2017, attacks have expanded all over Cabo Delgado province and in the North of Nampula province as well [5], and are presenting serious threat of spelling over to other countries, such as Malawi and Tanzania, according to the European Union reports and concerns from the governments.

The impacts of conflict are exacerbated by the impacts of recurring extreme weather and climate-related events, like droughts, cyclones and floods. Two years after the conflict started in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado, *that is* in 2019, two major cyclones (IDAI and Kenneth) made landfall in the provinces of Sofala and Cabo Delgado, respectively. Many communities that had suffered severe flooding were again heavily impacted. Mozambique has a long history of intense flooding and cyclones, which have been inflicting it since its independence in 1975. This includes extensive flooding in southern Mozambique in 2000, and in the provinces of Tete, Manica, Sofala and Zambezia from early 2007.

From the viewpoint of displacement, as of March 2024, the conflict alone forced over 1.1 million people to flee their homes and communities, from which 0.6 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) are returnees [6], living in villages where safety and security continue to be volatile and pose risks. In 2019, it was reported that both cyclones Idai and Keneth displaced over 160,000 people. Since then, the threats posed by violent conflict and natural disasters, and the spill-over effect of forced displacement, have occupied the foreground of political and social debate, forcing the government to change its approach by reshaping the legal landscape and dialogue around disaster and displacement management in Mozambique.

Regarding DRR, the government started by commissioning the review of the primary legal framework for disaster risk reduction (DRR)—Law No. 10 2020 Approving the Disaster Risk Management Act, Mozambique, 2020 (also known as Law No. 10/2020).[1] Recognising the spreading and the unfolding of displacement, the need for a definition of roles and responsibilities as well as a stand-alone instrument to orient displacement management, the government approved the Policy and Strategy for Internal Displacement Management (hereinafter—PEGDi), adopted *via* Resolution 41/2021. These instruments do not distinguish between the needs of those displaced in the context of conflict and those displaced in the context of climate change and conflict, and present gaps and vacuums for specific protection needs, they do improve the governance of displacement in Mozambique [2, 7], but they can foster social cohesion, and reduce inequalities and social tension.

2. Materials and methods

This research is qualitative in nature. It was first written for presentation at the national annual conference in Maputo, Mozambique: "*Impulsionadores de Conflitualidade em Moçambique*," organised by Observatório do Meio Rural (OMR) in August 2024. The chapter applies two-sided methods: literature review and empirical data. I shall emphasise that the contextual data utilised in this article have been derived from my ongoing fieldwork on conflict and displacement in Mozambique—specifically, a fieldwork conducted from 2022 to 2024; and my ongoing job as Displacement Policy Specialist for the Norwegian Refugee Council—to develop and support the implementation of the PEGDi. These experiences resulted in two papers and one policy brief, duly cited in this article. Secondly, the article uses a qualitative

[1] Lei n.° 10/2020: Lei de Gestão e Redução do Risco de Desastres.

approach based on a bibliographical as well as documental analysis of the relevant rules contained in the branch of international humanitarian law, national disaster and displacement framework on protection of rights of internally displaced persons, amid conflict.

This article responds to the following question: *Can displacement-related laws and policy foster social cohesion, and prevent social conflict?*

3. Results of the research

3.1 Conflict and internally displaced people in Mozambique: "A tale of crossroads" between to stay or to return

> *"For how long [will I stay in Pemba?], I cannot say because nobody knows when this [conflict] will end. I'm not returning to Palma while I don't know the [security] situation." [male interviewee. Retrieved from [8]]*

> *"Home is home …. Whenever you need something, you can ask your neighbours, and they will help you. Being away from here is like being in a foreign country." [male interviewee retrieved from [9]]*

> *"They say that they prefer to die at home in the attacks instead of dying in the displacement camps," [Tomás Queface, heads Cabo Ligado—retrieved from [9]]*

> *"Every night when you go to bed, you say thank you to God that you survived the day. They didn't find us. They didn't come" [male interviewee retrieved from [9]]*

[To] stay or go? This is one of the central questions Sophie Neiman asked displaced people and refugees in Pemba, while doing her research for The Christian Science Monitor. Moreover, this question draws attention to a daily struggle for each IDP who has complexly succeeded or failed to manoeuvre and encounter a reliable source of livelihood in the past 7 years.

The province of Cabo Delgado, located in the north of Mozambique, has been inflicted by the conflict and terrorist actions since 2017. The conflict itself is linked to many well-documented factors, from structural issues and individual incentives to enabling dynamics: socio-economic and political grievances, horizontal inequalities, corruption, the marginalisation of Muslims, poverty and state repression, the exclusion of local processes and mechanisms for negotiation and mediation, all playing out concurrently at different levels [5, 8, 10, 11]. These disputes led to community grievances that were then expressed in attacks that escalated into violent conflict.

From 2019 and 2022, from this conflict alone, it is estimated that more than 750 people were killed [2]. According to the UN agency for migration, in March 2024, conflict alone forced over 1.1 million people to flee. From this, over 0.6 million are now returnees. Those who remain displaced, living in Pemba or elsewhere, continue to struggle against a complex of realities, feelings of disorientation and confusion. This is worsened by the decisions they must take regarding the jobs, famine and fear associated with the traumas of fleeing death.

The cost of living in Pemba is too high. Hence, the economy in Pemba is mainly informal, and job opportunities for those who were forced to flee are limited.
The fishery sector contributes significantly to poverty alleviation and socio-economic

development. For most displaced people who live in or around the city, particularly near the coast, storms, cyclones, or floods would rapidly exacerbate many of the problems they are already facing [8].

On another hand, the funding is not enough, and the presence of humanitarian actors is low, with much of the world's attention and money focused on crises in places like the Gaza Strip and Ukraine. Funding shortages limit options for providing direct humanitarian aid and for extending emergency support to hosts [9].

Within this scenario, coping and adaptive mechanisms to encounter livelihoods are rare. Displaced people have been living between coping and adapting for the past 7 years. In their attempt to build a sustainable source of livelihood, most displaced people rely on assistance from the government, humanitarian actors, relatives (kinship), acquaintances and host neighbours. Nevertheless, there are those who no longer see themselves as a "community in exile or refuge," because they have managed to rebuild their social networks and inter-support channels easily. Furthermore, there are those "others" who, in their attempt to secure a livelihood, ended up in a circle of a *revolving door.* They have not managed to succeed in integration, for multiple reasons, and, while perceiving the risks of returning, continue to see their displacement as a temporary condition, longing for a return to the "homeland" to live in a terror of daily traumas and scariness [8].

3.2 Forced displacement and social cohesion: A "tale" of possibilities

> *"Social cohesion is a sense of shared purpose, trust and willingness to cooperate among members of a given group, between members of different groups, and between people and the state" [12]*

It is often argued that societies and communities exposed to war violence tend to behave more cooperatively after war. What is happening in Mozambique's Cabo Delgado, or, as OMR[2] would put it, *how is Cabo Delgado?* Warfare in Cabo Delgado is leaving terrible destruction, from raw physical destruction to shattered lives and families. A state of "development in reverse," causing persistent adverse effects on all factors relevant for development: physical, human and social capital [13], in a province once seen with enormous economic potential including natural gas reserves that could make it a leading natural gas exporter and a coastline attractive to tourism.

In some instances, the warfare in Cabo Delgado has fostered societal transitions in terms of social and political behaviour. Tivane [8] argued that after the attack in the district of Palma and Mocimboa, a strong sense of social network was shown in the city of Pemba. It was estimated that 71.1% of displaced people were living in houses of relatives and acquaintances and rented houses, 21.5% in resettlement neighbourhoods, and only 7.3% in accommodation centres [14]. Some have rented houses, borrowed rooms, or houses. Those who borrowed houses were also protecting and taking care of them, which belonged to foreign business actors (from Tanzania) who also gave their houses on the same terms—lending for security or charity. In addition, local authorities in the neighbourhoods helped to identify empty or abandoned

[2] The Observatório do Meio Rural (OMR) is implementing a bi-monthly webinar series COMO ESTÁ CABO DELGADO?—discussing serval social, economic and political implications of the war. I had the opportunity of participating in one.

houses and host the displaced, particularly in the neighbourhoods near the coast. Between the end of 2023 and March 2024, the surge in conflict resulted in over 100,000 individuals. Then, over 65% of these newly displaced people found refuge within host communities, while the remaining 35% are spread across 95 designated, densely populated displacement sites, often residing in makeshift or damaged shelters [6]. In these "adoptive families," hosted IDPs are subjected to hosting contributions, whether in money, work, or food for daily living. These contributions start to be demanded after 3 or 4 months of living with a host family. The high cost of living in Pemba and limited livelihood sources restricted host families' willingness to absorb more displaced people for longer periods [8, 11].

There is a breadth of evidence and referencing studies involving several countries (e.g., Sierra Leone, Uganda and Burundi in Africa, as well as the Republic of Georgia and Nepal), indicating that war affects behaviour in a range of situations, real and experimental. People exposed to more war-related violence tend to increase their social participation by joining more local social and civic groups or taking on more leadership roles in their communities [13, 15].

Overall, for the case of Cabo Delgado, this kind of effect applies to *in-group prosocial behaviour* ([13], p. 250) most of all: *that is, members of one's own village or identity group* implementing voluntary actions to benefit those in need: IDPs. For instance, when the Mocimboa da Praia, Macomia and Palma attacks happened, most displaced people found refuge in Pemba and Nacala, and these "hosting tendencies" were based on their kinship and acquaintances. People knew where to go and why. These people migrated to the islands to build their lives 20 or 30 years ago. They have families, relatives, or acquaintances in Pemba who were born around the city or in the districts under attack but moved to Pemba [8]. On another hand, it is argued that families with greater social or financial capital (including small entrepreneurs, civil servants or pensioners) were able to sponsor the relocation of the extended family to southern areas, as well as access to agricultural land.

While this so called "prosocial behaviour" can be attained to the exposure to war violence, and to the fact people tend to go on to behave more cooperatively and altruistically to their kins and acquaintances [16], there are also risks of "*parochial altruism*"—a widespread evolved response to external threats. People also tend to become more parochial and less cooperative with out-group members. This behavioural response could also harden social divisions, contribute to conflict cycles and help explain the well-known pattern that many post-conflict countries soon return to violence [13, 17].

A study published by the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) concluded that the conflict in Cabo Delgado is rooted in organised crime and regional difference, rather than ethnical difference, but raised questions about the instrumentalisation and politicisation of ethnicity at different times of Mozambican history. The study goes on to not exclude ethnic problems and brings about growing inter-ethnic tensions among the Makonde, Mwanis and Makua, and how the Makondes are favoured for most high-level jobs, especially strategic military positions, where they dominate [18]. Contrary to the ISS study, the study conducted by Fraym [19] found that the pattern of ASWJ attacks in Cabo Delgado between 2017 and 2019 suggested the targeting of some ethnic groups, that is, the Mwuanees tribe. The tribe has been very jealous of its erstwhile neighbours, the Makondes, who have for several decades held the reins of power and lived in greater affluence. Host communities find themselves having to share already scarce resources. There are evident signs of solidarity fatigue and tensions between IDPs, and host communities, resulting in frequent conflicts.

Prior to the crisis, Cabo Delgado province already suffered from high levels of poverty and the absence of services. This situation has been worsened by the crisis, which depleted what little resilience the province's population had. Armed conflict has had a negative impact on social relations in the North of Cabo Delgado, affecting different social groups and or by strain public services such as health care and education, which negatively impacted service delivery for poor host community members in contexts where services were already limited prior to the arrival of displaced people. A working paper on the socio-economic conditions of IDPs published by OMR concluded that conflict and displacement worsened in housing conditions, access to natural resources and conditions of production. For instance, according to this study ([10], pp. 10–13), while in the place of origin between 64.3% and 88.6% of the displaced had a roof constructed with conventional materials, this percentage fell to residual values in the places of destination (between 0% and 10%).

In addition to physical possessions, IDPs' social networks have been damaged by conflict and displacement. This social upheaval has undermined informal support mechanisms, such as rotating savings schemes, family loans and other mutual aid. Family members are scattered across different locations, districts and provinces. Many IDPs do not know where their relatives are, or even if they are still alive. Many were kidnapped and killed by insurgents, or simply went missing and are assumed dead. Others were lost or succumbed to hunger and thirst on their journey to Pemba [11].

As the number of IDPs grows, however, and as their displacement becomes increasingly protracted, the hosts' ability and willingness to help are coming under pressure. In resettlement places competition for access to land and tensions with the populations have increased, and the difficulty of access to means of production and uncertainty of food assistance have precipitated return movements to particularly insecure locations, making them easy targets for attacks, robberies and kidnappings, further intensifying the conflict [11].

3.3 Displacement and legal response in Mozambique: What did the "PEGDi" shifted?

Conflict is the main cause of displacement in Mozambique. From 2017 to 2024, conflict alone forced over 1.1 million people to flee their communities. Internal displacement in the context of climate change, including both sudden and slow-onset climate change impacts, is also recurring in Mozambique. Heavy precipitation and destruction associated with floods, tropical cyclones, drought, famine, sea level rise and land degradation are increasing the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Cyclone IDAI alone displaced over 163,000 people in 2019.

Since then, the threats posed by climate change impacts and violent conflict, and the spill-over effect of forced displacement occupied the foreground of political and social debate, forcing the government to change its approach. In 2020, Mozambique adopted a new Disaster Management Law, Lei n.° 10/2020 de 24 de Agosto. In 2021, adopted a national "Policy and Strategy for Internal Displacement Management" (PEGDi).

These instruments improve the governance of displacement in Mozambique, but both the Disaster Risk Management Law and the IDP policy do not distinguish between the needs of those displaced in the context of conflict and those displaced in the context of climate change and disasters. IDPs share the same basic civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights that all people are entitled to, as guaranteed in a range of international treaties, declarations and guidelines; but there are some specifications. These specific rights of IDPs are set out in the 1998 UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement (Guiding Principles) and in the 2009 Kampala Convention on the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention). These instruments provide important guidance to governments regarding preventing internal displacement and protecting and assisting IDPs. While the Guiding Principles are not a binding legal instrument, the Kampala Convention is binding on African states parties to it and is significant as the world's only binding instrument on internal displacement [2, 7].

The Policy in Mozambique express the government commitment to bring its national framework and progress in line with the standards set out by the Kampala Convention (signed in 2010 and ratified in 2017) and the 1989 Guiding Principles. First, it sets a forward step in formulating norms specifically tailored to redress and meet the needs of internally displaced persons, thus addressing the pre-existing grey areas, gaps and vacuums in the DRM law and in the entire DRM framework. The policy reflects a general attempt at clarifying legal norms and procedures in the efforts for displacement management, that is, prevention, preparedness, response and recovery—from a durable solution standing point, and in reinforcing and strengthening existing protection, with a narrowed focus on IDPs and their hosts. Prior to the policy, there were many other instruments that were not specific to IDPs and lacked references to displacement.

Second, it clearly specifies climate-related sudden/slow-onset events (i.e., cyclones, droughts, floods, land degradation, coastal erosion) as drivers and triggers of displacement, but it takes conflict as the main cause of displacement. The word conflict itself is mentioned 15 times, over climate change, which is only referred to four times. Prioritising conflict over climate change effects could jeopardise and minimise the threats posed by climate change in a country highly exposed or prone to climate hazards, and therefore the actions needed to address those challenges. This can also potentially limit the concept and country's vision/mission to tackle displacement [2]. For instance, in a context of active conflict (such as that of northern Mozambique), solutions cannot be piloted; however, they can potentially be piloted in the provinces of Sofala, Zambezia and Manica, Inhambane, which are still recovering from the effects of cyclones Idai, Gombe and Freddy and droughts. Nevertheless, the policy orients responses to those displaced internally, irrespective of whether they were displaced by the impacts of climate change and disasters or by conflict. For both groups, many of the concrete protection concerns are the same, namely: loss of personal documentation, family separation, increased risk of sexual and gender-based violence, concerns about housing, land, and property rights, forced relocations, forced returns and a lack of systems and conditions necessary to enable durable solutions. However, empirical evidence suggests that the predicament faced by IDPs may also differ depending on whether displacement occurs in the context of climate change or conflict. It may also differ depending on the location of displacement, duration of the crisis and the conditions in which the IDPs live.

Lastly, the policy and strategy constitute tremendous progress from measures and provisions for displacement in the DRM law itself, which, while clarifying terms and processes for evacuation (mentioned eight times), did not mention displacement at all.

3.4 Finding pathways to social cohesion and preventing conflict

Experience shows that, while there are existing gaps, the PEGDi and other instruments of its kind (integrative policies) may work in promoting social cohesion, owing to the progress and measures embedded in it. The policy sets out a few key parameters, which, however, policymakers shall be cautious about implementing without accounting for contextual differences.

The PEGDi sets parameters for promoting the right to work, land, controlled freedom of movement and access to social services, and the right to own or rent property. Using Uganda's contemporary context, Zhou et al. [20] suggest that the government encouragement for IDPs to settle in local communities rather than camps promotes labour market participation and invests in social service infrastructure (including schools). In Mozambique, there is scope for hosts to be included under development interventions. In 2021, for example, the World Bank announced a $100 million grant to support development efforts for both IDPs and hosts in northern Mozambique within the Northern Crisis Recovery Project, as well as $700 million to address the conflict and build resilience, through causes of fragility and conflict and prevent the escalation of violent [21, 22].

The policy also promotes a high level of interaction between IDPs and host communities, giving each group their specific roles and responsibilities to support reconstruction. A case study from Camerron suggests that, although localised conflict arise relating to land, resource sharing and access to livelihood opportunities, the factor of shared language, cultural and ethnic affinities and the pre-emptive involvement of administrative and traditional authorities, as well as support from non-governmental actors in financing projects for coexistence activities, tended to ensure that social conflict was managed peacefully through implement conflict resolution mechanisms and facilitates a peaceful coexistence. To pre-empt social tensions, governments and other actors should direct short- and long-term assistance to both the displaced and host communities. This can help reduce real and perceived inequalities in access to a variety of services and prevent host communities from forming negative attitudes about newly arriving displaced persons [20].

In promoting community participation, the PEGDi can ensure that the investments address the highest priorities and promote social cohesion. These IDP-host interactions during everyday activities can improve host community perceptions of the displaced [23], exhibit high levels of social capital upon which participatory approaches can be drawn [24] and can promote empathy among host residents and the displaced through perspective-getting exercises that involve sharing information about each other's situations [25].

The PEGDi enacts roles of local authorities and informal leaders to promote social cohesion, although who is included in the processes and whether they address community concerns versus IDP rights generates trade-offs. A case study of South Sudan suggests that host community attitudes towards IDPs and the presence of official peacekeepers encourage the return of displaced persons and mitigate host communities' negative perceptions of IDPs. In a context of conflict, IDPs are more likely to return if peacekeepers are deployed in their home country. These peacekeepers also appear to mitigate host communities' negative reactions to IDP inflows [26].

Finally, the PEGDi emphasises the provision of social assistance, health care and education services, etc., immediately following displacement. This can help mitigate some of the long-term impacts on forcibly displaced persons and host communities [20].

4. Conclusion

The main conclusion of this chapter goes beyond finding pathways through which (integrative) policies can promote social cohesion. In this regard, the main reference pointed to in various case studies shows that this is possible if the policy and practice contribute to reducing the pressure and the disproportionate burden of displacement on the host population, and by ensuring fairness and equal rights to humanitarian assistance.

This chapter draws two main calls for attention. First, it reinforces the notion about continuity and connection, whereas reconstruction and recovering are built from pre-existing knowledge and practice. The IDPs themselves are "purposive actors" (to coin David Turton's concept), that is "ordinary people" who are part of particular social and historical circumstances. *They are not a separated and isolated group in need of support; they should be understood as networked and part of their local context, and in relation to "others."*

Second, while framing reconstruction and recovering initiatives, the effects of war in all its complexity and postwar patterns of individual behaviour and institution-building is of broad importance, but Mozambique might find it difficult to integrate those patterns of individual behaviour and institution-building in reconstruction and recovering initiatives, because it comes to be conceptually difficult to precisely define social cohesion. Making it difficult to draw generalisable and actionable conclusions in planning interventions. Nevertheless, there is an entry point. The limits of cultural distance between IDPs and host populations are relatively small. In these contexts, studies in camps across Africa show that this cultural proximity improves local economies and reduces tensions between host communities and the displaced. Policymakers would clearly benefit from more systematic analysis of how (and under what conditions) cultural distance influences both policy responses and citizens' responses to those policies.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to acknowledge the contributions from the following institutions: Norwegian Refugee Council; the Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, UNISA; and Observatório do Meio Rural (OMR), to have contributed, in one way or another, to the writing of this article.

Author details

Nelson Tivane
Social Anthropologist [Cross-border Migration Researcher, Policy Specialist on Displacement, Member of SADC Emergency Response Team (ERT)] Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, University of South Africa (UNISA), Pretoria, South Africa

*Address all correspondence to: tivanen@gmail.com

References

[1] World Bank Group. Supporting the Most Vulnerable: Scaling up Support to Address Fragility, Conflict, and Violence. World Bank; 2023. Available from: https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2023/06/15/supporting-the-most-vulnerable-scaling-up-support-to-address-fragility-conflict-and-violence

[2] Tivane N. Displacement and legal response in Mozambique: Mapping gaps to explore existing beyond solutions. International Journal of Research in Sociology and Anthropology. 2024;**9**(1):1-5

[3] Tsandzana D. Disinformation, social media networks and terrorism in Mozambique: Narratives, strategies and practices. In: Digital Disinformation in Africa: Hashtag Politics, Power and Propaganda. London, UK: Zed - Bloomsbury; 2024. pp. 59-78

[4] USA. U.S. Government Invests in Infrastructure in Cabo Delgado with Bridge and Road Reconstruction Project Maputo, Mozambique: U.S. Embassy; 2022. Available from: https://mz.usembassy.gov/u-s-government-invests-in-infrastructure-in-cabo-delgado-with-bridge-and-road-reconstruction-project/

[5] Bussotti L, Coimbra E. Struggling the Islamic State in Austral Africa: The SADC military intervention in Cabo Delgado (Mozambique) and its limits. Frontiers in Political Science. 2023;**5**:1-8

[6] IOM. International Organization for Migration. Mozambique: IOM; 2024. Available from: https://dtm.iom.int/mozambique

[7] Tivane N. Developing Mozambique's IDP policy to better address climate change-related displacement. Climate Mobility Africa Insights. 2024;**7**:1-6

[8] Tivane N. Being in-between 'to return or to stay': Exploring the experiences of urban displaced people in Mozambique's Pemba. International Journal of Anthropology and Ethnology. 2024a;**8**(7):1-15

[9] Neiman S. Islamists target northern Mozambique—Especially the children. The Christian Science Monitor. 2024. Available from: https://www.csmonitor.com/World/Africa/2024/0606/islamist-rebels-mozambique-target-children

[10] Feijó J, Maquenzi J, Salite D, Kirshner J. Exploring the socio-economic conditions of internally displaced persons in northern Mozambique in 2021. Observador Rural. 2022:1-40

[11] Sturridge C, Feijó J, Tivane N. Coping with the Risks of Conflict, Climate and Displacement in Northern Mozambique. London: HPG Case Study. ODI; 2022

[12] World Bank. Social Cohesion and Forced Displacement: A Synthesis of New Research. Washington, DC: World Bank Publications 2022

[13] Bauer M, Blattman C, Chytilová J, Henrich J, Miguel E, Mitts T. Can war foster cooperation? Journal of Economic Perspectives. 2016;**30**(3):249-274

[14] UNICEF. Main Sociodemographic Indicators of Cabo Delgado. Maputo: UNICEF Mozambique; 2022

[15] Giacomo D, Marijke V. Civil war and political participation: Evidence from Uganda. Economic Development

and Cultural Change. 2015;**64**(1): 113-141

[16] Bogliacino F, Gómez C, Grimalda G. Crime-related exposure to violence and prosocial behavior experimental evidence from Colombia. SSRN Electronic Journal. 2022:1-12. [Accepted: April 18, 2023]

[17] Choi J-K, Bowles S. The coevolution of parochial altruism and war. Science. 2007;**318**(5850):636-640

[18] Ewi M, Boerekamp E, Louw-Vaudran L, Els W, Chelin R, Adam Y. Violent Extremism in Mozambique: Drivers and Links to Transnational Organised Crime. South Africa: Institute for Security Studies; 2022

[19] Devermont J. Is There an Ethnic Insurgency in Northern. Maputo; 2024

[20] Zhou Y-Y, Grossman G, Ge S. Inclusive refugee-hosting in Uganda improves local development and prevents public backlash. In: Policy Research Working Paper No. 9981. World Development. Vol. 166. Elsevier Ltd.; 2023. p. 106203

[21] World Bank. World Bank Supports Victims of Conflict in Mozambique. Maputo, Mozambique: World Bank Group; 2021. Available from: https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/04/27/world-bank-supports-victims-of-conflict-in-mozambique

[22] World Bank. World Bank Program in the North of Mozambique: Briefing Package. Maputo: World Bank; 2023

[23] Betts A, Stierna M, Omata N, Sterck O. Social cohesion and refugee–host interactions: Evidence from East Africa. In: Policy Research Working Paper, No 9917. 2022

[24] Tellez J, Balcells L. Social cohesion, economic security, and forced displacement in the long-run: Evidence from rural Colombia. In: Policy Research Working Paper, No. 10019. 2022

[25] Kalla J, Broockman D. Which narrative strategies durably reduce prejudice? Evidence from field and survey experiments supporting the efficacy of perspective-getting. American Journal of Political Science. Jan 2023;67(1):185-204

[26] Parry J, Aymerich O. Local peace agreements and the return of IDPs with perceived ISIL affiliation in Iraq. In: Policy Research Working Paper, No. 9916. 2022

Chapter 3

Conflict and Conciliation in Welfare: The Golden Principles for Well-Being of Isolated Indigenous People of Andaman and Nicobar Islands

Shivappa A. Awaradi

Abstract

The Negritos of the Andaman Islands, the ancient *Homo sapiens* and the first occupants of the Indian archipelago in the Bay of Bengal, remained the sole inhabitants for more than 50,000 years until these bowmen were overpowered by the colonial English gunmen 166 years ago. The British founded a penal settlement on islands and tactically struck a strategic amity with the warring largest group among the aborigines, i.e., Andamanese. This led to the latter's decimation on account of alien epidemic diseases spread from the penal settlers, while the remaining three tribes, viz., Jarawa, Sentinelese, and Onge, escaped such scourge, as they did not fall prey to the gift-giving ploy of colonialists and continued their fierce hostility toward outsiders. The partition of the Indian subcontinent and the birth of India and Pakistan in 1947 witnessed the biggest human tragedy of the displacement of nearly 15 million people and their cross-border movement. India had to handle the huge task of rehabilitating these farming refugees. The Andaman Islands were also identified for settling them. Thus, the Indian state encountered conflict in welfare approaches, one for the benefit of indigenous hunters and the other for the immigrant farmers. The conciliatory attempts made till the fag end of the twentieth century have been discussed here. A new pursuit of "wealth-fair" in the upcoming International Container Transshipment Port at Great Nicobar Island would run over the interests of the Shompen and Nicobarese, the indigenous people of this island, raising a major humanitarian issue that demands serious attention. This chapter discusses the possible survival course in such situations.

Keywords: aborigines, hostility, welfare, partition, refugees, colonization, conflicts, conciliation, golden principle

1. Introduction

It is a running tale of conflict between a 250-year-old current civilization and a 2.5-million-year-old primordial living culture of hunter-gatherers as played out in the tragic story of modern interlopers' intrusion on the Golden Age of the Indigenous people of Andaman and Nicobar Islands (ANI) in the Bay of Bengal. Our early ancestor, the "skillful man"/ 'handyman" (Homo habilis), who lived in Africa about 2,500,000 years ago, became "man the tool maker" and the skilled hunter thereby, who could very well be credited as the architect of the Stone Age culture. The "wise man" (*Homo sapiens*) emerged around 300,000 years ago, who later became a "bowman" by making an innovative hunting tool, the bow and arrow, nearly 71,000 years ago. These highly skilled hunters migrated out of Africa during the Pleistocene Ice Age and colonized parts of other continents and became the primordial "Earth Populators." The Andaman Islands were also colonized by them during 70,000–50,000 years ago [1], who belonged to Negrito stock that branched off in due course into today's four groups, viz., Andamanese, Jarawa, Onge, and Sentinelese. The people of Mongoloid stock from Southeast Asia reached the Nicobar Islands much later, about 18,000 years ago, now known as the Nicobarese tribe, and then nearly 4000 years later, the Shompen group, being the offshoot of the Nicobarese [2], occupied the interiors of Great Nicobar Island (GNI).

While these islanders continued as foragers, the mainlanders, i.e., continental people elsewhere on earth, became farmers with the advent of the Agricultural Revolution 12,000 years ago. The people in Europe came to be the manufacturers following the Industrial Revolution 250 years ago, and they seeded the continuing "modern civilization." These Europeans set out to colonize other parts of the world to sell their mill-made goods and pick up the raw materials required for the industries back home, heralding colonialism. The Indian subcontinent came under the sway of the British, who, after their failed first penal colony (1789–1796) in the Andaman Islands, founded the second penal settlement in 1858. They faced hostile resistance from Aborigines, which continued unabated despite heavy casualties of Andamanese bowmen inflicted by English gunmen in the Battle of Aberdeen in 1859. By changing the strategy, the British befriended the Andamanese through the tactics of gift-giving, thereby leading to the interface of aborigines with penal settlers that resulted in an epidemic outbreak due to the spread of alien diseases from those settlers. The Andamanese population dwindled from an estimated 5000 in 1858 to 460 in 1931 on account of an epidemic of pneumonia (1868), syphilis (1876), measles (1877), and influenza (1892). The Second World War ended two centuries of colonialism, leading to the birth of many independent nations. Many of them, like India, chose to be a welfare state.

The philosophy of helping the suffering people was not new in India. Right from the ancient emperor Ashoka, different rulers practiced varying degrees of this public virtue. However, welfare as a state policy to help the disadvantaged is a modern feature of postindependence India. It evolved in the course of the freedom movement led by Mahatma Gandhi to address the prevailing Indian socioeconomic situation. Hierarchical agrarian Hindu society in India was stratified on occupational caste lines, with outcasts, the untouchables, at the lowest rung to attend to the polluting/menial jobs, and they were prohibited from entering the temples and homes of upper-caste people. These socially oppressed people were landless and economically and educationally backward. Gandhiji championed the cause of the untouchables, termed them as Harijans, the people of God or children of God, advocated for the abolition of untouchability, and advocated for their upliftment. Eventually, untouchability was abolished through Article 17 of the Constitution drafted for independent India. The erstwhile untouchables were grouped as Scheduled Caste (SC) under the Constitution and were made entitled to their betterment through reservation in educational institutions and in public services, apart from the benefits of other affirmative actions through welfare measures. Similarly, there has been another category of people variously termed as adivasi (aborigines), *vanavasi* (forest dwellers), and *girijan* (mountain dwellers), who were outside the caste scheme. They are clubbed together as Scheduled Tribes (STs) under the Indian Constitution, though they have different levels of subsistence technology as hunter-gatherers, pastoral people, proto-foresters, or farmers. All of them are considered socio-economically backward and hence deserve special attention through state benefaction similar to that of SC. Further, the Indian state took upon itself the obligation to improve the living standard of all poor citizens irrespective of their caste or religion, in addition to that of SCs and STs, through economic development.

2. Economic development by the Indian state and the beginning of welfare conflicts in the Andaman Islands

2.1 Grow more food

India, as a new nation, had difficult times after its independence in 1947, mainly because of a shortage of food and an influx of refugees due to the partition of British India into India and Pakistan as two sovereign states. India set out for accelerated agricultural and industrial development by launching five-year plans while importing food grains from the USA under Public Law 480 (PL 480) to meet its immediate needs. Agricultural growth was given top priority through a multi-pronged approach, including intensive farming, bringing more land under cultivation, and scientific research. Forested ANI was also considered to reclaim the land for agricultural purposes and utilize other natural resources, including timber. The Andaman Exploratory Delegation, after visiting the islands in 1948, reported on the high potential of settling a large number of families whose traditional occupation is farming or fishing. It was further observed that laborers of all types and the skilled laborers of the artisan category were necessary to exploit the resources available in the islands [3].

2.2 Rehabilitation of refugees

Roughly 15 million people were uprooted in the aftermath of the partition of India in 1947 [4], leading to the biggest transborder movement of refugees in history. The displaced Bengalis from East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, moved into the neighboring Indian province of West Bengal in large numbers, creating a huge humanitarian responsibility for the government of West Bengal and the Indian central government. Refugees were put in transit camps till their rehabilitation, a long-drawn-out process. Governments took up a dispersal scheme to prevent congestion due to refugees in Calcutta City and other places, on one hand, and on the other, to provide a labor force for underdeveloped and thinly populated areas like the Andaman Islands and Dandakaranya Forest in the central-eastern part of India [5]. The plan was to colonize part of sprawling ANI with 836 islands, including islets and rocky outcrops, having a total geographical area of 8249 sq. km [6] and a population of 31,480 in 1951 [7], and thus a population density of 3.8 persons per sq. km. But the crucial matter was the type of people's subsistence, viz., farming or foraging.

2.3 Impact of previous colonization

The islands were under the sway of hunting and gathering indigenous people, viz., the Jarawa of South and Middle Andaman, the Onge of Little Andaman, the Sentinelese of North Sentinel, the Andamanese of North, Middle, and South Andaman, and the Shompen of Great Nicobar, and were under the proto-foresters, the Nicobarese inhabiting 12 Nicobar Islands. The autochthons were the sole inhabitants of the archipelago, living in their golden age till the arrival of the British. Andamanese were the first group to experience agony under the British, as noted above. The Onge suffered a massacre in the operation of a punitive expedition sent by the colonial administration in 1867, following the killing of eight crews of Assam Valley who had ventured to land on the Little Andaman. Later, they were befriended in 1885. The hostile Jarawa, having seen the decimation of their neighboring Andamanese, stayed mostly away from the penal colony except for rare and lightning attacks. They, with an estimated population of 500, perhaps happily occupied the territory of the Andamanese that had fallen vacant and thus remained vibrant. The British did not pursue their efforts to contact the hostile Sentinelese of the outlying tiny island of North Sentinel and further found no purpose to approach the Shompen inhabiting the interior region of faraway Great Nicobar. As such, both these groups stayed safe. Since the Nicobarese were not hostile, the British nurtured friendly relations through "spiritual colonization" by proselytizing them. It is the subsequent colonization by Indian mainlanders that had far-reaching consequences on all six aboriginal tribes of the archipelago due to the conflicts in the welfare crusade undertaken by the Indian state.

2.4 Fundamentals of conflicts

The welfare conflicts were fundamentally on account of contrasts in the systems of subsistence and the level of technology adopted by two communities existing in the same eco-region, for example, foragers and farmers in the ANI. A welfare conflict is essentially a situation of opposing interests of two or more parties belonging to different categories or classes. Parties may be a group of people, for example, foragers versus farmers, or an individual, for instance, an authoritarian ruler. An individual public authority in ANI holding crucial positions like Chief Commissioner (CC), now Lieutenant Governor (LG), Chief Secretary, Secretary, and Director of Tribal Welfare (DTW) who had relevant education along with training/research experience in the matters of tribal communities and who was able to clearly understand the tribal issues and formulate appropriate long-term solutions could leave an indelible mark on the well-being of the aborigines, while others could do more harm than any good. Even private individuals, including academicians who have worked in the islands and established rapport with the government authorities, could exert their influence to impose exotics among the aborigines that have a considerable impact, mostly negative, in the long run on the well-being of indigenous people. The "commuting" anthropologists (bettering the "armchair" anthropologist)—and unlike committed ethnographers—attempted to make the work field easily accessible for them instead of going to the field and living for a year or two with the ethnic community. This enabled others also to reach and interact with the long-isolated Aborigines and exploit them. The academic interest, thus, turns out to be another area of conflict with the interests of the hunter-gatherers. Incidentally, I had a postgraduate education in the discipline of anthropology and 6 years of research experience among the aborigines of the ANI while working with the Anthropological Survey of India. After joining the Civil Service under the government of India, I had the rather rare opportunity to handle the tribal welfare administration in the islands for more than 25 years (1985 to 2007) while functioning as the Assistant Commissioner of Great Nicobar Subdivision, Deputy Commissioner of Nicobar District, and Director of Tribal Welfare, and later for 5 years (2014–2019) in the capacity of Director of Tribal Research Institute (TRI) after superannuation.

3. Statutory initiatives in the conciliation of welfare conflicts

In the wake of the large-scale usurpation of the ancestral land of aborigines, a tiny law, viz., the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation, 1956, in short, the PAT Regulation, was promulgated by the President of India to safeguard the interests of indigenous people. It empowers the administrator of ANI, that is, the CC, now the LG, to notify the area predominantly inhabited by the aboriginal tribes to be a reserved area, specify the limits of such area, and alter such limits from time to time. This regulation has provisions like prohibiting the transfer of land from the reserved area in any manner unless permitted by the LG; forbidding the entry into the reserve area by any person other than the members of the aboriginal tribe except on the authority of the pass issued by the DC; and disallowing trade and business in the reserved area by outsiders except with the previous sanction of the LG. It is evident from the past that several times the reserved area has been reduced in the "public Interest." It is in the public (general public, i.e., immigrants/pressure groups) interest and at the cost of the aborigines. Just, in a couple of instances only, the reserved area has been increased, as could be seen in the notifications: No. 1- 467/ 86/ TW dated November 2, 1989; No. 104 / F. No. 1 - 582 / 91- TW dated September 10, 1991; and No. 159/2004 / F. No.1- 752 / 2002- TW dated September 15, 2004, published on respective dates in A & N Gazette Extraordinary. These notifications were initiated and pushed by me in the capacity of DTW. As of now, determining the limits of the reserved area under the regulation is done at the single and local level in the islands, easily overlooking, time and again, the concerns of the voiceless indigenous people. So, an amendment to the said regulation was recommended to the administration by me in the capacity of Director of TRI. It has been proposed that scaling down the reserve area be done only after examining it duly at multiple levels, that is, at the National Scheduled Tribes Commission, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, the cabinet of the Government of India, and with the assent of the President, so that, in the process, the pros and cons are considered, keeping in view the well-being of the aborigines.

3.1 Tribe-specific welfare policy

There was no separate policy addressing issues specific to each of the ethnic groups in the archipelago during the crucial period of colonization of the islands from the 1950s to the 1980s. *Master Plan (1991–2021) for the welfare of primitive tribes of A & N Islands* [8], prepared by me and published by the Administration in 1990, was the first document that contained specific welfare programs for each of the hunting-gathering tribes, now known as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs). Later, the Jarawa Policy was notified in 2004, and that for Shompen in 2015. Further, I submitted the draft tribal policy for the Sentinelese in 2018 and for the Onge and

Andamanese in 2019, which are yet to be notified by the Administration. However, in spite of the clear stipulation in the Jarawa Policy for noninterference in their culture, interventions by imposing alien culture have been attempted by the public authorities on the advice of some academicians, with an adverse effect on the aborigines. Hence, stringent legal provisions through the amendment of the PAT Regulation have been suggested by me to prevent such indulgences.

4. Destroying Jarawa's livelihood to create one for emigrees

As noted earlier, the Andaman Islands were also chosen for settling the Bengali refugees as farmers. Nearly 4000 families [9] were shipped to the Andaman Islands in batches. Big islands like South, Middle, Andaman, and North Andaman were taken up first to rehabilitate the refugees. The forest territory of these islands was used as a hunting ground by the Jarawa tribe following the decimation of the Andamanese. The tropical rainforest, endowed with a considerable wealth of fruits, roots, shoots, and wildlife, apart from medicinal substances, formed the resource base for the entire livelihood of the indigenous people. Destruction of such a forest was naturally perceived by the aborigines as a real threat to their lives, and hence they resisted it with all their might. Jarawas kept on ambushing the laborers' gangs engaged in felling the trees. The Bush Police (BP), an armed force created by the British colonial administration in 1905 [10], was deployed to protect the forest workers. Their attacks using bows and arrows were dreadful even for this BP armed with guns. Despite such resistance, 20,000 acres as per the First Five-Year Plan and 11,900 acres under the subsequent plan were approved for reclamation [11].

4.1 Farmers became unwelcome neighbors of foragers

Bengali refugees were settled in the reclaimed forest land by allotting each family five acres of plain paddy land and five acres of hilly plantation land. Further, as per the scheme, they were eligible to collect 15 cubic meters of timber in a round for the construction of a new house once; 6 cbm once every 5 years for house repairs; 1 cbm once every 5 years for making agricultural implements or a dinghy; and every year, minor forest produce like two cords of firewood, 500 bamboos, 200 canes, 100 *ballies* (thin poles), 20 posts, and 2000 thatching leaves. Such extraction of royalty-free forest produce was enshrined in the ANI Protected Forest Rules, 1986 [12]. Jarawas noticed that outlanders were not confining their activities within the reclaimed land but found their continued exploitation of forest resources by making frequent forays into the jungle and thereby turning it into a constantly recurring threat to their own livelihood. So, they began indulging in the fatal risk of raiding the farmers' houses in the wee hours of mostly moonlit nights when the settlers were in a deep slumber. They avoided attacking on a dark night, requiring their traditional torch in flame, thereby turning themselves into a visible target for shooting by the adversaries. During their incursions, Jarawas would arrow down the sleeping persons, collect iron tools available there, and retreat in lightning fashion. Iron was a precious metal for them, used for making arrow tips and knives ever since this metal began reaching the shores of the islands as drift material from the wreckages, which were frequent with the boom in the metallic shipbuilding industry around 1800 AD. Now, the settlement villages have become the new source of iron for the aborigines. Jarawas later began to plunder the settlers' farms by slashing and taking away banana combs.

4.2 Jarawa's frontline adversary

The A & N administration deployed the BP to provide protection to the settlers. BP camps were raised at strategic locations on the outskirts of the settlers' villages to prevent Jarawas' entry into the village areas. Regular patrolling was done along the cleared narrow tracks in the forest abutting the villages. Intermittent firing in the air was resorted to to scare away the aborigines from the vicinity of the patrolling track so as to avoid violent encounters with them. But this would adversely affect the hunting activities of the Jarawas, as the pigs aimed at would sprint away because of the boom due to frequent warning shots. Hence, the Jarawas would hold *khaki* (beige)-clad armed men with deadly guns, that is, BP, as their frontline enemies. So, they raided the isolated BP camps many times and disappeared quickly before the BP opened fire.

4.3 Highway of sorrow

The settlers' villages either had the seafront or were connected through the navigable (by small boats) sea creeks. So, the transport system was initially based on the waterways by plying the ships/boats. The Inter-Island shipping service was instituted by the Administration, connecting the Middle and North Andaman Islands with Port Blair (PB) in the South Andaman, the only town in the islands and the capital of this Union Territory. Later, the settlers began raising the demand for road connectivity with PB for the Middle and North Andaman Islands on the grounds that shifting the serious patients by ship to the lone referral hospital at PB did not serve the purpose of providing emergency medical care to save their lives, as the ship journey was not fast enough; shipping service would be suspended during the bad weather due to frequent cyclones and storms; and long travel by ship was a wearing journey, especially for those who were prone to seasickness. Considering the well-being of the settlers, the government approved the laying of the Andaman Trunk Road (ATR) from PB to Diglipur (DP) in North Andaman. This road, intended to be the lifeline for the immigrants, has proven to be a "highway of sorrow" for aborigines. Since the ATR cuts through the hunting ground of the Jarawas, they resisted the construction of the road by attacking the road-laying workers, killing many of them despite the fire cover provided by the BP. They laid roadblocks too at night to tell them emphatically to stop the work. There were several encounters leading to casualties on both sides. In view of the bloodshed, the government suspended the road-laying work. However, later it was resumed and completed, yielding to the pressure of the settlers. ATR was opened for the bus and lorry traffic right up to DP by running the vehicle ferry service across three straits. Anyway, the Jarawas did not give up their relentless opposition and began shooting the drivers and passengers with their deadly arrows. The administration provided BP escorts to the vehicles to protect the travelers. The vehicular traffic on ATR was brought under strict regulation to cause the least disturbance to the aborigines. Motor vehicles were allowed to move in limited convoys during the day only and at a fixed speed limit. Convoys were escorted by the police pilot vehicle and tail vehicle. Overtaking and sounding the horn were prohibited. It was to make the ATR an innocuous passage and not the highway of sorrow. Nonetheless, the Jarawas continued with their attempt to oust the outlanders.

4.4 Befriending the Jarawas

With the purpose of ending the perpetual hostility of the Jarawas, the BP launched a friendly mission in a similar way to how the British did for the Andamanese

100 years before. The contact party periodically went to drop gifts of coconuts on the shores of Middle Andaman Island and retreat quickly to avoid attacks from the Jarawas. Years of such conciliatory gift-giving efforts led the Jarawas to turn friendly in 1974 toward the visiting contact team, but they continued their hostility to almost all others. Later, contact expeditions were organized by the administration systematically through a designated team comprising doctors, anthropologists, botanists, foresters, and a contingent of BP under the leadership of the director or secretary of tribal welfare. Observations on the behavior of the Jarawas were noted during every visit from 1988 onwards, when I began to lead the contact expeditions. It was noticed that elderly Jarawa men frowned at those team members who wore *khaki* half pants, that is, BP constables, their foremost adversary. The doctor, though primarily meant for the expedition team, was asked to treat the wounds and bruises common on the bodies of Jarawas. Even though it was minor caregiving, the Jarawas were impressed by it, as the healing was fast since they were not all diabetic, as revealed through the studies carried out later in 1999. Thereafter, they began seeking such medical treatment on their own during subsequent contact.

5. Attempts at the conciliation of conflicts

As mentioned earlier, the territory occupied by the aborigines or used by them was notified, first on April 2nd, 1957, as the reserve area exclusively for the indigenous people, under the provisions of PAT Regulation; entry into it by the outlanders is prohibited, inter alia. However, such a reserve area meant for the Jarawa tribe was not demarcated on the ground, but the borders were defined through the imaginary lines connecting certain landmarks in the South and Middle Andaman Islands. The notification of the reserve area is found as a mere exercise on paper without having the intended effect on the ground. Unwitting trespass into the reserved area by the farmers and others was obvious in the absence of physical demarcation on the ground. And of course, it did not make any sense at all to the preliterate Jarawas.

5.1 Buffer zone

To address the above situation, a strategy of buffer zones was conceived on the basis of a universal principle of territoriality observed in human behavior. The hunter-gatherers are well aware of the boundaries of their own and of their neighbors' territory, defined through some natural landmarks, and honor them scrupulously. They avoid trespassing into other's territory to avert conflicts. The details of the buffer zone proposed to be carved out were incorporated in the *Master Plan (1991–2021)* mentioned earlier [13]. The buffer zone separates the settlement area, that is, the revenue land, which is territory occupied by the emigrees, from the rest of the forest area, which would remain as the hunting ground for the Jarawas. The declared revenue area is normally set apart from the rest of the forest land by demarcation through the boundary pillars/stones installed along the borders at certain intervals by the district authorities. The proposed buffer zone was an 8-meter-wide belt carved out in the forest by clearing the undergrowth, leaving about 500 meters of the jungle area beyond the revenue boundaries. The settlers could draw their entitled royalty-free forest produce from within this 500-meter-wide forest zone. Large trunks of standing trees on the two edges of the 8-meter-wide running buffer zone area were proposed to carry painted pictographs of human figures. The pictograph of the gunman in *khaki* color against the white background, visually representing the BP, painted on the Jarawas' hunting ground side of the 8-meter-wide belt implying the end of their area and beyond which there is grave risk for the them. Similarly, the pictographs of mother naked bowmen, representing the Jarawas, painted in a black color (skin color of the Jarawa and other Negritos) against white background on the tree trunks standing on the opposite edge of that belt indicating the end of settlement area and the territory beyond which is out of bounds for the outsiders. BP was to carry out regular patrols along the buffer zone to prevent trespass from either side. Zero entry of emigrees across the buffer zone could, in due course, convince the Jarawas about the termination of repeated ingress from the outsiders, and they would halt raids on the villagers. This could end, by the way, the "Jarawa problem" of settlers.

5.2 Reserved fishing grounds

Most Bengali settlers were fond of fish dishes, and hence they began to trawl in the coastal waters using rowing boats. A considerable number of fisher families from Andhra Pradesh, a southeastern province of mainland India, migrated to these islands and undertook the fishery business using mechanized boats and improved fishing nets and gear. As a result, coastal fishing grounds were exploited excessively. On the other hand, the Jarawas collect fish and mollusks from the shallow waters using fishing baskets. They did not have canoes to go offshore fishing. Therefore, the administration declared the west coastal waters up to 3 km from the high tide mark as reserved for the aborigines in 1979. Later, in 2004, it was extended up to 5 km. Thus, the prevention of fishing by outsiders in these coastal waters resulted in the availability of enough fish stock for the aborigines.

5.3 Augmenting food resources in forest

As DTW, I started in 1989 demonstrating to the Jarawas the entire process of planting the banana suckers and seedlings of other fruit-bearing plants like papaya, coconuts, etc. in the available open patches near their huts and in coastal plains during the Jarawa contacts. They were quick to learn and began to dig the pits and plant the seedlings carried by the contact expedition team, along with other gifts, and they also raised the protective fencing. They understood that such a dispersed plantation in their territory would provide them with fruits in due course, and they would have no need to go on raiding farmers' fields, risking their own lives. Within a few years, the Jarawas had quite a number of such plantation patches in their territory. A detailed proposal to augment, in situ, the wild pig population in the forest was also incorporated in the *Master Plan (1991–2021)* mentioned earlier [14]. Pork is the major food item for the Jarawas. But due to poaching by the immigrants, the pig population in the islands had thinned out. Hence, the project pig was designed to enrich that wildlife in a scientific and natural way.

6. Jarawas abandoned hostility and landed in vulnerability

The small ethnic communities flourishing in isolation for millennia strike a dynamic eco-cultural equilibrium by adapting biologically and culturally to the local eco-region. The population of such a community develops an immunity to the native pathogens in the long run, and it would have found ethnomedicine for the endemic diseases in its lengthy endurance. Hence, the sudden exposure of such indigenous people to the moderners is hazardous for their survival due to alien diseases for which they had neither resistance nor medicine. Further, they would be vulnerable to socioeconomic exploitation by the domineering, crafty modern people. This is what happened to the Jarawas when they gave up their hostility toward outlanders.

6.1 Jarawa lad's leg fracture fractured Jarawa's safety stronghold

One day in 1996, Enmei, a 17-year-old (approximately) Jarawa boy, was found lying with his leg fractured in the forest on the outskirts of Kadamtala village in the Middle Andaman. Villagers informed the local police, who in turn reported the matter to the higher authorities and sought advice. It was decided by the concerned officers (at that time, I was posted as the Deputy Commissioner of the Nicobar district, and I was not DTW) to shift the boy to the government hospital at Port Blair without considering the alternative method of providing medical care in situ as suggested in the *Master Plan* [15]. They were unmindful of the possible fallout of such action impacting the aborigines who have remained protected because of their long isolation. A makeshift medical hostelry could have been raised at Lakhralungta in the Middle Andaman, a place where Jarawas were contacted during most of the befriending missions, and moreover, Enmei was found very close to that location. That boy could have been shifted to the hostelry after giving him the orthopedic cast in the government hospital. Doctors, thereafter, could have visited the patient in that camp dispensary at the required intervals, and the nursing staff could have provided him with the daily care required. Enmai's parents could have given him the usual food, and then, for removing the plaster bandage after the prescribed period, he could have been taken again to the referral hospital.

Instead of such a course, he was hospitalized at Port Blair and kept confined for months in a room provided with alien food and clothing. At the end of the treatment, he was dropped off with a lot of gift items at the same place from which he was picked up. Enmei was moved by such friendly and consoling treatment given by the outlanders. He must have narrated all about this to other Jarawas. It must have been a big and pleasant surprise for his parents and others who had concluded that he must have been killed by the settlers. It took nearly a year for the Jarawas to change their age-old animosity and attitude toward the outsiders. One day in 1997, they allowed Enmei to go to Kadamatala village along with a few other boys in broad daylight. Delighted settlers gathered around that group of Jarawa boys without bows and arrows. Police took the boys to the police station, cooked rice, and fed them before they were dropped back at Lagralungta. Convinced by the friendly gesture of these emigrees, on the next and subsequent days, the elder Jarawa men, women, and small children came to that village to receive the same hospitality. Such a turn of events was widely reported in the media. Villagers from distant islands, too, began to come with the food and clothes to see the friendly Jarawas and give them those gifts, believing that the aborigines must be extremely poor, facing a dearth of food, and be naked as they did not have clothes. However, the truth was that Jarawas were curious about outsiders, their material culture, including strange eatables, and perhaps a fun time with them in the villages that pulled the Jarawas out, and not the hunger. Jarawa bands of the South Andaman, also emulating their northern brothers, began to enter the villages in the South Andaman in 1998 to get a similar reception from the immigrants.

6.2 A part of Andamanese history repeated with Jarawas too

The indiscriminate interface of Jarawas with outsiders led to the spread of alien diseases, some of them taking an epidemic shape, as had happened to the Andamanese in the past. Pneumonia broke out in 1988, measles and conjunctivitis in 1999, and malaria in 2000 and 2001. During these outbreaks, all those Jarawa patients who could be hospitalized were saved, while the fate of the rest who lived in the deep interior forest and could not be brought to the hospitals remained clouded. The other part of the Andamanese story of sexual exploitation of the womenfolk began a bit later among the Jarawas. The administration launched a campaign to stop the promiscuous interaction of outsiders with aborigines through an awareness program among the settlers and deployed a good number of officials in the field to give the gift of banana hands and persuade Jarawas to go back into the forest. Settlers, too, realized the danger to the aborigines, and by and large, they stopped giving them gifts. In the meantime, another scene was brewing up for the Jarawas, as the Andaman Islands were turning into a popular tourist destination.

6.3 "Jarawa tourism"

As one of the measures to boost the economic development of ANI in the aftermath of its massive destruction and loss due to the Asian tsunami of 2004, the government promoted tourism in a big way, apart from financing huge rehabilitation and reconstruction programs. While the administration took to aggressive marketing of paradisiacal and pristine beaches, blue crystalline waters, and nature's marvels in the islands like Baratang with a mud volcano and Ross and Smith in North Andaman having an immersible sandbar, the private tour agencies sold the clandestine "human safari" involving naked Jarawas. One-day tour packages from Port Blair to Baratang to Port Blair by taxi through ATR became popular. The tour operators enticed tourists with likely glimpses of Jarawa men, women, and children in their birthday suits and their photo shoots en route. There were instances of tourists indulging in breakdance, dragging Jarawa women into it, its videography, and its posting on social media. The administration came under widespread criticism for failing to protect the dignity of the aborigines. Therefore, it was essential to address this issue somehow. At this juncture, an expert came up with a proposal to dress up the Jarawas (during that time, I was posted in New Delhi).

6.4 Dress code for nude Jarawas

Authorities in the administration readily accepted the notion and the proposal pushed by that expert that it was the nudity that propelled Jarawa Tourism. They failed to visualize the effects on the health of the indigenous people flourishing for millennia in that hot, humid tropical climate without draping their bodies. They did not consider a safe and effective alternative solution of banning the tourist traffic to Baratang Island through ATR by operating a speedboat service under the Shipping Department or popularizing and incentivizing private boat services. The Supreme Court of India later, in its order, required the government to run the boat service to Baratong and close the ATR, which by then had been upgraded into a national highway by the Indian government. The administration had begun providing clothes to Jarawas. The field officials enforced the "dress code" among the aborigines and succeeded in ingraining in those novices the newfound "shame" of being nude. Soon, Jarawas developed a craze for clothes and wore them all the time, whether out hunting and gathering in the rain or in the sunshine or in for the rest within their huts. Although initially, they undressed themselves while in the woods or in the absence of outsiders. During the 7–8 months of monsoon season, their clothes mostly remained wet as they did not have so much to change them every time, leading to recurrent respiratory issues, while the long-term effect on their libido, sex life, and procreation is not known. In the humid, hot summer, they perspired profusely, leading to damp, sweaty clothes, resulting in an adverse impact on their skin health. Then, the supply of washing soap was introduced to clean the dirty clothes in the streams without realizing the consequences, like chemicals in the detergent contaminating the water in streams, especially during the acute summer, when Jarawas depend on puddles in brooks for drinking water.

6.5 Drapes brought scabies and triggered infant mortality

Clothing the Jarawas failed to stop the Jarawa Tourism, but it sprang yet another woe for them. Their fad for clothes opened up another channel for poaching the deer. Local pillagers—already in the clandestine business of supplying venison to the hotels and other consumers by lifting the deer ensnared in the traps raised by them in the forest—began to associate with Jarawas in the poaching. They taught Jarawas how to raise the trap, pick it up, and hand over the trapped deer in exchange for used or old clothes. Etch mite, the parasite causing scabies, common among the villagers, reached the Jarawa skin through such used fabrics and precipitated a highly irritating scabies epidemic during 2017–2018. Though a nonlethal ailment for the adults, it proved to be a devil instigator for the Jarawa children's death. The scabies in some infants exacerbated into impetigo scalp during the epidemic, with scary symptoms of blisters all over the kid's scalp oozing sap. Jarawas had never seen such a disease before the introduction of clothing, and so they did not have an ethnomedicine for it. The terrified parents of such kids believed, in accordance with an esoteric tradition prevalent in the tribe, that these children would not live the normal life of hunter-gatherers, and they needed to be sent to the care of their god, *Ankaanel*, in the other world, where such children get cured instantly and live there happily forever with an abundance of food. Because of this age-old tradition described as the ethnomedical termination of infirm infants (ETI), the Jarawa population does not have persons suffering from congenital deformities at all, a unique feature of this aboriginal tribe. The newborn babies and 1-2-year-old kids are thoroughly examined by the parents, and those babies found with deformities are handed over to the specified person who takes such infants to an undisclosed place to make them over to the god. In reality, such children are sentenced to death. Hence, some kids during the scabies epidemic of 2017–2018 lost their lives, and it was because of the result of the introduction of clothing among the Jarawas [16].

6.6 School and midday meal, the devil in disguise

"Schooling with rice grains" was yet one more novelty brought up for the Jarawas by that expert and applied by all too enthusiastic authorities in the administration, despite being aware of it as the blunder already committed in the Onge tribe. Two schools were started in the small building, one at Potatang on the roadside of ATR in South Andaman and the other at Poolthala, again on the roadside, in Middle Andaman. Preserving the Jarawa culture by documenting it in the school was said to be the main purpose. It was intended to do videography of the children being taught hunting and gathering in that school by the adult Jarawas and thereby keep their culture alive. Committed/genuine anthropologists make documentation of hunting and gathering while it is actually executed in the field. Anyway, the interest in producing books and articles by the "commuting" anthropologists and the craze of visiting dignitaries to have their photographs taken with such a unique tribe were met with ease in such a school. Further, aping in a way the practice of providing midday meals to the students in schools elsewhere in India, 3 kilos of rice grains per head per month were distributed to each Jarawa student in the school to carry home to cook for dinner by the parents. As such, it was neither a meal nor was it eaten midday, nor was it enough to meet their entire need. On the other hand, this fueled the Jarawas' craving for rice and getting it through underground transactions. It was the poachers again who exploited the situation. The miscreants began offering rice to Jarawas in exchange for their catch of big crabs and fish. They were asked to come to some corner in the village area with their catch, that is, womenfolk with fish/crab and men with venison. Those women were given fancy gifts of mirrors and talcum powder along with some rice and were sexually abused, leading to the birth of mulattos. Jarawa men were introduced to liquor; they turned into drunkards eventually. The intoxicants were unknown to this ethnic community in the past. Once the rice became their staple food, the Jarawas would be dependent on the outsiders, as they could neither hunt nor gather this new food in the jungle. Eventually, non-autochthon islanders may prevail upon the administration to supply rice to the Jarawas as a measure to prevent their exploitation by the poachers. They would base their advocacy on the current system of providing free ration articles to the Onge and Andamanese by the administration. In due course, thereafter, these outlanders would question the government about the justification of retaining such a huge area as a reserve for the small population of the Jarawa tribe when the increasing requirement of land for the development of the islands is the pressing need of the large population of islanders. Someday, the government would yield to such a majoritarian view, and the Jarawa ethnic community would be doomed.

7. Onge from nomadism to sedentarism at the behest

Little Andaman was also opened up for rehabilitation of the refugees, repatriates, and others during 1968–1974. Of the total area of 734 sq. km of the island, 34 sq. km was earmarked for settling 375 families of Bengali refugees [17], 25 Tamil-speaking Sri Lankan repatriated families [18], 95 Moplah families [18] from South Andaman, and 100 families of Nicobarese from Car Nicobar. In spite of these developments, the Onges, with their population of 112 (as per Census 1971), continued with their hunting and gathering activities in the remaining 700 sq. km area. In a way, encroaching on a part of Onge's land to meet the rehabilitation interest of displaced families was not a serious threat to the life and livelihood of the Onge, perhaps with the required medical care to tackle the alien ailments extended.

7.1 Coaxing the Onge to settle down

In the mid-1970s, an experienced and enthusiastic Chief Commissioner (CC) was posted in ANI. That was a period hot with the issues related to the rehabilitation of uprooted families by usurping the hunting ground of indigenous people. The government was extremely concerned with the well-being of aborigines in the wake of such an influx of outlanders and was keen to undertake the programs that would help the tribes to continue to flourish. Under such a situation, the Andaman Adim Janajati Vikas Samithi (AAJVS), an autonomous body fully funded by the government, was created under the headship of that CC to look after the welfare of the primitive tribes, now known as PVTGs, of these islands. A decision was taken at the behest of that CC to settle the nomadic Onges at a place and provide them with a free ration of essential food items like rice, wheat flour, sugar, cooking oil, spices, etc., apart from providing free medical care. A coconut plantation was raised at Dugong Creek, where the permanent houses were built for Onges, in addition to providing other facilities like water supply, power supply, medical sub-center, school, community hall, helipad, and jetty. Onges were not willing to stay in a fixed location. They were coaxed constantly till they reluctantly agreed to stay at two places, that is, Dugong Creek and South Bay. A contingent of officials comprising a doctor, a social worker, and others was positioned at Dugong Creek to manage the Onge settlement. The aborigines raised their own traditional shelters beside the houses built by the government. While the Onges of Dugong Creek, after prolonged persuasion, occupied the permanent houses, the Onges of South Bay continued to live in their own huts till the end. They were finally inveigled to settle at Dugong Creek following the winding up of the 2004 tsunami relief camp founded for all the Onges.

Onges in the beginning went for hunting and gathering even after their stay at a place. But the officials would force them to remain in the settlement so that they could be herded into the community hall for a gathering before the visitors, coming frequently to oversee the functioning of the settlement. That CC was keen to see the Onge Settlement at Duong Creek as a successful model of welfare for the aboriginal tribe. Various mundane development schemes, like the supply of dairy cows and Yorkshire pigs, etc., were introduced, which not only failed but also turned out to be a hazard for the Onge, as described by me elsewhere [19]. Over the years, Onges, particularly the younger generation, have given up foraging activities, relying on free food provided by AAJVS. The change in their food habits from their traditional forest-based paleo-diet to a farm-based neo-diet, clubbed with their sedentary living, has resulted in newfound health issues like obesity, hypertension, and anemia, particularly among children. They are living a vegetative life, the distorted lifestyle now, as against their original vibrant living. It is a perfect example of the interest of an individual and his system of authority conflicting with the interest of indigenous people.

8. Retaining the sociopolitical autonomy

Nicobarese is the largest group among the indigenous people of ANI, with a population of 23,681 as per the 2011 Census. It is the settled proto-forester ethnic community occupying the Nicobar Islands. Unlike the hunting and gathering aborigines of the archipelago, the Nicobarese did not practice hostility toward outsiders. Of course, they had a spell of bitter experience of economic exploitation by the Chinese, Burmese, and Malayan traders who came periodically to the islands to collect coconuts from the Nicobarese in exchange for iron tools, clothes, tobacco, and rice in the past. This exploitation was aborted when the traders deserted the islands hurriedly in the middle of the Second World War, when the Japanese forces were about to occupy the islands. The British had abandoned the archipelago since they did not have a strong defense to fight the Japanese. At the end of the war, the British reoccupied the islands and granted a trading license to one trustworthy agency, which had earned the faith of aborigines because of its fairness in dealings. Later, this company was transformed into two tribal cooperatives with Nicobarese families as the members. These guilds carried on with the export of coconuts procured from the aborigines and the import of essential and consumer goods to sell them to the members through its outlets in different villages. Thus, the role of private trader was done away with, and tribal self-determination was reinforced. Nicobarese came under the spiritual colonization started by the Christian missionaries, which was actually spearheaded by Bishop John Richardson, who was a tribesman from Car Nicobar. Despite virtually all of them becoming Christians and a few Muslims under the influence of Mohammadian traders, they did not lose their autonomy, wisdom, and culture. Being conscious of their own customs and practices, they were apprehensive of exploitation by the outsiders. Hence, the Nicobarese were insistent about their exclusivity in the Nicobar Islands.

8.1 Shifting of government college out of tribal island

Prior to the 1990s, the ANI had only one government college located at Port Blair for graduate courses in arts and science and no medical and engineering colleges. Nicobarese students got admission easily to the government college at PB and also to the professional colleges in mainland India against the reserved seats for them. Hence, they were satisfied with that situation. However, government authorities with the enthusiasm to augment educational facilities in the tribal areas opened a college in Car Nicobar in 1990. The Nicobarese were not at all willing to accept it, apprehending trouble due to the inflow of outlanders. The non-tribal students would also get admission to that college, teaching, and other stuff, and along with their families from outside, would stay on the island. Parents and guardians may keep visiting their wards, leading to an influx of outsiders. This would interfere with the normal peaceful life of aborigines and would lead to their exploitation too. It was not uncommon among the Nicobarese boys and girls to have premarital sex, and then their parents would finalize their marriage. Outlanders took advantage of this custom quite often. Some mischievous school teachers impregnated the girl students, exploiting their innocence. Now, the college in Car Nicobar with teenage boys and its staffers could breed more such sex escapades, leading to serious social issues among the aborigines. So, the tribal leaders prevailed upon the government authorities, and finally, the college was shifted in 1994 to Mayabunder in the Middle Andaman Island.

8.2 Traditional tribal councils and autonomy

Tribal councils (TC) are the customary self-governing sociopolitical bodies working at each village and major island level. The head of every extended joint family is a member of the village tribal council (VTC). These family headmen elect among themselves one wise, ethical, and reputed person as a village headman, popularly known as the captain, and to assist him, a second and third captain. This term apparently is borrowed from the ship's captain, who is the all-powerful head of the ship and its crew, which fits well with the village headman. All captains on an island elect one chief captain and a vice chief captain for the island tribal council (ITC). The captains at both levels are elected through a ballot paper, and the election is conducted by a committee of tribal elders smoothly, with their own resources, without any problems. The concept of the political party system did not exist for the purpose of elections to these institutions. The Nicobarese community as a whole has been voting for the oldest Indian political party in the elections for members of the Indian Parliament.

VTCs perform multifarious functions under the broad supervision of ITCs in matters like maintaining social order, settling local disputes, managing cultural practices and festivities, arranging community activities, and coordinating religious observances, thereby sustaining the community traditions, apart from facilitating and carrying out developmental/welfare pursuits with the assistance of the administration. The government notified the A & N Islands (Tribal Councils) Regulation, 2009 (TCR) in 2009, which intends to provide *greater autonomy* to the Nicobari Scheduled Tribes (sic) in managing their affairs and for the matters connected therewith. But this regulation is still in the process of being implemented. Administration has been trying for the last 15 years to convince the aborigines to accept it. Tribal leaders' argument is that the traditional TCs have *total autonomy* in managing their affairs. As such, a much higher objective has already been achieved than that intended in TCR, thereby questioning the justification of imposing TCR. The underlying worry of the community is the possible breakdown of its cohesion due to the involvement of outlanders in the matters of TCs, especially in the election process and financial management. Nicobarese are well aware of undesirable happenings elsewhere in such matters. Thus, it is another instance of their strong self-determination and autonomy.

Nicobarese have full autonomy in the management of their natural resources, including land and forest. Land is owned by an extended joint family. The entire territory from shore to hinterland, including the forest in the islands except Great Nicobar, is divided into parts, and each part is owned by the respective joint family. Individual nuclear families being the constituents of the joint family have usufructuary rights to grow or tend the coconuts and other plants and use the produce. It is notable that the writ of the revenue and forest administration does not run in the land of the Nicobarese. The administration has to request the concerned village captain and the head of the joint family to spare a piece of land required to establish and run the government offices in the Nicobar Islands, even though these institutions function for the benefit of the aborigines. They would permit the administration to use it but do not allow it to own it.

9. Wealth-fair of outlanders versus welfare of aboriginal islanders of great Nicobar

The Shompen and Nicobarese are the two aboriginal tribes of Great Nicobar Island (GNI). The former, with an estimated population of 229, has several nomadic hunting-gathering bands, each having 25 to 30 people occupying different portions of the interior forest region, while the Nicobarese had many small villages on the western coast and one on the southeastern coast prior to the tsunami of 2004. The tsunami had a devastating effect on the lives and livelihoods of the Nicobarese. Survivors were shifted by the government to the relief camps at Campbell Bay (CB), the administrative headquarters of the island. Permanent shelters were built for them at CB itself and not close to their original place. They could not restart their traditional livelihood activities at CB town in the absence of land for raising a coconut plantation. They are subsisting by working as daily wage workers whenever they get an opportunity. The Nicobarese, with a population of around 1200, are longing to go back to their original place. Shompens did not suffer due to the tsunami, as their habitations are in the hinterland.

9.1 State's territorial integrity and the interest of aborigines

GNI is a remote Indian island in the Bay of Bengal, nearly 1200 km away from the Indian mainland and 551 km from Port Blair, while it is just 163 km from Indonesia. As noted earlier, East and Southeast Asian traders visited the Nicobar Islands, including GNI, in the past. After Indian independence, there were occasional unreported visitors/fishermen from such foreign states. Preliterate Shompen and illiterate Nicobarese would not realize the implication if any foreigners occupied the part of the GNI. With a view to preventing such an eventuality, the Indian government launched a program in 1969 to settle 2000 families of the ex-soldiers on the island and help them to lead a life as farmers and thereby secure the presence of well-informed Indian citizens there. This was one of the steps in ensuring the territorial integrity. Two trunk roads, that is, the North-South Road along the southeastern coast and the East-West Road cutting across the middle of the island, were laid. Settlements were taken up first along the southeastern coastal region, and 330 families were rehabilitated in six villages. The grand plan of colonizing the island was reviewed, and the then government gave up the program of settling the balance of about 1700 families on the west coast in the interest of the well-being of the indigenous people and the environment.

9.2 Interest of wealthy overwhelms the welfare of the weak

The Great Nicobar Megadevelopment Project approved by the Indian government is underway to build an International Container Transshipment Port (ICTP), an international airport, and a global township for 650,000 immigrants as against the present population of just 8500 of the GNI and the total population of 380,520 of the entire archipelago. 166 sq. km, i.e., nearly 15% of the total geographical area of GNI, is being used for this project, leading to large-scale felling of standing forest and damaging the fragile ecology. This project is justified on the presumption that it will be able to compete with the hugely prosperous ports of Hong Kong and Dubai because of its locational advantage. It is situated at a strategic position near the Malacca Strait on one of the world's busiest shipping routes. The idea of setting up such a venture is not new. Many times, in the past, the proposal of building Freeport came up but was put aside by the then government, considering the disastrous impact on the indigenous people. More than 75,000 crore Indian rupees (9.4 billion dollars) is expected to be invested in this project. Hence, the giant multinational companies and conglomerates are putting their money in it and expecting handsome returns.

Now, money-making seems to be overtaking everything else, including ethical issues raised by several civil society organizations and individuals in India and abroad. The Tribal Council of GNI has withdrawn its consent for the project, stating that it was misinformed by the officials during the meetings that their land would not be used for the project. Presently, the other Nicobarese Tribal Councils in the district—under the stewardship of new captains who were chosen under the influence of government officials in emergency to fill the void created due to the death of many of the old wise captains in the tsunami, on the basis of their ability to speak Hindi, that is, their capability of communicating easily with officials (not because of their traditional wisdom)—are unable to prevail upon the administration to protect the interests of the aborigines of GNI. In such a situation, where the money overwhelms the morality, the money power that manages the political power could possibly be rechanneled, and conciliation in the conflicting interests could be attempted by throwing up alternative ways of money-making. The substitute channels have to be feasible, equally appealing, and founded on scientific research in the relevant field. Further, the information about such alternatives needs to be placed in the public domain through the efforts of well-meaning individuals and NGOs so that policymakers, public authorities, and the captains in the industries could pick them up. This could kindle healthy public debate, which would result in evolving widely acceptable solutions and options. Such an approach is most likely to succeed in truly democratic states.

In the context of a megadevelopment project in Great Nicobar, there are at least two sectors, viz., pharmaceuticals and fisheries, under which alternative proposals for investments could be drawn up. The vast ethnomedicine practiced by the indigenous people of these islands is a likely gold mine for the drug and cosmetics industry. To quote a few examples, the herbal juice consumed by Shompens provides them with energy to attend to the days-long heavy tasks, including long-distance treks across the mountain ranges and deep valleys without having usual food. This energy drink could propel the defense industry that supplies food to the fighting forces engaged in the long combat operations. The Jarawas have medicine and a procedure for painless parturition, which could prove to be a boon for women in modern society, who are troubled by the painful and difficult process of giving birth to their children. Onges have tribal medicine to address the issue of baldness among men, who, after applying it, could boost themselves with their shaggy scalp once again. This medicine has huge potential in the cosmetics industry. The other sector is the commercial fisheries, which have tremendous opportunity in these islands, having a 1962 km long coastline and a large Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to the extent of 0.6 million sq. km, which is 30% of the total EEZ of India. This is a high-investment-potential venture having long and steady returns. The moneyed companies can invest in it.

10. Conclusion

The primordial "Earth Populators," the progenitors of "would be Mars Populators," have become the minorities living in some corners of the Earth. They are now known as the indigenous people whose interests are being run over by the interests of their progeny, having grown into the majority. The conflict of interests is accentuating with the continuous expansion in number and ambition of the majority of people. The civilizational question is begging an answer from the "civilized" majority as to whether they are "civil enough" to accommodate the interests of the minority through conciliation. The story of the interface between the different indigenous peoples and the outlanders in these islands reveals the following three golden principles, which could be applied to serve the cause of indigenous people: (a) If, in the democratic state, the majoritarian interest of nonindigenous people conflicts with the interest of the minority indigenous people, the alternatives shall be explored toward meeting the interest of the majority, at the least cost to the minority, through transparent due process, involving the statutory authorities appointed to safeguard the interest of the indigenous people; (b) Principle of self-determination by the indigenous people for their vibrant self-reliance by retaining or reverting to their age-old dynamic eco-cultural equilibrium; (c) Principle of non-maleficence. This last principle states that every welfare measure, before it is executed among the isolated ethnic communities, should pass the test that it is absolutely necessary for the well-being of that

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.1011620

community in the long run for preserving its self-reliance and its autonomy. What is the undesirable negative fallout, and how is it totally annihilated? The statutory ethics committee for the welfare of such ethnic communities needs to be instituted, which may comprise administrators, anthropologists, medical and subject experts, devoid of their personal conflicts of interest. The committee will analyze and critically examine the proposal of welfare and approve it through a reasoned and speaking manner only if it conforms to the principle of "do no harm."

Author details

Shivappa A. Awaradi
Former Secretary to Government of NCT Delhi, India

*Address all correspondence to: s.a.awaradi@gmail.com

References

[1] Thangraj K et al. Reconstructing the origin of Andaman Islanders. Science. 2005;**308**:996

[2] Trivedi R et al. Molecular insight into the origin of the Shompens a declining population of Nicobar archipelago. Journal of Human Genetics. 2006;**51**:217-226

[3] Sengupta A. "They Must Have to Go Therefore, Elsewhere": Mapping the Many Displacements of Bengali Hindu Refugees from East Pakistan, 1947 to 1960s. Patna: Public Arguments Publication; 2017. p. 7. Available from: https://tiss.edu

[4] Kulik Rebecca M. Partition of India, South Asian history (1947). Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica; 2025

[5] Sengupta A. "They Must Have to Go Therefore, Elsewhere": Mapping the Many Displacements of Bengali Hindu Refugees from East Pakistan, 1947 to 1960s. Patna: Public Arguments Publication; 2017. p. 5. Available from: https://tiss.edu

[6] Andaman & Nicobar Islands Administration. Sri Vijaya Puram. Available from: https://www.andaman.gov.in

[7] Government of India. Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Calcutta: Census of India 1951

[8] Awaradi SA. Master Plan (1991-2021) for Welfare of Primitive Tribes of A & N Islands. Sri Vijaya Puram: A & N Administration; 1990. Available from: https://library.niti.gov.inopac-detail

[9] Erica LC. Bengali Settlers in Andaman Islands the Performance of Homeland in Newsletter 77 Summer 2017 of International Institute of Asian Studies Leiden. 2017

[10] Iqbal S. The Andaman Story. Delhi: Vikas Publication; 1978

[11] Krishnakumar MV. Development or despoliation? The Andaman Islands under colonial and post-colonial regimes. Shima: The International Journal of Research into Island Cultures. 2009;**3**(2):110

[12] Department of Forest and Environment A & N Islands. Forest and Environment A & N Islands. Available from: https://forest.and.in

[13] Awaradi SA. Master Plan (1991-2021) for Welfare of Primitive Tribes of A & N Islands. Port Blair/Sri Vijaya Puram: A & N Administration; 1990. pp. 171-175. Available from: https://library.niti.gov.inopac-detail

[14] Awaradi SA. Master Plan (1991-2021) for Welfare of Primitive Tribes of A & N Islands. Port Blair/Sri Vijaya Puram: A & N Administration; 1990. p. 170. Available from: https://library.niti.gov.inopac-detail

[15] Awaradi SA. Master Plan (1991-2021) for Welfare of Primitive Tribes of A & N Islands. Port Blair/Sri Vijaya Puram: A & N Administration; 1990. pp. 163-166 and 177-178. Available from: https://library.niti.gov.inopac-detail

[16] Awaradi SA. Ethnographic hotspot of Andaman and Nicobar Islands: Urgency for multidisciplinary studies. The Oriental Anthropologist (Allahabad, India: Oriental Institute of Cultural and Social Research). 2022;**22**(1):177-178. Available from: https://journals.sage.com/home/oan

[17] Sen U. Memories of partition's forgotten episode refugee resettlement in the Andaman Islands. Sudasien-Chronik-South Asia Chronicle (Germany). 2017;7:160

[18] Bannerjee R. Settler memory and islanding: An archipelago perspective. In: Occasional Paper. New Delhi: Prime Ministers Museum and Library; 2024. p. 16

[19] Awaradi SA. The gift and not the gun ruined them: The cultural history of aboriginal tribes of Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Global Journal of Human-Social Sciences (D). 2024;**XXIV**(II Version 1):26-29

Chapter 4

Iran: Nationalism Versus Islamism

Mahmoud Alinejad

Abstract

Since the sixteenth century, being Iranian had been tantamount to being a Shia believer. In the nineteenth century, however, the chaos of a frantic identity crisis trapped Iran, as a nation, in the impasse of a split identity, rendering it divided between an emotional belonging to a religious tradition and an intense desire for economic and social benefits of a secular modernity. The rise of a novel Iranian nationalism in the third decade of the twenty-first century is seeking to uproot the ruling theocratic oligarchy of Shia clergy with the promise of building an inclusive national identity for a truly modern, prosperous, and progressive Iran. Through capturing the state power, Iran's rising nationalism may yet end the millennia-old reliance of the Iranian state on religiously sanctioned legitimacy. The fall of the Islamist state and the emergence of a democratic government in a post-Islamist Iran will mark a seismic shift, a real game-changer, for Iran and the entire Middle East.

Keywords: Iran, state, Shia Islamism, religious nationalism, secular nationalism

1. Introduction

For centuries, Shia Islam had been an essential marker of the collective identity of Iranians. In Iran of the 1970s, a new political reading of Shia faith aroused a sense of collective belonging and solidarity. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini successfully deployed the deep emotional thrust of Iran's passionate millenarian culture in the late 1970s to inspire a militant religious nationalist ideology as the driver of an Islamic revolution.

Leading the revolution, the Ayatollah managed to topple the millennia-old Persian monarchy and found an Islamic theocracy in Iran in 1979. Ever since the fall of the Pahlavi monarchy, Iran's political landscape has been dominated by a Shia Islamist theocracy.

The social potency and the mass appeal of Shia nationalism in Iran of the 1970s resided in a unique combination of a revolutionary reading of religious traditions with populist egalitarian mottos. Through his apocalyptic interpretation of Shia millenarianism, Khomeini made political capital of Shia eschatology as the core of the national identity of Iranians.

In the decades since the Islamic revolution of 1979, however, a profound shift in perspective has emerged among many Iranians regarding the deposed Pahlavi monarch. An intensifying trend has emerged, characterized by a widespread re-examination of modern history. Discussions comparing the country's current state of the economy and society to the pre-revolutionary period have gained momentum among both the intellectual elite and the public at large.

A dramatic generational shift has given rise to a strong sense of indignation and patent anger toward religious restrictions, nepotism, and corruption, resulting in open calls for the separation of religion from political affairs and an end to the religious state. Alienation from the Shia faith as a marker of collective identity has ignited search for alternative sources of national solidarity.

This chapter demonstrates how a resurgent Iranian nationalism is challenging the Islamic state that has wielded absolute political power in Iran for nearly half a century, projecting its power across the Middle East. It will show how this rising secular nationalism is fueling a revolution against the Islamist regime, which came to power through a revolution itself—a revolution that was driven by its own brand of nationalism—a religiously motivated nationalism, which I refer to as "Shia nationalism".

The rising nationalist movement is endeavoring to unseat the Shia Islamist rule by eroding its foundational core—i.e. Shia nationalism. Shia nationalism, as the core of Shia Islamism, was the main driving force of the Islamic revolution of 1979. It was fundamental in motivating the Iranian nation to rise against the secular regime of monarchy in an Islamic revolution and blindly hand political power to a repressive theocracy with global ambitions.

In the interplay of religious tradition and secular modernity, the protagonists of the new Iranian nationalism are challenging the foundational legitimacy of Iran's ruling Islamist state by confronting the centuries-old influence of Shia faith on Iran's political culture. In this quest, they are reclaiming their pre-Islamic ancient roots as the source of their authenticity. They are not only displacing Shia Islamism as the ideology of the ruling class, but also supplanting Shiism as the core of Iranian national identity.

It is Ironic that the new generation of Iranian nationalists is seeking to topple the Islamist theocracy which their predecessors helped to bring to power. They are bent on rehabilitating and restoring the Pahlavi monarchy, which their elders vilified and overthrew. They are keen to redeem their forefathers by coronating the surviving heir to the Pahlavi throne, whom the Islamists berated and reviled.

What follows is essentially an exercise in interpreting the profound political journey that the Iranians of contemporary generations are trekking against the background of their millennia-old history through the lens of nationalism. It is based on personal observation, conversation with a wide range of Iranians inside and outside Iran, and consultation with the writings of subject matter specialists.

2. The bipolar source of nationalism in Iran

The imagination of a modern Iranian nation first emerged in the Iranian social and political milieu because of the encounter with modern imperial powers in the early nineteenth century under the Qajar Dynasty (1789–1925). The memory of Iran's humiliating defeats in the Russo-Persian wars of 1804–13 and 1826–28 led to the loss of vast Iranian territories in the Caucasus to Tzarist Russia. The defeats would weigh heavily on the conscience of the Iranian nationalists for generations to come.

Early modern Iranian nationalism was based on a strong sense of history deposited in collective memory. Symbolically, modern Iranian nationalism was primarily anchored in the Persian language and literature, which had bequeathed Iranians with a rich corpus of epic romantic and mystical poetry and prose.

Despite Iran's linguistic diversity, almost all the great works of Iranian literature after the Seventh-Century Arab conquest, such as Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*, Khayyam's *Rubaiyat*, and Hafiz's *Divan,* were composed in Persian [1]. In fact, if it was not for the post-conquest emergence of modern Persian (Farsi) and its peak of literary excellence between the tenth and fourteenth centuries, Iranians, like Egyptians, would be speaking Arabic today.

The tiny minority of Iranian literati in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries rediscovered their own history and culture through access to Persian literature as well as recent archeological discoveries, modern historical analyses, and writings of European orientalists. They developed a strong sense of Iranian homeland with community and culture [2]. The work of European historians, archeologists, and orientalists was particularly important in kindling the interest of Iranian literati in ancient sources in a search for a deeper knowledge of their own past, which extended far into several millennia.

Modern Iranian nationalism thus fed on the vivid imagination of a distinct and continuous ancient culture, which existed way before Islam, within what was believed to have been the cradle of human civilization and the seat of the first world empire in roughly the same geography [3]. For the literati outside the scholastic Shia establishment, Cyrus the Great, the founder of the sixth-century BC Achaemenid Empire, came to be venerated as a hero who produced the first charter of human rights and liberated the Jews from the Babylonian captivity.

Through a fresh encounter with the Hebrew Bible and the ancient Greek works of history, the modern Iranian literati sought to reconnect with the Persian world beyond the boundaries of Islamic history and culture. They were gradually finding that even much of what was known as Islamic culture and civilization had been shaped by Arabized Iranians who had served as viziers, historiographers, mathematicians, astronomers, and physicians at the courts of Arab Caliphs.

The Iranian literati thus came to harbor strong nationalist sentiments. They sought to reawaken the sense of an ancient grandeur, which was latent in the collective memory of ordinary illiterate Iranians. They found this challenging as ordinary Iranians had no anchor in life other than their zealous belief in the teachings of the Shia clergy, who, through their seminary education, formed the second class of literate minority in Iran of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It was in this context that a new generation of Iranian nationalists endeavored to conceptualize the modern Iranian nationalism.

Despite the appeal to ancient history, the intent of the early Iranian nationalists was secular in the modern sense of the term. They were keen to learn from the developments in Europe by reading imported books, journals, and pamphlets, by interacting with European functionaries and visitors, and through travels to Britain, France, Germany, and Russia for education, diplomacy, and business.

The incompetence of the despotic Qajar kings, the royal patronage of a class of courtly priests, and the influence of imperial powers on the royal court caused a strong sense of humiliation in the nationalist literati. They sought to limit the power of the king, cut off the state from the obscurantist edicts of the priestly class, and reduce foreign influence on domestic policy. In essence, they sought to change the status of the inhabitants of Iran from "subjects of the king" to "citizens of the nation" [4].

The secular nationalist fervor in Iran, which had begun in the late nineteenth century, incited strong nationalist sentiments that set the stage for a constitutional movement in the early twentieth century (1905–1911). Indeed, secular nationalism on the European model emerged on a wave of social discontent and political dissent as the most coherent political ideology of the constitutional movement.

In contrast to the romantic nationalism of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century literati, which was anchored in Iran's pre-Islamic history, the nationalist ideologues of the post-World War II generation built political ideology based on the sentimental attachment of overwhelming majority of Iranian population to Shia faith. They redefined Shia Islam as a modern political ideology that would inspire religiously motivated nationalist sentiments. Shia nationalism proper, which developed during the 1960s and 1970s, owed its success to the Safavid Empire (1501–1736) to turn Iran into a Shia bastion surrounded by a sea of Sunni neighbors nearly five centuries earlier.

Shia Islam had already spread roots in Iran since the seventh-century Arab conquest, but its followers were in the minority until the sixteenth-century rise of the Safavid. Until then, in Iran, like elsewhere in the Islamic world, most of the population were of the Sunni faith—the dominant faith of the Islamic Caliphate, which was then carried by the Ottoman Sultan. In competition with the Sunni Ottoman Sultan for the leadership of the Muslim Umma, the Safavid declared Twelver Shiism as state religion in Iran. In pursuit of a deliberate policy to promote Shiism as the true version of Islam, the Safavid sought to forge a faith-based proto-national identity integral to building mass loyalty to their state.

A sense of being oppressed, the notion of martyrdom, and expectation for a savior shaped a common cultural self-understanding among the Shia believers and served as the source of religious nationalist sentiments in Iran. The sense of being oppressed referred to the belief that Prophet Mohammad's son-in-law and the first Immaculate Imam, Ali ibn Aboutaleb, and his eleven descendants had been the rightful successors of the Prophet as spiritual and temporal rulers of the emerging Islamic empire, but had been deprived of their right by the Sunni caliphs.

This was in sharp contrast with the majority Sunni believers, who firmly believed in Islam as it had really unfolded throughout its history. Sunnis believed that justice had been done in the Prophetic succession and thus Abu-Bakr, Omar, and Uthman had been the rightful successors of the Prophet before Ali, and the Umayyad and Abbasid afterward. For the Shia, however, who believed in a form of hereditary succession after the expiry of the Prophet, the actions of the Sunni Caliphs to deprive the Immaculate Imams of their right to rule had perverted the course of Islam and thus prevented it from fulfilling the Prophetic mission. They believed that only the Immaculate represented the true version of Islam.

The notion of martyrdom (*Shahadah*) in Shiism was associated with the tragic end of the Shia hero, Hossein-ibn-Ali, the third Immaculate Imam, who with handful of followers stood against the army of the Sunni Umayyad Caliph, Yazid ibn Muawiya, in the battle of Karbala in the year 680, to claim his birthright and return sovereignty to the Household of the Prophet (*Ahl-al-Beit*), but was slain and decapitated on the order of Yazid.

And the waiting for the Savior, the Promised Mahdi, constituted the redemptive element of Shiism—the belief that the last of the Twelve Immaculate Imams, Mohammad-ibn-Hassan, had gone into Occultation in the year 874 and will reappear as savior in an apocalyptic fashion to cleanse the world of sin and institute universal justice under the genuine Islamic rule.

3. Secular nationalism driving the rise of a modern state

Shortly after demonstrations and political pressure forced the Qajar King Muzaffar ad-Din Shah to ratify the draft of a constitution and the convention of a national parliament in August 1906, divisions in the constitutionalist ranks split them into two opposing parties, plunging the newly created constitutional government into chaos. The influence of religion and religious leaders on the population had made it imperative for the constitutionalist intellectuals, bureaucrats, and technocrats to make concessions to the Shia clergy and even form political alliances with them to secure the ratification of the constitution by the monarch.

With the victory of the revolution, however, the secular constitutionalist intellectuals sought deliberately to minimize the influence of the clergy and Islam, in general, on the new Iranian national polity. Having the upper hand in the new parliament, the religious party moved to reciprocate. The tension between the two factions came to a head in 1910, when the religious members of the new parliament, including the Shia clergy and traditional merchant class, used their numbers to isolate and marginalize the secular intellectuals.

As conflict intensified, the Shia clergy exerted their popular influence to effectively banish the secularist members of the parliament. Outnumbered, the secularists were denounced as heretics and apostates [5]. Although the constitutional government persisted, the unproductive domestic conflicts and the machinations of imperial powers continued for almost a decade. The inconsequential bickering in the parliament and foreign intrigue paralyzed the nascent constitutional government.

In the aftermath of the Great War and the Russian Revolution, Iran had become a battleground of the British and the Soviet Union. In 1917, Britain had used Iran as the springboard to launch an expedition into Russia as part of their campaign against the Bolsheviks on the side of the White Guard. The Soviets had responded by propping up a vassal state in Iran's northern province of Gillan. By 1920, the Iranian constitutional government had lost virtually all power outside its capital, with British and Soviet forces exercising control over most of the Iranian mainland. Insurgencies were also incited in Iran's Turkish, Kurdish, and Arabic-speaking regions.

The situation became so frustrating that the meteoric political rise of a strong military man was conceded by almost all the main political and religious protagonists to settle the inconsequential disputes by force. The Iranian commander of the Cossack Brigade, Colonel Reza Khan, in league with a well-connected journalist and politician, Seyyed Zia Tabatabaei, put an end to the fruitless political discord by staging a coup in February 1921. They pushed for radical reforms in the constitutional government, which had come to the brink of ruin by the corrupt political class that jealously guarded its privileges from the pre-constitution period.

Under pressure by the military contingent commanded by Reza Khan, the young Qajar king, Ahmad Shah, appointed the 33-year-old Seyyed Zia as Prime Minister, who in turn appointed the 43-year-old Reza Khan as commander-in-chief of army and minister of war. The coup was partially assisted by the British who advocated a strong central government in Iran to end the Bolshevik penetration in Iran. The British were concerned about the threat that communist influence in Iran would pose to the British interests in India.

By 1923, when Reza Khan had largely succeeded in securing Iran from regional insurgencies, secessionist revolts, and foreign threats, he returned triumphantly to the capital. More powerful than before, he induced the parliament and the 25-year-old Shah to appoint him prime minister. In return, Reza Khan facilitated the Shah's voluntary departure for Europe in November 1923. The journey was undertaken ostensibly for the purpose of medical treatment abroad, but Ahmad Shah was destined never to return to Iran.

With the Shah's departure, an extensive campaign, encouraged by Reza Khan, was initiated in favor of the abolition of the monarchy and the establishment of a republic on the model of neighboring Turkey. However, the move by the Republic of Turkey under Mustafa Kemal Pasha to abolish the Caliphate and place all religious schools, seminaries, and endowments under the government control frightened the Shia clergy in Iran, who feared a republic in Iran would have similar consequences for the role of Islam. The senior clergy then persuaded Reza Khan to become king.

In December 1925, Reza Khan called the Constituent Assembly into session, which, after deliberation, decided to remove the Qajar Dynasty and appoint Colonel Reza Khan as the new Shah and the founder of the new Pahlavi dynastic monarchy (1925–1979). Ahmad Shah remained in Europe in exile on a generous state pension until his death in 1930 at the age of 32. According to French newspaper reports at the time, he left behind a considerable fortune, estimated at 75 million francs. This marked the first peaceful transition of power from one political dynasty to another in Iran's history.

Like Napoleon, Reza Shah emerged as a strong ruler from the ashes of a revolution that had been incapacitated by its own internal squabbles. He built a modernist but autocratic monarchy within the constitutional framework, which instituted the rule of law and implemented much of the aspirations of the movement for constitutional modernization, but kept the romantic desire of intellectuals for democracy at bay.

The miserable economic condition of the country in the aftermath of the Great War, the Bolshevik Revolution in neighboring Russia, armed secessionist movements around the country, and the chaotic factional infighting meant that a full bloom democracy had to wait. Reza Shah's policies were guided by a will for top-down modernization of Iran and recreation of the country as a modern territorial state.

Reza Shah founded such modern institutions as a standing army, state bureaucracy, modern judiciary, modern schools, and the first Iranian university. His reign saw the emergence of an educated urban middle class and the development of a national market and modern industry [6]. His infrastructure development projects saw the building of roads and railways, and integration of the then-new communication technologies of telephone and radio transmission.

Some of the Shah's policies antagonized the Shia clergy, such as his move to take away from the clergy their independent positions as judges and educators by creating modern state-run judiciary and education systems. The resentment of the clergy intensified when the Shah introduced a Europeanized national dress code for men and, notably, issued a decree to mandate Muslim women to be unveiled [7]. The clergy denounced these moves as heretical innovations and incited a rebellion in the shrine city of Mashhad, which was crushed in a bloody crackdown in August 1935.

Reza Shah's nationalism invoked the Persian pre-Islamic imperial tradition. Ancient Persia was celebrated in official historiography, styles of architecture, pomp and ceremony of coronation, and archeological excavations. However, while the invocation of past glories could be useful for the purposes of the modern state, such imaginations could, at times, be misguided. Reza Shah's fascination with the idea of Iran as an Aryan nation drew him close to the fashionable racially inspired political ideologies of the 1930s in Europe. This could be seen as the motivation behind his move to approach Nazi Germany to obtain technical assistance for his development projects—much to the resentment of the Britain and Russia—the two major European imperial powers with great influence in Iran.

With the start of World War II, Britain and Russia insisted that German engineers and technicians in Iran were spies and saboteurs and demanded that Iran expel all

German citizens. The Shah's refusal served as an excuse for the Allied Forces to invade and occupy Iran in 1941. The Allied leaders demanded the Shah's abdication and forced him into exile. He was succeeded by his 22-year-old son and heir, Mohammad Reza. The humiliating abdication of his father and the complexities of dealing with Allied occupation made the early years of the new Shah's reign uneasy.

4. Shia revival and the crisis of the Pahlavi modern state

The first decade of Mohammad Reza Shah's reign saw the decline of the authority of the king, which provided a conducive environment for open criticism, ridicule, and scandalous smear against the Shah, his family, and the entire ruling class. While some activists called for the restoration of the constitutional powers of the parliament, others were trying to revive the political influence of religion—and yet others were advancing foreign interests. To these must be added the free rein of racketeers, fraudsters, charlatans, and outright criminals.

An avalanche of newspapers and other printed materials expressed a stunning range of political points of view, ranging from the rightwing press to official publications of the Iranian communist party, to scandalous stories and slanderous accusations against the Shah and other statemen. A militant Islamist group—the Fedayeen of Islam—even tried to assassinate the Shah in 1949. The Shah survived—but this assassination made him more assertive and more willing to employ harsh punishments against his enemies. The Shah even called the constituent assembly into session to make amendments to the constitution to give him more powers.

Like his father, the young Shah incorporated pre-Islamic symbolism to fashion his style of nationalism, with official historiography elevating the Achaemenid period as the political origin of the modern Iranian state. However, in 1951, the Shah's own prime minister, Mohammad Mosaddegh, became the leader of a political movement that sought to limit his powers.

Mosaddegh was a Qajar prince and a popular parliamentarian, who was nominated as prime minister by the parliament and whose nomination was ratified by the Shah himself. Mosaddegh had gained popularity as the champion of the oil nationalization movement, which represented the popular desire to take back control of Iran's oil reserves and revenues from the British [8].

Rather than appealing to the glorious Persian history, or the Islamic tradition, for political legitimacy, Mosaddegh's patriotic rhetoric stressed national awakening in the face of contemporary threats posed to national interests by British imperialism. In retaliation, Britain placed an economic embargo on Iran, which moved the prime minister to consider closer ties with the Soviet Union.

The increasing influence of the atheist pro-Soviet communist party, however, strained the prime minister's cordial relations with the Shia clergy. It also frightened the U.S. and Britain on the cusp of the Cold War. The CIA and MI6 supported the plot of a group of royalist army officers to overthrow Mossadegh. A coup was staged in August 1953 with the blessing of the Islamist clergy, which toppled the prime minister and restored the Shah to power. Mosaddegh was removed and placed under house arrest, and the communist party was outlawed.

In 1962, the Shah introduced a progressive package of reform. By redistributing the arable land of the large landowners to smaller agricultural workers, his land reform effectively abolished the old feudal system in Iran. The Shah also introduced policies in support of the welfare of industrial workers, implemented programs for social security, medical insurance, and mass literacy, and crucially granted women and non-Muslim minorities the right to vote and run for office.

Another serious challenge to the Shah came in the early 1963 as a backlash to his reforms. The radical Shia cleric, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, represented the resentment of the Shia clergy with the decline in the status and influence of Shiism under the Pahlavi monarchy. In a speech in June 1963, which sparked a bloody riot in Tehran, the Ayatollah condemned the Shah's reforms. He was particularly resentful of the treatment of the large landowners, who were large religious donors. He was particularly appalled by the idea of women's liberation.

The Shah also provoked the ire of the anti-Jewish Islamists by his friendly relations with the Jewish State. During the 1960s and 1970s, Iran became a major provider of oil for Israel, and Israel established a de facto embassy in Tehran [9]. The Islamist resentment intensified with leaked news about extensive military and security cooperation with Israel, which had been kept under wraps to avoid provoking public sentiments, which were mostly hostile to Israel at the time.

The religious ideologues of the 1960s and 1970s—men like Jalal Al-e-Ahmad, Ali Shariati, and Murtaza Motahari—played a significant role in invoking religious traditions to shape and diffuse a consecrated Islamist nationalist ideology, and the radical clergy were happy to mobilize the revolutionary mob by fiery speeches, motivating them to make sacrifices demanded by what had come to be known as the Islamic *Nahda* (Movement). Shiism demonstrated the capacity to engender national political consciousness within a traditional and deeply religious community that viewed itself as a chosen people surrounded by a sea of enemies.

During the anti-Monarchic *Nahda*, Khomeini conveniently invoked the Shia myths and legends to mobilize his followers and prepare them to make the ultimate sacrifice. He had drawn parallels between the rebellious actions of his followers against the Shah and the legendary acts of the Shia martyrs against the injustices of the Sunni Caliphs. The Ayatollah pledged to awaken the Shia believers to their "celestial identity" and "blissful destiny". He portrayed his promised Islamist state as a site of social reconstruction, moral regeneration, and collective salvation.

Ironically, Khomeini drew on the legendary acts of Arab Shia saints, like Ali-ibn-Aboutaleb and Hossein-ibn-Ali, as inspiration to provoke patriotic sentiments in Iranian believers. He promised that if the Iranian people shored up the righteous tenets of Shia Islam and distinguished themselves as true believers by putting their trust in his version of the Shia faith, Allah would grant them the conquest of the whole world. His promised utopia for Iran was to become a "holy nation" with material power.

Ayatollah Khomeini exploited the Shah's return to power by an "American coup" and his contentious ties with Israel to accuse him of selling out Iran's national interests. He managed to portray the Shah in the public mind as an American and Israeli pliant creature. A sense of nationalism inspired by Shiism was crucial in provoking strong public resentment with the Shah, which was harnessed by Khomeini to inspire an Islamic revolution to bring the Pahlavi monarchy down in 1979.

The Islamic revolution of 1979 came as a shock to the proponents of Pahlavi secular nationalism. The Pahlavi monarchy deemed the separation of state and religion an essential condition for Iran's modernization—and it felt secure in the achievement of this objective. The political revival of Shia Islam contradicted the Shah's optimism about the depth of social support for his modern ideas and practices. The Shah and his political elite had underestimated the deep roots of Shiism in defining national identity in Iran. Shia Islamism inspired a religious nationalism, which represented the return of religion to the public and political life.

5. Shia Islamism and the political evolution of Shia theology

Since the fall of monarchy in 1979, Iran's political landscape has been dominated by Shia Islamists, who have doggedly committed themselves to inspiring a jihad against the U.S. and Israel as adversaries of Islam and Iran. Ayatollah Khomeini's deep animosity toward the U.S. and Israel stemmed from a combination of ideological, political, and historical factors.

Khomeini viewed the U.S. as the primary global symbol of modern Western arrogance, materialism, and moral decadence, which he believed to be antithetical to Islamic values. He popularized his anti-Western rhetoric by accusing the U.S. of undermining Iran's independence.

Khomeini's enmity with the U.S. was most intense when it came to American support for Israel. In fact, he accused the U.S. of using Zionism to penetrate and corrupt the Muslim nations. In Ayatollah Khomeini's worldview, expulsion of America from Muslim lands was of prime importance.

Khomeini as a Shia Islamist believed that the Sharia law purified of foreign elements, Islam offered a divine blueprint for conducting social and political affairs as well as personal life. His political views were strongly influenced by the ideas of Islamist ideologues of Sunni persuasion, such as Maulana Maududi of India and Sayyid Qutb of Egypt, who also advocated the creation of a political system based on the teachings of the Islamic Sharia [10].

Khomeini criticized America's support for the late Mohammad Reza Shah of Pahlavi, whose regime he saw as corrupt, oppressive, and complicit in subjugating Iran to foreign interests. His rhetoric framed the U.S. as a hegemonic power undermining Iran's sovereignty and a barrier to the establishment of an Islamic state governed by the Sharia.

Shortly after his rise to power, the founder and paramount leader of the Islamic Republic proclaimed the unwavering commitment of his new Islamic state to destroying Israel and kicking the U.S. out of the region. He referred to the U.S. as "the Great Satan" and called Israel a "stain" that must be "wiped off the map". This worldview shaped the anti-American and anti-Israeli stance that became central to the Islamic Republic's political identity and foreign policy.

On November 4, 1979, less than a year after revolutionary storm toppled Iran's millennia-old monarchy, a group of armed Iranian college students—influenced by anti-American agitation of the Ayatollah who was now entitled Imam Khomeini—raided and occupied the U.S. embassy in Tehran, seizing and detaining over 50 American diplomats and embassy staff as hostages. The students who referred to themselves as "followers of the Imam's line" included many of the future political and military leaders of the emerging Islamic Republic.

The takeover of the U.S. embassy became a pivotal episode in the history of Iran-U.S. relations. The U.S. embassy building and grounds were never handed back, and the two countries have had no official diplomatic relationship ever since. The embassy building was turned into a monument to "U.S. arrogance"—a museum of anti-American posters, sculptures, and paintings, with old equipment for sending coded messages on exhibition. Every year since, on the anniversary of its takeover, the embassy doors have opened to the public, and anti-American demonstrations have been staged in surrounding streets.

Notwithstanding the gap between Ayatollah Khomeini's global aspirations and the economic and military capacity of Iran to realize his ambitions, the essence of the Ayatollah's animosity toward the U.S. should be understood in terms of an effort to undermine U.S. global hegemony. He sought to demonstrate his will to subvert U.S. power by humiliating America through a display of the helplessness of its captive diplomats to the world.

As for the Ayatollah's anti-Jewish sentiment, it certainly had religious and historical roots. But his obsessive zeal for the destruction of Israel should be understood, at least in part, in the light of his anti-American sentiment, which became a pervasive sentiment in Iran in the aftermath of the embassy seizure. While under the late Shah, Iran was far from hostile in its relations with Israel, under the Ayatollah, the friendship turned into animosity.

The Ayatollah ordered all ties with Israel to be cut off, and the building of the Israeli de facto embassy to be expropriated and handed to Palestinian representatives to turn it into the Palestinian embassy [11]. He also declared last Friday of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan as the "Quds Day", marked by state-organized annual rallies against Israel and its Western supporters across the nation.

The U.S. embassy seizure effectively became a watershed moment, marking the evolution of Shia Islamism into the political ideology of Iran's emerging Islamist state, the U.S. into its nemesis, and animosity with Israel into its cause. Ayatollah Khomeini portrayed expelling Americans from Muslim lands, destroying the Zionist regime, and liberating the Quds as an apocalyptic mission that would redeem and renew contemporary Islam as a compelling global political power [12].

For over four and a half decades, Iran's Islamic state has ceaselessly impressed the anti-American and anti-Zionist call-to-arms upon the Iranian public mind. To demonize the U.S. and Israel, the regime has used every avenue at all levels, in religious sermons, state-organized demonstrations, publications, movies, documentaries, and even school curricula. What is more, the Islamist regime has substantiated its unrelenting rhetoric with zealous action, designed to reinvigorate Islam as a political and military force, with the view to challenge the U.S. and Israeli presence in what is believed to be Muslim lands.

6. The Islamic Republic: The modern state undermined by a deep state

By the early 1970s, Khomeini had already developed a theory of Islamic state by reinterpreting the doctrine of *Velayat-e Faqih*—which in traditional Shia jurisprudence was understood as the guardianship of Shia jurists over minors and the insane. With skillful references to the *Quran* and *Hadith* (Oral Traditions), Khomeini offered an innovative—some would say heretic—reinterpretation of the doctrine of *Velayat-e Faqih* in terms of political authority of a qualified Shia jurist over the entire Muslim community.

With the victory of the Islamic revolution in 1979 and the fall of monarchy, Khomeini's reading of *Velayat-e Faqih* was incorporated into the Constitution of the emerging Islamic Republic. Thereby, the Shia jurists were identified as the custodians of the Iranian state. The Constitution, in effect, enshrined in the law the exclusive claim of the Shia clerical elite to political power. Khomeini proved unwavering in his determination to transform Iran into a theocratically ruled Islamic state, with Shia clerics taking over the formulation of governmental policy based on the edicts of the Sharia.

As a populist leader, Khomeini aroused a sense of collective belonging and solidarity by deploying the deep emotional thrust of a passionate religious culture, which he invoked to popularize his apocalyptic Shia millenarianism. He mobilized the nation in support of *Velayat-e Faqih* by characterizing Iran as a Shia nation which, under *Velayat-e Faqih*, would serve as the site of the return of the Promised Mahdi—the proverbial Messiah—and the hub for a global revival of Islam.

In Khomeini's Shia millenarianism, Iran as the world's only Shia-governed nation was uniquely qualified to lead the struggle to liberate the Quds from Zionist occupation and set the stage for the return of the Mahdi [13]. Khomeini's followers came to believe that the eradication of Israel and liberation of the Quds were a necessary first step for the global power of Islam, with Iran as its apocalyptic agent.

In a clear challenge to the claims of the Sunni archrival, Saudi Arabia, to the leadership of the Muslim world, Khomeini sought to turn Iran into Islam's *Umm al-Qura*—Mother of all Cities, the proverbial City on the Hill. In his radical reinterpretation of the Shia faith, the Iranian nation appeared as a chosen people with a strong conviction to a sacred history and divine duty.

Khomeini dismissed Iranian secular nationalism, while appealing to the transnational concept of the *Umma* to highlight the global reach of Islam and his own transnational ambitions. Yet, a militant religious nationalist ideology was embedded in his political reading of Islam. Through his radical interpretation of Shia millenarianism, Khomeini emerged as a champion of Shia nationalism by making political capital of Shia eschatology as the core of the national identity of Iranians.

Ayatollah Khomeini's rise to power in 1979 marked one of the most paradoxical revolutions in modern history. His overthrow of the Pahlavi monarchy and creation of an Islamic state did not result in the dismantling of the modern bureaucratic state built by the two Pahlavi monarchs, but its capture and repurposing under an ideological framework that fundamentally contradicted the foundations of the modern state.

As already noted, the Pahlavi monarchy had built a centralized bureaucratic system that managed critical public services, such as education, healthcare, utilities, and national infrastructure. The Pahlavi state—modeled on Western administrative principles—provided governance through technocratic institutions.

Khomeini and his followers found themselves in charge of a functioning modern state. But Khomeini's vision was in fundamental opposition to the secular-nationalist model that had underpinned the Pahlavi modern state. The Islamic Republic he established was, in a literal sense, an oxymoron—a state that retained the state apparatus of the previous regime while imposing a parallel power structure—one governed by Sharia-based rule and clerical supremacy.

Rather than dismantling this modern state, Khomeini kept it intact, at least in form, because it was essential for the country's continued operation. However, alongside it, he constructed an alternative power structure—a deep state governed by Islamic law and clerical authority, which ultimately came to overshadow and undermine the modern bureaucratic state. This parallel system, led by institutions such as the Supreme Leader's Office, the Guardian Council, and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), was designed not to serve the practical needs of the population but to enforce ideological and religious authority.

The contradictions between the two systems became apparent almost immediately. The modern state's role as a provider of public services was undermined in favor of Ideological priorities. Under the authority of *Velayat-e Faqih*, the state weaponized religious faith against non-conformance through the enforcement of harsh penal codes. The theocratic disruption of the modern state imposed the Islamic law as the basis of governance, creating deep conflicts with the functions of the modern state. Execution of opponents, stoning of adulterers, flogging of drunkards, cutting of the limbs of thieves, and discrimination against women and minorities were legislated into law.

To Islamize the Iranian society, public display of piety became mandatory. Bars, discos, and other public spaces—deemed to be sinful—were shut down. Nationwide mass prayer congregations were organized to demonstrate the cohesion of the community of believers, and women were mandated to wear the hijab (veil) to promote chastity. To these may be added the purge of history books of pre-Islamic references, expulsion of secular academics from universities, censor of literary and artistic works, and dissemination of religious dogma via the state-controlled media and school curricula.

Women's rights, social and cultural freedoms, and scientific advancements were curtailed by strict Islamic regulations. Universities, once a source of modernization and scientific progress, were subjected to frequent ideological purges. The legal system that had been rooted in codified civil law was replaced with religious courts applying vague and inconsistent interpretations of the Sharia. The result was a system in which public administration was constantly at odds with the deep state's ideological imperatives.

The bureaucracy required rational decision-making, technical expertise, and a focus on efficiency, but the new ideological order prioritized piety, loyalty to the Supreme Leader, and adherence to Islamic morality over competence. Adding to political and social contradictions, the deep state redirected national priorities toward its own ideological objectives. Instead of improving infrastructure and social services, vast portions of the national budget were funneled into military expansion, nuclear and missile technology, and the creation of regional proxy forces to extend Iran's influence.

Despite maintaining the formal structure of a republic, the Khomeinist state functioned increasingly as a theocratic autocracy. Elections were held, but only candidates vetted by the clerical gatekeepers—the Guardian Council—could run. The presidency and parliament existed, but their authority was secondary to the unelected Supreme Leader, who held ultimate power. Laws were passed, but they had to conform to the dictates of the Supreme Leader.

The Khomeinist system ensured that the state would always be trapped in contradiction. The institutions of modern governance were retained, but their ability to function was perpetually sabotaged by an ideological deep state that prioritized religious absolutism and geopolitical confrontation over national welfare. The result was a government that struggled with economic mismanagement, endemic corruption, social repression, and international isolation—outcomes that were not incidental but intrinsic to the structure that Khomeini built.

In the end, Khomeini's Islamic Republic was neither truly Islamic nor genuinely a republic. It was, and remains, a hybrid state—a modern government forced to operate under the constraints of an outmoded ideological regime that subordinates national interests to a revolutionary vision of Islamic power.

7. The entrenchment of Shia Islamism

After Ayatollah Khomeini's death in 1989, his position of *Velayat-e Faqih*—the guardian and paramount leader of the Shia believers—was transferred to his successor, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, a relatively young middle-ranking revolutionary cleric. As the new Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei has continued and even codified Khomeini's apocalyptic Islamist zeal. In his vision, the world is on the threshold of a "Historic Turn"—one that will mark the fall of "the nihilistic and materialist Western civilization" and serve as a starting post for the apocalyptic rise of a "new Islamic civilization" [14].

Ayatollah Khamenei views the Islamic revolution as an unfinished and ongoing project whose ideological foundations and principles must be passed down to future generations for further advancement. Accordingly, the new revolutionary generations are expected to accomplish two main aims: to preserve the theocratic order of *Velayat-e Faqih* and to complete the revolution by creating a "new Islamic civilization" [15].

Ayatollah Khamenei has shaped Iran's foreign policy around the anticipation of an impending decline of the "Western civilization" led by the U.S. and the rise of an anti-Western axis led by China and Russia. He has advocated a strategic alliance with China and Russia as a rampart against Western influence in Muslim lands, which will set the stage for the realization of his vision of a "new Islamic civilization".

Khamenei looks to China's economic support to alleviate U.S. pressure. Geopolitical alliance with Russia is driven by common concerns in the Iranian and Russian regimes about their domestic stability, which is perceived to be threatened by "U.S. instigation of domestic political dissent" [16]. In line with Khomeini's political discourse, Khamenei has frequently emphasized the "hatred of Muslim nations" toward the U.S., which he attributes to American "domineering arrogance" and its support for the "hated Zionist entity" [17].

Khamenei has invested tens of billions of dollars in creating a military-industrial machine in Iran, which is producing missiles and drones and moving fast toward developing nuclear weapons. He has also invested tens of billions more in building up nonstate combat armies in the region as Iran's proxy forces to drive his project of annihilating Israel and kicking the U.S. out of the region.

The development of nuclear and missile technology, increasing political and military influence in the region, and standing up to U.S. pressures were important factors in eliciting a sense of Iranian exceptionalism that was fed into public consciousness as national power and a cause for national pride. Encouraging irredentist tendencies, Ayatollah Khamenei deemed territories with substantial Shia population beyond Iran's borders as Iran's "strategic depth".

Iran's Shia Islamists thus expanded their influence in the region by recruiting followers from Shia communities in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, and make alliances with Sunni Islamist groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Before the recent setbacks since the 7 October 2023 attack on Israel by Hamas, his proxy forces had become powerful enough to influence politics in several countries in the region.

The Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) has been instrumental in the expansion of Iran's Shia Islamist power in the region. A major player in fomenting antagonism toward the U.S. and Israel, the IRGC is a parallel military force to the armed forces founded and developed by the Pahlavi monarchs. Although the Shia Islamists thoroughly purged the army, they never came to completely trust the Pahlavi modern army. As a military and economic empire, the IRGC operates independently of the traditional armed forces, which has been demoted to a secondary rank, with a relatively meager budget, dwarfed by that of the IRGC.

Conceived as a humble people's militia to protect the revolutionary values early after the victory of the 1979 revolution, the IRGC was shaped to operate as the praetorian guard of the theocratic oligarchy. Under Ayatollah Khamenei, the revolutionary guards leapfrogged from their humble beginnings into the position of an all-powerful military-industrial conglomerate, dominating nearly every aspect of Iranian society.

While the official government struggles with inflation, unemployment, and declining living standards, the IRGC controls vast economic assets. Beyond military industry, the IRGC has operations in telecommunication, banking, and construction industries. It also has interests in national oil, gas, and mineral resources. Revenues that could have been used to improve public utilities or social services were instead allocated to groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon, the Houthis in Yemen, and various Shia militias in Iraq and Syria—as extensions of Iran's regional hegemonic ambitions.

Politically, the IRGC plays a crucial role in shaping the regime's domestic and foreign policy, often operating as an independent power center, a substantial part of the deep state parallel to the formal state institutions. It serves as the regime's main instrument of repression, ensuring the survival of the theocratic oligarchs in the face of increasing social and political discontent. Internationally, through its foreign legion—the Quds Force, the IRGC directs Iran's regional proxy networks, engaging in asymmetric warfare and supporting proxies and allied groups across the Middle East.

Since its inception, the Quds Force has been organizing, funding, arming, and training Islamist militant groups violently opposed to the U.S. and Israel [18]. The sponsorship of proxy militias has constituted an Iran-centered alliance of militant nonstate groups across the region, which is driven by the cause of freeing "the Quds"—a euphemistic reference to Jerusalem—from "Zionist occupation". Through its proxy militias in the region, the Quds Force has been enabling Iran's Islamist regime to counter rival powers and influence regional politics to its advantage.

The destruction of Israel thus became so integral to the raison d'être of the Islamist regime in Tehran that the supreme leader even prophesized a timeframe of 25 years for the extinction of the "Zionist regime". "God willing, there will be no such thing as a Zionist regime in 25 years. Until then, struggling, heroic and jihadi morale will leave no moment of serenity for Zionists", Ayatollah Khamenei said in September 2015 [19].

The IRGC's extensive political, economic, and cultural influence makes it a unique entity within the Islamic Republic. Its hybrid nature—part militia, part business empire, part ideological enforcer—makes it a unique phenomenon in modern statecraft. It is a novel entity in the political and military landscape whose peculiarities will likely be better understood over time. However, the IRGC's regional adventurism and its function as a repressive security force inside Iran make the organization susceptible to internal divisions and even defection under significant political, economic, or security pressure.

The October 2023 attack on Israel by Hamas—the Sunni Islamist allies of the Iranian Shia Islamists—revealed the extent of the Quds Force's involvement in coordinating the operations of its proxy forces and allies to challenge the stability and security of Israel [20]. The escalation of hostilities since 7 October 2023 was initially viewed in Tehran as a demonstration of the value of ground attacks on Israel, which could be complemented by missile and drone attacks [21]. In response to Israel's attack on Hamas, Iran-backed Shia proxies in Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, and Yemen were mobilized to launch concerted attacks on Israel.

As hostilities escalated, in a feat of grave miscalculation, the Iranian regime moved to demonstrate its capability and will to launch direct attacks on Israel by firing hundreds of ballistic and cruise missiles into Israel on two occasions in April and October 2024. In November, Ayatollah Khamenei openly called for the blockade of Israel [22]. The most obvious move in this line of effort was the intensification of Houthi attacks on international shipping around the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea [23].

However, the Iranian regime's tactical decision to launch direct attacks on Israel proved to be a strategic blunder. The success of Israel to inflict serious blows upon

Hamas and Hezbollah, the collapse of the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria, and the destruction of Iran's air defense system in Israeli retaliatory attacks illustrated the limits of the Iranian regime's grand strategy.

8. The limits of Shia Islamism

Israel's success in significantly diminishing the capabilities of Hamas and Hezbollah demonstrated the limits of Iran's capacity to shift geopolitical dynamics in its own favor through proxy warfare. The collapse of the Assad regime in Syria has cost the regime a key ally and a major supply route to its main proxy in Lebanon in a critical moment. The so-called Axis of Resistance may have been damaged beyond short-term repair. Amid economic siege, social discontent, and political dissent, the collapse of regime's extraterritorial ambitions has made the domestic political ground upon which it rests shakier than ever before. It has exposed the Islamist regime's strategic weaknesses [24, 25].

The regime's political misfortunes are exacerbated by a looming crisis of succession. The incumbent Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, is 86 years old and reportedly ill, with no apparent successor, a challenge that could unravel the authoritarian rule of the mullahs. Regime survival may effectively depend on a smooth transition of supreme power after the death of Khamenei [26]. Although there are indications that Khamenei's second son Mujtaba is being groomed to succeed his father, there are serious obstacles on his path to the throne [27]. A hereditary transfer of power could catalyze division, chaos, and turmoil within the regime—the exact opposite of a smooth transition of power. Hereditary succession is seen as subverting the constitutional claims to republicanism, undermining the regime's foundational principles [28].

In the event of the absence of a clear successor at the time of Ayatollah Khamenei's death, another likely scenario would be the more empowerment of the already powerful IRGC, with a puppet supreme leader propped up under its control. However, the IRGC is not a disciplined army, nor a monolithic hierarchical organization. Unlike conventional hierarchical military organizations, the IRGC is a complex network of factions with deep ties to various political and economic interests.

While the power of the IRGC appears formidable, its internal dynamics are shaped by competing political factions, vested economic interests, patronage networks, and personal loyalties. Its lack of unity and reliance on economic patronage makes it more like a loosely structured syndicate of gangsters, with competing interests within its ranks fighting for their own turfs. This would mean that under sustained pressure, the IRGC could face fragmentation or collapse, making the rise of a lasting military government unlikely.

The absence of a clear successor exacerbates Iran's existing political uncertainty, turning what should be a structured process into a potential flashpoint for political discord and instability.

9. A resurgent nationalism

For centuries, being an Iranian was tantamount to being a Shia believer. Iranianism and Shiism had accommodated each other peacefully, creating an identity shaped by the fusion of the two cultural and religious traditions. A productive ambiguity perpetuated this political and cultural fusion. The king formally deferred to the Shia clergy, and the reciprocal blessing of the clergy consecrated the king's rule in the eyes of the traditional masses.

However, since the rise of a theocratic regime driven by a Shia Islamist ideology in 1979, a sharp political divide emerged between Shia Islamism and Iranianism. Now after nearly half a century of tolerating the political dominance of Shia Islamism, alienation from the Shia faith as a marker of collective identity has ignited a search for alternative sources of national solidarity.

A dramatic generational shift has given rise to a strong sense of indignation and patent anger toward religious restrictions, nepotism, and corruption, resulting in open calls for the separation of religion from political affairs and an end to an Islamist state. Recent data indicate an unprecedented trend of secularization in Iranian society. Surveys indicate that an overwhelming majority advocate the exclusion of religious prescriptions from legislation and governance [29].

Iran today boasts a burgeoning population of educated young professionals, technocrats, entrepreneurs, artists, and academics who are disillusioned with the current regime and seek a clear path forward. These individuals seek a vision of a better future and a leadership that would understand their aspirations and can represent them on the global stage. Nationalism remains the most powerful marker of collective identity and a compelling ideological force in Iran. It is generated as a collective imagination of Iranians of themselves as a nation, which arises from their memories of their origins, and their aspirations about their destiny.[1]

In a quest to anchor nationalist sentiments in a concrete political consciousness, a new generation of Iranian nationalists has engaged in an incessant rehashing of Iran's history, trying to situate their generation in the flow of a triumphant narrative of Iran's historical experiences. Even the ordinary Iranian citizens find themselves deeply engaged in a historical dialog that seeks to reclaim their identity and destiny.

Across the streets and in hushed academic debates alike, Iranians are engaged in a search in the nation's long and layered history for both a rallying cry and a counterpoint to the Islamist regime. This ongoing struggle is not merely a reaction to contemporary grievances but a profound engagement with a rich tapestry of Iranian history and mythology, spanning several millennia.

The modern secular nationalists recall with pride the sixth-century BC glory of King Cyrus, the founder of the first world empire, the pinnacle of ancient civilization—a time when Persia was a beacon of order and progress. They reflect on a legacy of both grandeur and adversity—from the glory of the ancient empire to the seventh-century AD Arab conquest, and the shifts following the nation's conversion to Islam. The Arab conquest marked a transformative period, where the imposition of Islam reshaped the cultural landscape, yet the resilience of the Persian identity endured. Each historical moment serves as a reference point, a mirror reflecting their aspirations and challenges.

The rise of the Safavid in the opening of the sixteenth century is remembered with a newfound sense of nationalism intertwined with Shiism, positioning Iran as a distinct entity within the Islamic world. The Safavid era—with its deliberate embrace of Shiism and its sense of Iranian exceptionalism—is seen as another bold assertion of identity, later marred by the humiliating surrender of the capital to the insurgent Afghans in the early eighteenth century.

The renewed flare of Persian valor under Nader Shah in the eighteenth century is remembered by present generations with a newfound sense of nationalism—the last

[1] For a discussion of nation as an imaginary cause, see Ref. [30].

hurrah of the Persian empire under a pragmatic, calculating, and shrewd military and political leader—quickly followed by the memory of Nader's sack of Delhi, his madness, and his eventual assassination by his own men. The humiliating defeats in the wars with Tzarist Russia in the early nineteenth century lay bare for the present generations the vulnerabilities of the nation, which sparked off the imagination of a modern sovereign nation a century later.

The Pahlavi reign is increasingly remembered as a period of significant potential for modernization and economic progress. For all his flaws, the Pahlavi era is belatedly appreciated for its vision of progress and ambitious modernization efforts—building infrastructure, expanding education, advancing women's rights, and striving for a more globally integrated Iran. The revolutionary upheaval in the late 1970s is increasingly viewed as a disruption of this trend, replacing it with a system that stifled freedoms and ran the economy to the ground.

Today, these voices, steeped in the echoes of past glories and defeats, drive the younger generations of Iranians with rekindled hopes for reclaiming the full spectrum of their historical legacy and securing a future that honors the enduring spirit of the Iranian nation and Persian civilization. The Iranian nationalists are re-examining their historical narrative, drawing on past struggles and triumphs to articulate a vision for a future that honors their heritage while embracing a brighter future. They are harking back to a pre-Islamic golden age with the clear political intent of inspiring new markers of collective identity for Iranians into the future.

The public expression of a quest for an alternative to Shiism as a marker of national identity began in October 2016, when a large crowd gathered around the tomb of Cyrus, the Great, in Pasargadae. The event followed an avalanche of public support for nominating 29 October as the Cyrus Day to mark the day of the ancient king's triumphant arrival at Babylon and setting free of the Jews in Babylonian bondage.

Ever since, mass pilgrimages to ancient archeological sites such as the Persepolis and the Cyrus Tomb have been happening more frequently, with large segments of society paying homage to symbols of pre-Islamic ancient glory. Iranians' ancient myths are somewhat intertwined with their ancient history in the greatest poetic narrative of Iran's history, the *Shahnameh*—the story of kings—the epic magnum opus of the tenth-century poet, Abul Qasim Ferdowsi. The elevation of pre-Islamic legends retold in the *Shahnameh*, along with calls for restoration of monarchy, is increasingly voiced in the public sphere.

The revival of Iranian nation's originality and authenticity is compelling enthusiastic public loyalty. It is inspiring the idea of a modern nation by forging a strong bond of solidarity through invocation of pre-Islamic cultural loyalties. This nationalist revival displays the political resilience of primordial bonds, which are rooted in time immemorial [31]. It feeds on collective memory—no matter how inaccurate, flawed, or inventive [32].

Collective memories are manifesting the capacity to shape an alternative collective identity in defiance of the Shia identity advocated by the Islamic Republic. Passionate convictions to win Iran back from the Islamists drive a new generation of Iranian nationalists as if it were a sacred cause.[2] Like all nationalisms, an emotional core is responsible for the passions that motivate Iranians to trust in the promise of a new political order.[3]

[2] For a discussion of passions that drive nationalism, see Ref. [32].

[3] For discussion of the emotional force of nationalism, see Ref. [33].

Identification with the glories of the ancient Persian Empire has shaped an imagination of a past golden age that is helping the younger generations of Iranians to imagine a life beyond their miserable and deplorable present. The nationalist fervor is increasingly reflected in the growing grassroots agitation and intermittent protest movements against the regime. It is driven by a striving for a new political order, which will endow the nation with a new "political roof".[4]

Today's nationalist elite are searching in Iran's past glory for the primordial soul of the nation. The writings and speeches of the forerunners of the new Iranian nationalism contrast the present deplorable condition of Iran with its glorious pre-Islamic past, on the one hand, and with the developed nations of the West, on the other, blaming Iran's stagnation on religious obscurantism and political absolutism. In the tradition of the early Iranian nationalists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the present-day Iranian nationalists recall the history of their ancient empire with pride, while lamenting with resentment the seventh-century Arab conquest of Persia.

The concept of the Iranian nation is thus characterized by a romantic appeal, perhaps best described by Ernest Renan as a "spiritual principle" [35]. It offers the possibility to imagine ways to break free from what young Iranians see as the shackles of Islamist repression. The nationalist ideology feeds on the passion for identity to engender the emotions that predicate the intense bond of solidarity, which is at the root of loyalty to the idea of nation [31].

The new nationalist elite are incorporating cultural and linguistic categories to rationalize the raw passions and disseminate the rising Iranian nationalism in the form of a new political consciousness with the capacity to generate a collective political force that turns this idea into the concrete cause of building a new nation. They are hammering, shaping, and diffusing a new idea of Iranian nation by reinterpreting their pre-Islamic traditions and manipulating their nuances to draft a blueprint for the political order that is to replace the incumbent Islamist order.

The proponents of the emerging Iranian nationalism promise a democratic government with national interest at heart. They propose the removal of Iran's Islamist regime as a pathway to re-establishment of the modern nation-state, which will liberate the Iranian nation from both the ravages of Islamist rule and the ongoing Middle East turmoil by eradicating the root cause of domestic and regional instability. They promise to ease sectarian conflicts by shifting away from interventionist policies, defunding militant groups, and diverting the funds for rebuilding the nation. Furthermore, they seek better relations with Western nations to ensure political stability and economic recovery.

10. The rise of Iranian nationalism against Shia Islamism

On March 21, 2025, as the ancient Persian festival of Norouz ushered in the Iranian new year, Iranians across the nation gathered at sites of profound historical and cultural significance—e.g. the ruins of Persepolis, the tomb of Cyrus, the Great, in Pasargadae, and the monuments built under the Pahlavi monarchy for towering figures of Persian poetry—Omar Khayyam, Ferdowsi, and Hafez—to mark the occasion not only with traditional celebrations but with a renewed political fervor.

[4] For discussion of nationalism, see Ref. [34].

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.1011120

In a striking display of national sentiment, thousands of celebrants broke into chants calling for liberty from Islamist oppression and economic hardship—even voicing a desire for the restoration of monarchy and the return of the crown prince of the former regime, Reza Pahlavi, as the rightful Shah of Iran. Against the backdrop of ancient landmarks, where Persian civilization's glory was once enshrined, voices rose in unison, invoking the legacy of the past to demand a future rooted in national identity, sovereignty, and liberty.

The resurgence of such sentiments underscores a growing wave of Iranian nationalism, one that seeks to reclaim the country's pre-Islamic and monarchical heritage as symbols of strength and continuity. The timing of these calls on Norouz—the festival of renewal—reflects a broader desire for political and cultural rebirth, echoing the sentiments of Iran's kings and poets who once shaped its destiny. This was a rallying cry for change, a moment where history and hope converged in the heart of Persia to call for an Iranian renaissance.

History, for Iranians, has never been a mere sequence of events. It has always been a cycle—one foretold and rehearsed in their own ancient myths. On reflection, the ancient legend of Jamshid, Zahhak, and Fereydoun seems to be more than just a legend—it is a model of history, an archetype, that illustrates Iran's perpetual struggle between adversity and prosperity, tyranny and autonomy, despair and hope, rebellion and redemption.

Jamshid Shah, the great king of Iran's origination myth, ushered in an era of abundance and power. Under his rule, Iran reached unparalleled heights, arriving at peaks of prosperity, justice, and prestige. Yet, Jamshid—blinded by hubris—claimed divinity. His own grandeur severed his bond with the "divine grace"—and his people, disillusioned, turned away from him. When he finally realized his mistake and begged for another chance, the people refused to listen. Instead, they cast him aside and embraced Zahhak, a tyrant who fooled them and would plunge the nation into darkness and suffering.

So too did Iranians in 1979. Much like the tale of Jamshid, Iranians rebelled against Mohammad Reza Shah, a proud king whose era saw rapid modernization, economic growth, and global prestige for Iran. They rejected the Shah's late pleas for reform. Blinded by revolutionary fervor, they turned instead to Khomeini, a man who, much like Zahhak, deceived them with promises of justice but ruled with cruelty.

Just as Zahhak's reign was marked by bloodshed, repression, and suffering, so too has Khomeini's Islamic Republic led Iran into poverty, corruption, and despair. The land, once rich and flourishing, has withered under the weight of tyranny. Yet, myths do not end in despair—they foreshadow renewal. Zahhak's reign was not eternal—the people, crushed under his rule, finally rose up, seeking salvation. They found it in Fereydoun, a descendant of the royal line, who defeated the tyrant and restored Iran's glory.

Now, in the new nationalist resurgence in Iran, history mirrors myth. The Iranian people, having endured decades of oppression, are awakening. The cycle turns anew—and just as their ancestors once sought the blood descendant of Jamshid to reclaim their lost greatness, so too do many Iranians now look to the heir of the fallen Shah to save them from the bondage of the ruling Zahhak. The echoes of the past resound in the present—Iran, having known prosperity and having suffered tyranny, stands on the cusp of a new revolution—one that may yet bring justice and renewal to the land, as it always has before.

Since Iran's humiliating encounter with Western modernity in the nineteenth century, the nation had been engaged in the chaos of a frantic identity crisis that trapped it in the impasse of an identity split—one modern, and the other traditional.

It rendered the Iranian identity deeply divided between an emotional belonging to a religious tradition and an intense desire for economic and social benefits of a secular modernity.

Iran's split-identity impasse remained politically dormant until the early twentieth-century surge of demands for a constitutional government. Under the secular Pahlavi monarchy that emerged from the constitutional movement, increased state attention to pre-Islamic past and reduced political and economic influence of Shiism frightened the custodians of the faith and the community of faithful whom they represented.

The resentment with the Pahlavi social and cultural modernization peaked in an Islamic revolutionary movement, which brought the Pahlavi monarchy down in February 1979 and the rise of Shia Islamism in Iran. But the puritan zeal to cleanse society and the voracious appetite for regional hegemony have delivered nothing but economic ruin, social discontent, and political deadlock. The failure of the Islamist state to grant these rights has drastically diminished the loyalty to political authority derived from Shia Islam.

The people are fed up with religious fanaticism, ossification of body politic, economic mismanagement, and rampant corruption, which have constrained the capacity of the state to accommodate the legitimate social, economic, and political needs of an increasingly educated and diverse population. They are appalled by nepotism, cronyism, and favoritism, which have offered access to high political office, lucrative economic opportunities, and other underserved privileges, to the families and associates of a ruling clique.

Defeats in the battlefield and crisis of succession are not the only problems of the Islamic Republic. The biggest threat to the survival of the Islamist regime is the intensifying public frustration and dissatisfaction within Iran. Forty-six years after its creation, the regime is increasingly at odds with the emancipatory and egalitarian mottos that had initially attracted a considerable following for a romantic idea of an Islamic republic.

Frequent protests have begun to shake the foundations of the regime, posing a serious challenge to its survival. While protests have so far failed to unseat the regime, the litany of grievances suggests that the regime is dealing with persistent domestic discontent, which may erupt into new protests at any moment [36].

The doctrine of *Velayat-e Faqih*, which had been promoted as guarantor of moral purity and pious devotion, turned into the legal basis for the claim of Shia jurists to absolute political power with no accountability. In time, ambitions for regional hegemony moved the Islamist leaders in Iran to diverting national resources to military expenditures, funding a costly nuclear program, and raising proxy forces across the region. Military expenditure and the increasing cost of maintaining proxy forces, combined with economic sanctions and systemic corruption, have led to significant devaluation of the local currency, hyperinflation, and impoverishment of the nation.

Frustration of civil liberties, dereliction of social justice, and collapse of the economy have given rise to a broad-based public discontent, which intermittently erupts into open protest. Several large-scale protests over the past couple of decades called for policy change. More recently, however, protests have increasingly pivoted to demands for regime change. Since 2017, street riots against the Islamist regime have been occurring more frequently despite regime's brutality in its crackdowns. The latest example of mass protests occurred in September 2022 over the death of a young woman in police custody. It led to a national rebellion of the youth against the regime, which took the regime several months to crush.

The tragic death of Mahsa Amini—a young woman who died in police custody after being detained for allegedly not wearing her hijab "properly"—provoked an unprecedented outpouring of collective rage, which was fueled not only by grief but also by decades of pent-up frustration under oppressive religious and social restrictions. Her death became a powerful symbol of resistance, igniting protests that transcended gender, class, ethnic, and sectarian divisions. The movement highlighted the growing divide between a repressive state apparatus and a society yearning for dignity, equality, and autonomy.

The shift in public opinion against the regime has sparked calls for more radical changes in the entire framework of the ruling regime, signaling a desire for a fundamental shift in the Iranian political landscape. Indeed, public resentment toward the regime and calls for regime change are voiced far more frequently and openly than any other time since the rise of the Islamic rule in Iran in 1979, despite the threat of retaliatory crackdown by regime's security apparatuses.

Over the past few years, Iranian dissidents and intellectuals have been seeking in earnest to establish a coordinated opposition to the current regime, but they have lacked a strategic framework for organizing Iranian opposition around a central leadership that can be presented as a viable alternative to the incumbent regime. It is increasingly recognized that the success of the nationalist opposition hinges on building a movement that is united around a leadership with the ability to create a network of solidarity, which can empower ordinary Iranians to take united action "to save Iran from the Islamist bondage".

Despite the Islamist regime's incessant propaganda campaign, focused on demonizing and denigrating the Pahlavi monarchy, the heir to the Pahlavi throne, Prince Reza Pahlavi, who has been in exile in the U.S. has garnered respect in recent years among large segments of the Iranians for his calls for a secular and democratic government that is committed to save Iran from "destruction at the hand of Mullahs". He has gained a wide grassroots support as a symbol of change, especially among younger generations who are frustrated by economic struggles, social restrictions, and international isolation.

The prince's calls for democracy, secular governance, and economic reforms have resonated with many Iranians who view regime change as a catalyst for policies necessary for lifting the country out of its current economic and diplomatic impasse. With grassroots support, a Pahlavi-led coalition is wielding both legitimacy and influence, standing as a real alternative to the existing regime.

In the decades since the Iranian revolution of 1979, a profound shift in perspective has taken place regarding the public attitudes toward the deposed Pahlavi monarchy. An intensifying trend has emerged, characterized by a widespread re-examination of modern history. Discussions comparing the country's current state of the economy and society to the pre-revolutionary period have gained momentum among both the intellectual elite and the public at large.

During the fervor of the revolution, the Pahlavi monarch—Mohammad Reza Shah—was vilified by much of the population, who accused him of autocracy and selling out the national interests. Cries for his downfall and even death echoed across Iran as revolutionary zeal swept through the nation. However, as time has passed, a collective reckoning has begun to take place. This collective introspection reflects a growing sense of disillusionment with the empty promises made by the leaders of the 1979 revolution, as many Iranians revisit the years preceding it with a newfound sense of remorse.

The Islamist promises of freedom, justice, and prosperity have largely failed to materialize. Instead, a generation has grown up under repression, economic hardship, and international isolation, prompting a re-evaluation of the past. Many Iranians grapple with the realization that their ancestors might have been swept up in revolutionary fervor, failing to appreciate the complexities of the Pahlavi reign.

The chants for the downfall of the Pahlavi monarchy, once a symbol of liberation, now echo as painful reminders of a moment when collective rage overshadowed reason. This growing awareness moves increasing numbers of Iranians to reflect on how they treated the last Pahlavi king with a mix of regret and a sense of collective guilt.

The Pahlavi era, though not without its flaws, is increasingly viewed as a period of significant potential for modernization and economic progress. Iran was on a trajectory of rapid development, with ambitious infrastructure projects, a growing middle class, increasing recognition of the rights of women, and an expanding role in the global economy. In hindsight, the Pahlavi achievements shine brighter, and the judgment once heaped upon the two Pahlavi kings appears overly harsh.

For a significant portion of those analyzing the past, the realization has been stark: the Islamist ideologues, once seen as visionaries, offered a mirage that ultimately diverted the nation from a path of economic and social progress. The sense of a squandered opportunity has become particularly palpable as Iran grapples with decades of economic stagnation, international isolation, and societal restrictions. These reflections are not confined to academic circles but resonate widely among ordinary citizens who feel the weight of unfulfilled promises of the Islamist regime in their daily lives.

This trend underscores not only a deep regret over lost opportunities but also a desire to reclaim Iran's potential as a modern and prosperous nation into the future. As these conversations gain traction, they are playing a pivotal role in shaping the country's social and political discourse, paving the way for the emergence of a vision and action plan for political change grounded in lessons learned from recent history.

Reza Pahlavi's influence has grown within Iran amid economic hardships and societal discontent. The exiled former crown prince of Iran has emerged as the only political figure who can conceivably lead a coalition of opposition forces against the regime. The former crown prince has positioned himself as a key opposition figure against Iran's Islamist regime, advocating for a nationalist yet democratic vision for the country's future. His approach carefully balances revolutionary fervor with institutional stability, aiming to mobilize Iranians against the clerical rule while avoiding the chaos that undermines emancipatory and egalitarian movements.

At the heart of the prince's strategy is a commitment to national unity. His strategy draws on Iran's rich cultural and historical heritage to inspire a broad-based movement that transcends ethnic, religious, and ideological divides. He frames his opposition not as a return to monarchy per se, but as a path toward a secular, democratic system that reflects the will of the people. By emphasizing human rights, gender equality, and civic freedoms, he differentiates his movement from past revolutionary cycles that, despite promising democracy, often led to new forms of authoritarianism.

Prince Reza Pahlavi advocates for a transitional framework that would preserve Iran's territorial integrity and social cohesion, ensuring that the collapse of the Islamist state does not result in the chaos of a political vacuum, but in the establishment of a functioning, representative government. By fusing nationalism with democracy, the prince is crafting an alternative vision of Iran's future that is nothing short of a revolution—one that rejects both Islamist authoritarianism and Western-imposed solutions.

By offering a credible alternative to the status quo, the Pahlavi crown prince has the potential to attract the political and military factions within the regime, which are no longer loyal to the ruling regime. This could catalyze a wave of defection in the rank and file of the regime. Defection to the opposition movement of moderate politicians, traditionalist Shia clerics, and senior officers in the ranks of the IRGC and other security forces, who see no future in regime's domestic repression and defiant foreign policy, would be crucial.

The opposition leadership can leverage the erosion of regime's core to amplify the general will for liberation from the repressive regime. The success of the opposition depends on its ability to unify, organize, and mobilize the Iranian public for a nationwide mass uprising to unseat the regime.

11. Conclusion

The fall of the Islamic Republic and the emergence of a democratic government in a post-Islamist Iran would mark a seismic shift, a real game-changer, for Iran and the entire Middle East. In this vision, Iran would redirect resources currently allocated to military and proxy support for regional conflicts to domestic spending and regional partnerships for economic development. Redirecting funds and attention from military expenditures would boost economic activity, social wellbeing, and political stability.

Iran's transition to democracy would likely weaken the grip of hardline Islamist movements across the Middle East. Groups that have long relied on Tehran's ideological and financial support would find themselves politically and financially isolated. Without Iran as a revolutionary patron, many of these groups would be forced to either moderate their positions or face decline and extinction.

A democratic Iran could lead to a thaw in relations with its Arab neighbors, particularly Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. The Sunni-Shia divide, long exacerbated by Tehran's theocratic ambitions, would likely be de-emphasized in favor of pragmatic diplomacy. Economic integration, energy cooperation, and security partnerships could replace decades of hostility, fostering a new regional order less defined by sectarian rivalries.

The pursuit of trade agreements, cooperative energy initiatives, and infrastructure investments would not only strengthen Iran domestically but also create vested interests across the region. Rich Persian Gulf states could be potential investors to turbo-charge the Iranian economy once a friendly government is in power in Tehran.

Western support would be crucial in the rise of Iran as a democratic Muslim nation. By helping to establish a government committed to democracy and regional stability, the U.S. and Europe could secure a more cooperative Iran, one that values integration into the global economy and peaceful coexistence with its neighbors.

A Pahlavi coalition, if successful, could position Iran as a state more aligned with Western interests, one that seeks peaceful relations with the U.S. and Israel rather than confrontation. Iran's re-engagement with the West could also pave the way for a resolution of long-standing tensions over its nuclear program. A democratic Iran would be in a stronger position to negotiate lasting agreements, contributing to global non-proliferation efforts and reducing the risk of military conflicts.

By shifting alliances from confrontation with Israel and the West toward cooperative frameworks, a new moderate Iran would encourage other Muslim-majority countries to follow suit. With security threats from one of its most formidable regional adversaries less immediate, Israel might also feel less pressure to prioritize immediate military deterrence over long-term diplomatic resolutions. In such a climate, chances would be renewed for Israel's closer engagement with other Arab states.

Iran's transformation could serve as an inspiration for reformist and democratic movements across the region, spurring a wave of normalization across the region. If Iran—a country with deep Islamic and revolutionary roots—can transition to democracy, it could happen in other authoritarian states in the region. The Iranian model would be a counterpoint to both Islamist and military-dominated regimes, proving that democracy and national sovereignty need not be mutually exclusive.

Iran's influence in countries like Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria could be refocused to promote stability and development rather than resistance and militarization. These new alignments would reduce the influence of hardline Islamists in those countries and create regional blocs that value stability, economic growth, and security cooperation.

Without Iran fueling anti-Israel sentiment in the region, Middle Eastern nations might feel more comfortable making peace with Israel. With fewer existential threats on its borders, Israel could consider steps toward addressing the long-standing issues at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Israel is uniquely placed to turn Iran into a startup hub for commercialization of technological innovations, relying on a large population of highly educated and motivated Iranians who aspire to rebuild their nation.

By lowering the temperature in one of the Middle East's long-standing conflicts, Iran, Israel, and Arab states could pave the way for broader cooperation on issues such as economic development, climate change, and even security concerns that transcend national boundaries, like water and energy scarcity.

For over four decades, Iran has been a revolutionary outlier, projecting its ideological influence across the region through proxy militias, sectarian conflicts, and an aggressive anti-Western stance. A democratic Iran, however, can trigger a wave of political normalization, fostering regional stability, diminishing old hostilities, and rebalancing power dynamics across the region. Although a challenging path, the potential for a reformed Iran represents an unprecedented opportunity for long-term peace and prosperity in the region.

In essence, the demise of the Islamic Republic would be more than just a domestic political shift—it could realign the entire Middle East toward a more stable, cooperative, and less ideologically driven future. It would not solve all the region's problems overnight, but it would remove one of the primary engines of instability, setting the stage for a new era of political normalization and reform.

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.1011120

Author details

Mahmoud Alinejad
University of Amsterdam, Netherlands

*Address all correspondence to: mahmoudalinejad@y7mail.com

References

[1] Katouzian H. State and Society in Iran: The Eclipse of the Qajars and the Emergence of the Pahlavis. London: I.B. Taurus; 2000

[2] Akhavi S. State formation and consolidation in twentieth century Iran. In: Banuazizi A, Weiner M, editors. The State, Religion and Ethnic Politics: Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan. New York: Syracuse University Press; 1997

[3] Kapuscinski R. One world, two civilizations. New Perspectives Quarterly. 1988;**5**(3):Fall

[4] Keddie N, Richard Y. Roots of Revolution; an Interpretive History of Modern Iran. New Haven: Yale University Press; 1981

[5] Abrahamian E. The causes of the constitutional revolution in Iran. International Journal of Middle East Studies. 1979;**10**(3):381-414

[6] Bharier J. Economic Development in Iran 1900-1970. London: Oxford University Press; 1971

[7] Chehabi H. Staging the Emperor's new clothes: Dress code and nation building under Reza Shah. Iranian Studies. 1993;**26**(3-4):209-229

[8] Takeyh R. What Really Happened in Iran: The CIA, the Ouster of Mosaddeq, and the Restoration of the Shah. Foreign Affairs; 2014

[9] Menashri D, Parsi T. Vol. XIV. 2007. pp. 213-223. Available from: https://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/israel-i-relations-with-iran/

[10] Khan N. Understanding the 'Islamic Revolution': Comparative Study of Qutb, Maududi, and Khomeini. Modern Diplomacy; 2023. Available from: https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2023/12/05/understanding-the-islamic-revolution-comparative-study-of-qutb-maududi-and-khomeini/

[11] Motamedi M. Iran and Israel: From Allies to Archenemies, How Did They Get Here? Aljazeera; 2023. Available from: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2023/11/6/iran-and-israel-from-allies-to-archenemies-how-did-they-get-here

[12] Kosc AJ. Iran's Enduring Apocalyptic Political Mythology. Providence; 2024. Available from: https://providencemag.com/2024/09/irans-enduring-apocalyptic-political-mythology/

[13] Finger T. Waiting for the Mahdi: A Path for Dialogue. A Christian Century; 2008. Available from: https://www.christiancentury.org/article/2008-06/waiting-mahdi

[14] Milani A. Khamenei's Muscular "Soft Power" in the US. The Caravan. Hoover Institution; 2023. Available from: https://www.hoover.org/research/khameneis-muscular-soft-power-us

[15] Zamirirad A. How to Complete the Revolution? Khamenei's Vision and Its Disruption after Raisi's Death. Clingendael; 2024. Available from: https://www.clingendael.org/publication/how-complete-revolution-khameneis-vision-and-its-disruption-after-raisis-death

[16] Sadjadpour K, Grajewski N. Autocrats United: How Russia and Iran Defy the U.S.-Led Global Order. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; 2024. Available

from: https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/10/russia-iran-oil-gas-ukraine-syria?lang=en

[17] Khamenei A. Speech. Khamenei.ir; 2009. Available from: https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=6082

[18] CFR.org Editors. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). Council on Foreign Relations; 2025. Available from: https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/irans-revolutionary-guards

[19] McLaughlin EC. Iran's Supreme Leader: There Will Be No Such Thing as Israel in 25 Years. CNN; 2015. Available from: https://edition.cnn.com/2015/09/10/middleeast/iran-khamenei-israel-will-not-exist-25-years/index.html

[20] Fite J. America's Road to War: Iran Threatens Israel – OpEd. Eurasia Review; 2023. Available from: https://www.eurasiareview.com/18102023-americas-road-to-war-iran-threatens-israel-oped/

[21] Bariyo N, Faucon B. Iran Tried to Persuade Sudan to Allow Naval Base on Its Red Sea Coast. Wall Street Journal; 2024. Available from: https://www.wsj.com/world/middle-east/iran-tried-to-persuade-sudan-to-allow-naval-base-on-its-red-sea-coast-77ca3922

[22] Khamenei A. Speech. Khamenei.ir; 2023. Available from: https://farsi.khamenei.ir/speech-content?id=54271

[23] Parry A et al. Iran Update, April 2, 2024. Institute for the Study of War; 2024. Available from: https://www.understandingwar.org/backgrounder/iran-update-april-2-2024

[24] Ross D. Capitalizing on the Weakening of Hamas and Hezbollah. Project Syndicate; 2024. Available from: https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/capitalizing-on-decimation-of-hamas-and-hezbollah-by-dennis-ross-2024-10

[25] Vakil S. The Fall of Assad Has Exposed the Extent of the Damage to Iran's Axis of Resistance. Chatham House; 2024. Available from: https://www.chathamhouse.org/2024/12/fall-assad-has-exposed-extent-damage-irans-axis-resistance

[26] Hussain M. The Other Giant Crisis Hanging Over the Islamic Republic of Iran. Intercept; 2022. Available from: https://theintercept.com/2022/12/09/iran-regime-khamenei-death/

[27] Pinatel M. Mojtaba Khamenei: The Shadow Prince of the Islamic Republic. This is Beirut; 2024. Available from: https://thisisbeirut.com.lb/articles/1301508/mojtaba-khamenei-the-shadow-prince-of-the-islamic-republic

[28] Golkar S, Aarabi K. Why Khamenei is Unlikely to Pick His Son to Succeed Him as Iran's Supreme Leader. Middle East Institute; 2022. Available from: https://mei.edu/publications/why-khamenei-unlikely-pick-his-son-succeed-him-irans-supreme-leader

[29] Arab PT, Maleki A. Iran's Secular Shift: New Survey Reveals Huge Changes in Religious Beliefs. The Conversation; 2020. Available from: https://theconversation.com/irans-secular-shift-new-survey-reveals-huge-changes-in-religious-beliefs-145253

[30] Anderson B. Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. London and New York: Verso; 1991

[31] Geertz C. The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays. New York: Basic Books; 1973

[32] Smith AD. Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach. New York: Routledge; 2009

[33] Connor W. Ethno-nationalism: The Quest for Understanding. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press; 1994

[34] Gellner E. Nations and Nationalism. Oxford: Basil Blackwell; 1983

[35] Renan E. In: Giglioli MFN, editor. What is a Nation? and Other Political Writings. New York: Columbia University Press Renan; 2018

[36] Jones SG, Newlee D. Iran's Protests and the Threat to Domestic Stability [Internet]. Washington, DC: Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS); 2019. Available from: https://www.csis.org/analysis/irans-protests-and-threat-domestic-stability

Chapter 5

The Iranian Refugee Subculture in Turkey: An Evaluation through the Frankfurt School's Approach to Freedom

Hakan Topates and Aslican Kalfa-Topates

Abstract

This study examines the work experiences of Iranian immigrants residing in Denizli, Turkey, and investigates their distinctive cultural practices as a subcultural group. It examines immigrant labor in relation to the concept of subculture and the meanings associated with freedom, as interpreted by the Frankfurt School. The Frankfurt School theorists argue that alienation has become widespread due to the diminishing freedoms in advanced capitalist societies. They advocate for a reconstruction of society that prioritizes freedom and calls for a shift from instrumental reason to critical reason. For instance, Adorno asserts that individuals must first recognize their lack of freedom to truly be free, while Fromm emphasizes that freedom is an essential aspect of our personality. Interviews conducted with Iranian refugees and asylum seekers as part of the qualitative research for this study reveal that the freedom these individuals seek, which they are unable to experience in their home country, is often temporary and fluid in Turkey. This situation aligns with Adorno's observation that people play brief games of freedom while still fulfilling their obligations to earn a living. Iranian immigrants are striving for democracy and equal personal freedoms. Additionally, they frequently find themselves categorized as a cheap labor reserve within labor relations, often pushed into the lowest tier of the labor market due to unregistered employment. While the services sector can offer some entrepreneurial opportunities for immigrants, it also provides restricted freedom for refugees. Additionally, this sector can become a space where Iranian refugees may exploit the labor and life experiences of other Iranians.

Keywords: migration, refugees, subculture, Frankfurt school, labor

1. Introduction

The Frankfurt School, commonly referred to as critical theory, is committed to the pursuit of liberation and social transformation [1]. A fundamental aspect of its philosophy is the concept of liberating individuals from social obligations [2], which distinguishes it from traditional forms of thought [3]. This school primarily focuses on critiquing the technical rationality of capitalism and adeptly reveals the hegemonic networks that are woven into the fabric of everyday life [4]. This analysis clearly exposes the cultural domination that permeates every social layer in today's industrial societies [5] and challenges individuals to recognize that their way of thinking may be flawed [2]. This text serves two critical purposes: it examines the widespread cultural domination that permeates all social layers in contemporary industrial societies [5] and prompts individuals to critically reassess their thinking, which may be flawed [2]. On the other hand, it is well-documented that thinkers from the Frankfurt School were compelled to escape the Third Reich and resettle in the United States. Thus, it is essential to explore the phenomenon of migration through the insights of Frankfurt School members, shaped by their own subjective experiences of migration, particularly in our study of Iranian immigrants pursuing freedom.[1] Bauman argues that the ideas of Adorno, a key figure in the Frankfurt School, are essential for exploring the concept of freedom. Adorno's pursuit of reclaiming aspirations from the past necessitates a rigorous and ongoing reevaluation. This ongoing rethinking is crucial for achieving a balance between "freedom" and "security" [7]. Additionally, Fromm asserts that a true love of life can only flourish within a society that provides security, justice, and freedom [8].[2]

From the perspective of the relationship between freedom and security, the insights of Fromm [9] and Marcuse [10] hold significant importance. Fromm contends that we inhabit a "contemporary bureaucratic industrial age" that significantly limits individuals' capacity to achieve genuine freedom. Similarly, Marcuse characterizes our period as an "age of anxiety." This predicament arises from the ambiguous alliance industrial society has formed with the "repressive rationality" [11]. The rationality governed by this repressive mindset, intended to optimize efficiency, simultaneously curtails individual freedom [12]. While industrial society may appear to advance freedoms, it, in fact, perpetuates systems of domination as seen in concentration camps, massacres, world wars, and atomic bombs [10]. Additionally, we must acknowledge the current migration processes as part of this troubling narrative. Today's society, heavily influenced by technology, utilizes the transformation of nature as a means of exerting sovereignty [13]. Horkheimer also proceeds with a similar analysis, evaluating that industrial society severely undermines rationality. He points out that critical reason, freedom, and subjectivity are systematically suppressed through rationalization [14]. Although capitalism has introduced certain "positive freedoms," it leaves individuals feeling trapped in a sense of powerlessness and insignificance. This feeling arises because capitalism organizes labor relations solely for the purpose of capital accumulation [15]. As a result, the relationships between individuals, influenced by market forces, have deteriorated into mere transactions characterized by use and tool [15].

Habermas's examination of contemporary globalization closely aligns with Fromm's observations. The fluidity inherent in the globalization process promotes

[1] Members of the Frankfurt School undertook a crucial study on immigration in the United States, drawing from their own experiences as political immigrants. They conducted comprehensive interviews with 566 new immigrant workers in the heavy industry sector, focusing specifically on key cities such as New York, New Jersey, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Los Angeles, and San Francisco [6].

[2] In his Theory of Communicative Action, Habermas systematically endeavors to liberate practice and to establish a well-functioning society. He conducts an analysis of how linguistic forms and boundaries contribute to the development of a democratic perspective in social life [4].

the global exchange of trade and commodities, facilitating economic mobility, cultural exchanges, and communication networks, as well as migration patterns [16]. Moreover, Habermas posits that the modern era is fundamentally defined by subjective freedom. This freedom is reinforced by several key components, including civil law, the principle of equal rights, moral autonomy, self-realization, and the accumulation of culture, significantly expanding individuals' opportunities for self-expression [16]. However, in the absence of these freedoms, migration mobility—a distinct manifestation of globalization that flows from periphery to center—brings a range of other significant social issues.

Immigrants have historically been separate from the traditionally fixed working class due to their geographical mobility and cultural differences. However, in today's post-Fordist economy, immigration and economic factors are inherently linked [17]. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze immigration through the intersecting lenses of economic, social, and political paradigms. In this context, the roles of "emigration," "immigration," and "being a transit country" [18] are pivotal in shaping the migration experiences in Turkey, and these dynamics are equally relevant to the migration experiences in Denizli, one of the satellite cities designated for refugees in Turkey. The research sample for this study is specifically located in this city. Castles and Miller highlight that in nations where despotism prevails, it is exceedingly difficult to establish a framework that would facilitate the safe return of refugees, owing to issues such as limited economic resources and insecure human rights [19]. This reality underscores the importance of examining the relationship between the sociology of immigration and the personal narratives of immigrants, particularly in relation to their experiences of freedom.

2. Exploring migrant subculture: The intersection of migration practices and the pursuit of freedom

2.1 Methodology

This study involved conducting in-depth interviews with 30 Iranian refugees and asylum seekers residing in Denizli, utilizing a semi-structured open-ended questionnaire within a qualitative research framework. The interviews and focus group discussions ranged from one to three hours and were conducted in Turkish, Persian, and English. Iranian refugees who were proficient in English or Turkish served as interpreters during the Persian interviews. Participants were informed that they had the right to decline to answer any questions they found uncomfortable and could withdraw from the research at any time, in accordance with stringent scientific and ethical standards. Each participant was assigned a nickname to protect their anonymity.

Maximum diversity sampling was employed to ensure a diverse representation of refugees who migrated to Turkey from Iran for various reasons. Following this, the snowball sampling method was utilized to reach additional respondents. This research, which commenced in 2022, is designed to be longitudinal and is ongoing. We maintain contact with the respondents after the interviews to evaluate changes in migration experiences over time. This includes leveraging connections made through social media and observing individuals who have moved from Turkey, a transit country, to third countries. Below is the socio-demographic information of the interviewees in the research sample (**Table 1**).

Age	**21-29**	15
	30-39	13
	40-50	2
Gender	**Female**	10
	Male	20
Sexual orientation/Gender identity	**Lesbian**	2
	Gay	7
	Bisexual	1
	Trans woman	2
	Trans man	3
	Straight	15
Level of education	**Phd**	2
	MA	3
	BA	21
	High school	4
Marital status	**Married**	5
	Single	25
Ethnicity	**Fars**	19
	Azeri	5
	Kurdish	4
	Lur	2
Religious belief	**Moslim**	6
	Christian	8
	Baha'i	3
	Zarathustra	2
	Shaman	1
	Deist	4
	Atheist	6

Table 1.
Socio-demographic data.

2.2 Iranian migrant subculture in Denizli City: "I am both a Christian and a Gay…"

When examining the educational qualifications of the respondents, it becomes evident that a significant proportion of Iranian immigrants in Western countries are intellectuals who adopt an anti-Sharia lifestyle and worldview [20]. The research sample reflects a high level of education, with most respondents holding undergraduate, graduate, or doctoral degrees; only a small number are high school graduates. The majority of these individuals are single, with ages ranging from 23 to 50, and there is a notable concentration of younger individuals. While the sample consists of 10 female and 20 male respondents, there is considerable diversity in terms of gender identity, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, and ethnic backgrounds. The interviewees encompass a range of ethnicities, including Lur, Kurd, Persian, and Azeri, as well as a variety of religious and antireligious affiliations, such as Zoroastrian, Christian, Bahá'í, atheist, deist, and shamanistic beliefs. This diversity highlights the array of reasons for migration. The migrants in this sample have decisively left Iran for various compelling factors, including political oppression, identification as Bahá'í or Christian, LGBTQIA+ status, and experiences of domestic violence. Despite their differing motivations, they share a common dissatisfaction with Iran's repressive political regime and a strong desire for a free and modern life. Notably, in some cases, the identities driving the migration process intersect, as illustrated by Afrin's experience in Turkey:

> *"I am both gay and because we have Sharia law in Iran. They bother us a lot; there is even the death penalty. This religion was not relaxing for me; I came here a little bit. I talked to it and met it (Christianity). Now I am both Christian and gay; I have no place in Iran."*

The diverse identities of Iranian refugees, along with their motivations for migration, clearly illustrate Marcuse's assertion that individuals must actively cultivate radical subjectivities to achieve true freedom and happiness [21]. The motivations for migration among the respondents clearly demonstrate that "the migrants' escape experiences carry a sense of freedom" [17]. Female respondents particularly highlighted critical push factors, such as the obligation to wear a hijab, the prohibition of alcohol, and the restrictions placed on public interactions with their spouses. Aryana's compelling account powerfully illustrates the regime's oppression of women: "In Iran, the mindset is very narrow. It is forbidden. How many women have died because of this hijab? Millions." Similarly, Dorsa's experience with domestic violence emerged as a significant factor influencing her decision to migrate: "There are many problems. My husband always threatens and oppresses me. He once said he would throw acid in my face. I had to come here." This perspective aligns with Horkheimer's claim that the family is a foundational source of authoritarian behavior [22]. Fromm's reflections on personal freedom further underscore the significance of this issue. He contends that a conscious and productive individual should act in accordance with their desires, asserting that the essence of a free person's life is rooted in their existence [23]. Additionally, Adorno emphasizes that individuals must first recognize and confront their unfreedom in order to achieve true freedom, highlighting the essential need for self-reflection [24].

The experiences of Baver and Leyan, both LGBTQIA+ respondents, also highlight the regime's oppressive control over male-female relations in the public sphere. Baver explains,

> *"We endure significant police oppression. They are constantly monitoring us, questioning our actions, our choices, and our companions. For example, if you are sitting with someone, the police may approach and inquire, 'Who is the woman?' In some cases, they take you into custody, compelling you to write a statement confessing that you made a mistake, which you are then required to sign."*

Leyan points out, "In Iran, men and women are segregated in all aspects of life. In Turkey, this segregation is limited to bathrooms." These accounts not only reveal the harsh realities of regime oppression but also empower Leyan's comparison of the public representation of male-female relations in her country to that in Turkey.

In Iran, all sexual orientations and identities outside of traditional marriage are subject to severe penalties, including the death penalty [25]. The regime operates within a rigid patriarchal and heteronormative framework that does not tolerate diversity in sexual orientation or gender identity. Although the state provides support for sex change surgeries, this assistance often fails to enhance the lives of transgender individuals, who continue to face discrimination.

In this context, Khorshid compellingly describes the widespread discrimination that LGBTQIA+ individuals endure in both their personal and professional lives in Iran. He states,

> *"The views in Iran are quite harsh. It is especially challenging for women. I would not want my child to be a lesbian, as I believe it is inherently genetic. How can she navigate life with that struggle? While transsexuality is officially accepted in Iran, those who undergo surgery often find themselves marginalized, unable to gain acceptance in society or the workplace. Most parents do not embrace them."*

The stark reality of the regime's brutal suppression of dissent is strikingly illustrated by the experiences of Murdad, a political prisoner. He recounts,

> *"In Iran, yes, 80 lashes. For example, the police came to my mother's house twice. There was hot water, and they threw it on my mother. Her foot burned. Because I put a promissory note and went outside. I came to Turkey. The state has taken over one of my houses. They even shot my dog. Because they think that this is what Allah says, they say that whoever is in Iran is an enemy of the state; they are enemies of Allah. In other words, politics is mixed with sects. It is the worst thing."*

In this narrative, the police's demeanor can be understood through Fromm's analysis, which posits that obedience transforms individuals into a part of the power they venerate, leading them to feel empowered [26]. Murdad's experiences, particularly the tragic killing of his dog, exemplify the Sharia regime's pervasive influence that extends beyond humans to other species. His case also underscores the idea that true freedom for individuals lies in their capacity to resist authority, as Fromm articulates [26]:

> *"There was a project that all the dogs outside would be poisoned. I made a campaign. I went to the Shiraz Municipality. I said, 'Don't do this.' I wrote a signature text. I went from house to house, collecting signatures. I did this for 5 or 6 days. Why? Because Sharia law came. Anyway, when the campaign ended, they called me on the phone. I signed something once, saying I wouldn't write anything online. They called me and said, 'Don't write anything. Don't do anything for civilization, politics, or the state. Don't think about it. Just don't make any noise.' I said, 'Okay.' I was scared. One day, I went to the office. My mother called on the phone. 'Murdad, these people have come to our house, they are looking for you. 2 men, one woman. They check the house to see who is there, what is there.' I had 700,000 tomans,[3] or 700 TL, on my card at the time. I came to Ankara with it. It was between 2:00 and 3:00 in the morning. I came to Turkey by bus, illegally."*

[3] Toman is the informal term for an amount equivalent to 10 rials in Iran.

Adorno's assertion, "The upside-down world perpetuates itself: domination is spread by those who rule" [27], is particularly relevant to Murdad's experience. The police chief serves as a quintessential representation of totalitarianism, embodying the oppressive forces at play within such regimes. Those who fall victim to totalitarianism become reified, ultimately losing their capacity to experience themselves freely [28]. This perspective reinforces Fromm's claim that evil is an intrinsic aspect of human nature, with the degree of evil reflecting the level of regression. Additionally, it is essential to recognize that Turkey, where Murdad applied for asylum, is currently undergoing oppressive Islamic practices that closely resemble the situation in Iran.[4]

Leyan, a trans woman, articulates the relationship between refugee status and freedom in her narrative. She underscores that Iranian immigrants, despite their profound attachment to their homeland, are compelled to migrate due to the harsh conditions they face:

> *"But honestly, we're all refugees because we fled Iran. Everyone left. The country was pretty amazing, and that's a fact. Sure, I'm a legal student, but you know how it goes—when people want to move, they usually look for a better country with a stronger economy. They think, 'Okay, Turkey isn't too bad.' But sometimes it can be tough here because of low salaries."*

This narrative, critically exploring the concept of freedom, is parallel to Habermas' argument on freedom. Habermas [24] argues that genuine freedom of action is not solely founded on reason; rather, it is significantly influenced by our natural circumstances. This perspective highlights a consciousness of freedom that is intricately linked to action [24]. The quest for freedom arises from the processes of individualization and cultural development. Additionally, authoritarian systems cannot effectively suppress an individual's persistent pursuit of freedom [29].

Another crucial aspect of Iranian refugees' quest for freedom is the importance of critical thinking. The narratives of Iranian refugees, which often highlight their high levels of education, unequivocally demonstrate their capacity for critical thinking. As Fromm [30] emphasizes, critical thinking is not merely important; it is essential for liberation. This skill transcends a casual interest; it serves as a vital means of constructive criticism that promotes freedom and enriches life [30]. For instance, Murdad, a political prisoner, articulates a pointed critique of the Iranian regime.

> *"Yes, our state is rich. Nineteen percent of the world's oil and gas reserves are located in Iran. But 70 million people in Iran are not Iranians. There are Arabs, Syrians, Palestinians, Lebanese, and Yemeni people. They all give money to terrorists, but we don't get any money."*

Moreover, his assertion that "The Iranian government is very old-fashioned. Iran does not love its people; who is new-fashioned" closely parallels Reich's claim that conservatism is fundamentally rooted in a fear of freedom [31]. The evident repercussions of a lack of freedom among the populace are ignorance and powerlessness [10]. This aligns with Fromm's concept of "robot conformity." In this context, individuals distance themselves from their true selves, becoming shaped by the dominant cultural patterns of society, which leads to a pervasive conformity [15]. Within this state of

[4] Similar to Iran, a recent legal regulation in Turkey has envisaged the rounding up of homeless street dogs and their abandonment to die in shelters.

robot conformity, critical thinking is not merely suppressed; it is effectively eliminated. Individuals resort to artificial thinking, rationalizing irrationality as acceptable [15]. As a result, the original thought and the authentic self are progressively diminished [15]. In addition to this argument, Murdad underscored Iran's anxiety regarding the concept of free thought:

> *"If you read some books, go to school, study other departments a bit. This government knows that there is a problem. Many of the Iranian refugees who come here are highly educated or have attended prestigious universities. They are knowledgeable in specialized fields."*

As Marcuse [32] noted, reason can only be fully realized in the context of freedom. Leyan's narrative also serves as a powerful example of critical thinking, showcasing profound metaphors that clearly expose the limitations of patriarchal, heteronormative patterns:

> *"There is a wonderful cartoon called Chicken Run. Have you seen it? It tells the story of chickens in a factory that lay eggs every day. The boss keeps track of their production, and if he doesn't like a chicken's eggs, he has it killed. It's terrible. One chicken says, 'We need to get out of here and escape.' They start to plan their escape, realizing they need a plane. One chicken suggests, 'Let's do it this way.' Another chicken chimes in, 'But if we escape, who will feed us?' The first chicken replies, 'We'll find food for ourselves.' Then someone asks, 'What about our eggs? Who will take them every day?' The reply is, 'Actually, we don't need to worry about that. The eggs are for us to eat.' Finally, they realize, 'The boundaries are not here; the boundaries are in your head. Your prison is right here. You are trapped here."*

2.3 Life experiences in satellite cities as the iron cage of freedom: "This is a dungeon.."

One of the significant challenges encountered by Iranian immigrants in Turkey is the victimization stemming from the UN's practices concerning refugees. These practices often bureaucratize the confinement of refugees, ultimately transforming their aspirations for freedom into an "iron cage," as described by Max Weber [33]. Additionally, Turkey's policies regarding refugees face valid criticism from those directly affected. Upon their arrival in Turkey, refugees are typically placed in small or medium-sized cities designated as "satellite cities," rather than in larger metropolitan areas. Although these cities lack the visible barriers associated with refugee camps, they create invisible walls that substantially restrict the freedom of refugees [34]. Those who flee Iran in search of a free and democratic life encounter social oppression in these smaller cities, where patriarchal values and rural traditions are firmly rooted. For example, the narrative of Baver, an LGBTQIA+ individual, serves as a compelling illustration of Erich Fromm's [23] critique of the dehumanization process that reduces individuals to mere numbers and commodities:

> *"They didn't give me a kimlik[5] for a year. I tried (to get a kimlik) for a year. We were required to go every week to get an ID, but now it's only once a month. There used to*

[5] It is the Turkish term for an ID card issued to refugees.

> *be long queues, with people lining up as early as 4 or 5 in the morning, and police officers were present. There was a crazy police officer there. He does things so slowly to get your job done. For example, my job will take five minutes. He drinks tea slowly. Then he goes and talks to a man. He goes and does something else. Our job takes five minutes; it doesn't happen anymore, it really doesn't happen. I filed a complaint."*

Kimiya firmly criticizes the bureaucratic obstacles encountered by Iranian refugees in Turkey, highlighting the unjust legal advantages that Syrian refugees enjoy, stemming from complex global political manipulations:

> *"It's tough. Compared to Syrians, Iranians have been in Turkey for a longer time. When you look at the duration of their stay, you see that Syrians are offered citizenship. While we don't necessarily want citizenship, they have been able to vote in elections, and so on. At the very least, we would like the right to work permits."*

Besides, complaints about life in satellite cities are prominently reflected in the narratives of interviewees. These grievances are particularly focused on the behavior of local residents, especially as expressed by LGBTQIA+ individuals. Leyan's statement below powerfully illustrates this perspective:

> *"I observed a lot of negative behavior. For instance, while I was walking down the street, a girl pointed me out to her boyfriend, saying, 'Look at her.' He turned around, saw me, and laughed. It was noisy, and everyone was looking at me, making comments loudly. Then the girl added, 'Don't look at her anymore.' I understood why she said that; he continued to stare at me, which made me uncomfortable. What should I do about his behavior?"*

Afrin, a gay respondent, presents a noteworthy perspective that diverges from Leyan's view, arguing that the residents of the city have become increasingly accustomed to the presence of Iranian LGBTQIA+ people over time. He asserts, "So Turkey, specifically Denizli, has become a bit more modern because they have seen so much; they have gotten used to us. It is not as oppressive as Iran, but it is not as free as Europe." This viewpoint illustrates a significant geographical and cultural comparison within the framework of public life proposed by Habermas, which prioritizes equal freedoms and tolerance. Habermas posits that individuals who exhibit tolerance must respect the ethos of others within society while also recognizing their own values. Consequently, his concept of "lifeworld" is closely linked to the sphere of freedoms. In this light, Kaveh's experience underscores the reality that the boundaries of tolerance are often limited for immigrants:

> *"It wasn't the problem (with my neighbours), but once there was, I don't know how. However, there is some trash outside the houses, and an older woman asked me why there was trash here. 'Okay, clean it,' she said, just because I was "yabancı…"*[6] *I passed it."*

On the other hand, Leyan's experience demonstrates that locals can sometimes form solidarity relations with immigrants, even in the face of unfair treatment by employers:

[6] It is the Turkish meaning of the word foreigner.

> *"My boss in the textile industry behaved badly and said hurtful things. I ended up crying. I had just arrived in Turkey and didn't have a Turkish phone line, so I had no way to call anyone. I also didn't know anyone or where to go, and my Turkish wasn't very good. I didn't have a bus pass and mistakenly thought I would be taking a shuttle back. I felt lost and overwhelmed. The security guard, who was a woman, noticed I was upset and offered me a seat. She told me, 'Sit here until the shuttle comes. Or if you prefer, I can help you with the bus.' That woman cried with me. Most Turks aren't like that either. Half-and-half. Right? It's like that in elections, too."*[7]

Another pressing issue faced by respondents in the satellite city is the exploitation of Iranian immigrants by landlords. Dorsa and Murdad's statements effectively illustrate the injustices associated with the exorbitant rents to which they are subjected. While Murdad states, "Our landlord asks, 'Where are you from?' When we respond with 'Iran,' the rent, which should be 500 TL, is instead increased to 1,000 TL for us." Dorsa's statement is the following:

> *"My lease expires in twenty days, and I am currently paying 2,100 TL. Now, my landlord is demanding 4,500 TL—more than double my current rent. What will I do as a single woman? It's far too expensive."*

Similarly, Baha's experience illustrates that the attitudes of local landlords toward refugees can be challenging, even though they can be, in some cases, quite positive:

> *"Our landlord was a very good person. Because he had lived in Germany before, he understood the challenges faced by foreigners. He owned many buildings, and we lived in one of them. However, he sold the house, and we had to move out. Then we moved to another house, where the new landlord collected my rent but wouldn't answer the phone until the following month. The water was cut off, and there was no internet for 50 days. Both my brother and I told him, 'Please don't do business with us like this; don't treat us poorly.' But he continued to do terrible things. I ended up buying my own internet. The water was cut off for three days, and the natural gas was also turned off, with no response from him. I told him, 'No problem, just answer the phone.' Instead, he called me three days before the rent was due, asking, 'Give me money, Baha, I need money.' I replied, 'No, I don't have any money; where would it come from?' After that, we moved to a smaller apartment, where the landlord was good as well."*

Murdad's narrative effectively captures the challenging realities faced by refugees in Turkey, which operates as a transit country. By utilizing the metaphor of a dungeon, he compellingly illustrates the adverse experiences these individuals have endured:

[7] Leyan's statement emphasizes a pronounced division within Turkish society, separating those who support the AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi-Justice and Development Party) government, which has been in power for the past 23 years, from those who oppose it, particularly the secular part of the society. Recent results from both general and local elections indicate a significant erosion of the AKP's support base. Its political and cultural dominance is increasingly challenged, and its hold on power is weakening.

> *"I came to Turkey when I was 28 years old. I am 32 now. I will be 33 in 3 months. I haven't done anything. My life is going by for nothing. There is no permission in Turkey to work or to sit. Excuse me, just like a dog. Even one phone call says, 'Are you alive? Are you dead? What happened to you?' No one looks at us. Denizli is a dungeon. It is forbidden to leave the satellite city. There is a fine of 2500 TL if you leave. How many people have committed suicide here? A guy committed suicide there 3 months ago. A friend of ours went crazy here 2 years ago. They sent him to Canada last. He committed suicide in Canada. Why? The guy cracked up."*

The central issue in these statements is the apparent bureaucratic insensitivity exhibited by the authorities toward human life. Additionally, the challenges faced during the migration process often lead migrants to sacrifice their lives and their ideals of freedom, even if they ultimately reach their destination country.

2.4 Working practices in the freedom-unfreedom dilemma

International migration studies often delineate a distinction between refugees and labor migrants, separating political motivations from economic ones [35]. However, in practice, financial and political factors are frequently interwoven in shaping individuals' migration decisions. Many migrants are motivated not only by the pursuit of a better quality of life but also by the desire to live in environments that afford them essential freedoms and opportunities. Unfortunately, the social realities encountered by migrants often compromise their aspirations. For example, it is common for migrants to experience social mobility that falls considerably short of their class positions and the skilled occupations they held in their home countries. The Iranian immigrant population in Denizli is predominantly employed in low-wage, unskilled jobs that do not offer social security benefits. This reality starkly illustrates the concept of obligation and labor as articulated by Marcuse [10], highlighting a significant lack of freedom for these individuals. They are often compelled to take on tasks and responsibilities that do not inherently belong to them during their working hours. Within a capitalist framework, individuals are systematically directed toward work processes, effectively diminishing their autonomy to choose whether or not to participate in work [36].

A key issue concerning migrant work is that, although refugees and asylum seekers in Turkey have the legal right to work and access social assistance, the reality is that obtaining a work permit is quite challenging. None of the respondents in the sample possesses a work permit, which has led them all to engage in informal employment. One interviewee, Kimiya, effectively articulated the stark contrast between the necessity for migrants to work for survival and the complicated legal procedures they encounter:

> *"I can't work comfortably here because I don't have a work permit. I've worked very hard but have been caught two or three times. I spent forty days in Aydın at the Repatriation Center without working or having a work permit. Essentially, I'm not allowed to work. For example, I worked extensively in the textile industry and even served as a foreman. However, each time I got caught, I faced a fine of 5,000 to 6,000 TL. Since I wasn't able to work, how am I supposed to pay that money? Employers don't apply for work permits on our behalf, as they have to pay a separate fee for this service. This lack of action from employers shows that they cannot be humane."*

Consequently, Kimiya decided to pursue a career as a hairdresser, as this occupation presents a greater likelihood of securing a work permit:

> *"I received training and worked here at the hair salon because our boss applied for a work permit. If we get caught here, I'm uncertain about what will happen this time. There is a risk of being caught, but we chose this job over working in textiles because we applied for a work permit."*

In these circumstances, it is evident that Iranians in Denizli are actively engaged in various sectors, including textiles, industry, services, construction, and self-employment. Statements from interviewees consistently indicate that Iranian refugees are compelled to pursue a wide range of income-generating activities, spanning from legitimate services to criminal endeavors, including sex work.[8] Hedayat remarked, 'I saw it with my own eyes; they do everything from selling drugs to real estate and foreign exchange,' highlighting the stark reality they face.

The research findings indicate that a substantial proportion of respondents are employed in positions that do not correspond to their qualifications. This situation is classified as unqualified labor within the realm of social policy literature. A majority of the respondents reported that they had applied for numerous positions that aligned with their qualifications; however, they were unable to obtain these jobs due to a lack of work permits. As articulated by Horkheimer and Adorno, the unequal regulations governing the social division of labor impose significant constraints on individuals: "The division of labor, as it has developed under domination, is by no means overlooked in the process" [39].

An illustrative instance of the disparity between occupational demands and skill sets is exemplified by Kaveh, along with his wife, both of whom are professional artists:

> *"I used to be a musician in an orchestra in Iran, where I was a well-known singer of traditional Iranian music. I played the cello, and my wife played the piano. Now, I work as a carpenter in a furniture store. This job can be hazardous; I cut my finger two weeks ago. Animals could do this job, yet here I am, a professional musician, forced to do this work. We went to the hospital for treatment, but we found that hospital insurance was not available, and they didn't provide any assistance. They simply dressed my wound, and we returned to work with my boss after just an hour."*

Marcuse [12] clearly articulates the connection between freedom and beauty, contending that beauty is the fundamental quality of freedom. He emphasizes that art and technology play essential roles in the process of liberation, highlighting that true liberation arises from the harmonious integration of both liberating art and liberating technology [12]. However, Kaveh and his wife's immigration experience creates barriers that prevent them from fully engaging with this social reality.

Similarly, Rustem, who had previously been an employer in Iran, encountered the stark realities of proletarianization when he was compelled to work as an unskilled laborer in the textile sector. After losing his job, he continued living in his rented apartment without paying rent, instead offering to clean the building in exchange for his accommodation. This choice effectively excluded him from the labor market and placed him in a subordinate position. In this context, Rustem's strategy to address the

[8] For research findings concerning the involvement of refugees in the sex sector, see [37, 38].

impoverishment he faced, alongside his gradual decline in social class, is particularly noteworthy: "For four or five months, I only ate jam because I didn't have any money." Marcuse [13] compellingly notes that mass production and distribution have effectively encroached upon individual freedom in the one domain where people should be able to express their true selves. This predicament is not simply an unfortunate happenstance for Rustem; it reflects a broader reality experienced by migrant workers as a whole. Specifically, Iranian refugees often find themselves in alienating and objectifying jobs, primarily within the textile sector. The commodification of both objects and people functions as a shackle of freedom, highlighting a significant parallel between the two [13]. The narratives provided by the interviewees in this research strongly align with Marcuse's [10] insights on work. The relationships that develop in the workplace, representing rational expressions of authority, typically lead to the alienation of individuals. As a result, true freedom can only be experienced during their leisure time, outside of work.

For migrants, these experiences are intricately linked with various limitations and exclusionary practices. Requirements such as standing while working in factories, restrictions on communication among workers, and strict product quantity targets exemplify the intense control over labor. While Nasim, one of the interviewees, articulated her experience of these oppressive conditions as follows, "You won't talk; you will work all the time and be fast. They say, 'Come on, be quick, don't talk,'" Shahram compared textile production to the discipline in Nazi concentration camps:

> *"When I first entered the workshop, I felt it was like the Second World War. I thought they probably cut us up after the work was done. The craftsman's attitude was negative; they only looked at you, and you were expected to work."*

Shahram and Nasim's narratives effectively illustrate Horkheimer's claim that contemporary industrial society fosters individuals who are instrumental and reified. Horkheimer posits that modern industrialism produces a new type of human, which he refers to as the "alienated robot." This robot-like individual is adept at group work, embodies consumerist tendencies, and is easily manipulated. Additionally, Fromm's [23] examination of conformist individuals—those who do not perceive themselves as part of an authority network yet still seek to avoid conflict with the prevailing social order—strongly reflects the experiences of respondents enduring oppressive working conditions.

Dorsa indicated that she undertook additional cleaning responsibilities in her workplace, paralleling the experiences of Shahram and Nasim:

> *"I have always struggled with textiles. Sometimes, I do some cleaning here, and that's fine, but textiles feel so rigid. They seem to demand, "Come on, get up!" For example, they often speak poorly to us. I have always worked and have experience in cleaning. I've been to many shops for work, but they pay very little."*

Rustem's narrative, on the other hand, effectively highlights the xenophobic and homophobic verbal harassment endured by employees: "They were saying, 'Come on, come on.' For example, they were swearing. Out of 20 people, 1 or 2 people understand. The rest are all newcomers and don't know the language." Furthermore, Leyan's work experience clearly illustrates the social marginalization she faces as a trans woman, despite being a productive and efficient employee:

"I worked in the textile industry for a day, but no one accepted me during that time. I met with many supervisors, but they all rejected me. My work was excellent, and I was very fast with my hands. However, one boss saw me and said, 'I don't want him. He uses the same bathroom as the women. It's too comfortable for him.' The foreman informed me, 'The boss doesn't want you. He saw you on the cameras and has asked you not to work here.'

A major concern in the industrial sector, particularly in the textile industry, is the prevalence of excessively long working hours. It is all too common for wages to be paid late, only partially, or not at all, with many employers opting for in-kind compensation rather than cash. Additionally, overtime wages are often insufficient or completely unpaid. The working conditions are unacceptable in terms of occupational health and safety standards. Furthermore, Iranian workers grapple with discrimination stemming from their marginalized social status, which poses significant psychological risks. As a result, severe labor exploitation and processes of marginalization are pervasive in the textile sector. These adverse conditions contribute to heightened levels of depression among workers, increased turnover rates, decreased job satisfaction, and ultimately make employment in the service sector more preferable.

The services sector requires that respondents have lived in the city for a specific duration and acquired proficiency in Turkish in order to transition into this sector. This requirement clearly illustrates that the textile sector acts as a vital entry point for newcomers. However, it is essential to recognize that working conditions in the service sector are far from ideal. Factors such as long working hours, delayed wage payments, and negative attitudes from employers present significant challenges, contributing to high labor turnover rates within the sector. For instance, Farhad, who works long hours as a waiter, shares his weekly schedule with a friend as a way to cope with the exhausting monotony of his routine, emphasizing the disparity between his income and the demands of his job. This leads to a deliberate choice: prioritizing free time over income reflects a conscious desire to escape the "social power machine" [14]. The dominance and oppression within industrial society and mass culture increasingly distance individuals from the fundamental possibility of liberation [14].

Baha, an English teacher at a private nursery school, is well-regarded by both parents and students alike. However, his experience reveals a troubling trend: skilled jobs in the service sector are experiencing proletarianization, leading to negative consequences for wages and working conditions that demand our attention:

"For example, he pays late. He gives the money 10 days late, sometimes a week late, and then even 2 weeks late. Eventually, he stops paying altogether and doesn't answer the phone. He comes and goes without speaking to me. I left that situation, but there's still a problem. For instance, I called the school. The parents asked, 'Where is Baha? Can you come, teacher?' I plan to go and talk to him today. I currently have 2 days of lessons. If they pay me my fee, I will work. However, I know he probably won't pay me; he doesn't want to."

Efsun, on the other hand, boldly highlights the sexist attitudes of local employers in the services sector by drawing a clear comparison between employers in Iran and Turkey:

"If I had an Iranian boss, I believe I would perform better and be happier at work. Iranians have a deep respect for women, particularly for those who work.

> *Unfortunately, I feel that this respect is lacking in Turkish culture. This could explain why I initially had conflicts with my boss. For example, I often wondered why my hard work went unnoticed and why I wasn't given the respect I deserved. That's why I would prefer to work under an Iranian boss."*

Despite some challenges, the service sector offers relatively favorable working conditions, even for unskilled positions, compared to the textile industry. Many individuals find these conditions desirable and believe their jobs align well with their qualifications. For example, several women employed in the beauty sector report enjoying their work and receiving fair treatment from their employers. Similarly, employees in restaurants and cafes often highlight the positive attitudes and strong support from their supervisors. Baha's experience exemplifies this; his employer has taken significant steps to help him acquire qualifications and has ensured that his wage rights are respected:

> *"I got a cleaning job at a restaurant, but later the manager saw me and said to the baristas, 'Teach this guy how to be a barista. He'll leave the country soon, but let him learn something here in the meantime.' The manager is very popular and well-liked; everyone knows him, and he's a genuinely good person. We still see each other from time to time. I eventually left that job, but there were one or two other Turkish baristas who were really good guys. They taught me some things, although not everything. Nonetheless, I've learned how to be a barista now. The other place I worked was an excellent organization. They paid minimum wage, but the pay was fair and always on time. Sometimes I think about sharing some of my experiences, and I doubt you would believe them; how could I be so lucky?"*

In Baha's experience, the employer's positive attitude toward migrant workers was, unfortunately, overshadowed by the competitive demeanor of local workers, who provided only partial guidance in teaching them how to be baristas. Conversely, Afrin's narrative is insightful, as it reveals that some female employers cultivated friendly relationships with Iranian LGBTQIA+ workers:

> *"Ezgi,[9] my boss, knows that I am gay at work. I dye my hair every month or sometimes every week because I enjoy different colors. Ezgi occasionally tells me, 'Afrin, lighter hair suits you better.'"*

Respondents have successfully identified various opportunities for informal self-employment and entrepreneurship within the service sector. Notable activities in this realm include English language teaching, tour guiding, event organization,[10] tattoo artistry, hairdressing, and online entrepreneurship, particularly through collaborations with Turkish partners in fields such as software development and graphic design. What is particularly striking is that many refugees actively engage in income-generating activities within their community, leveraging the strengths of the Iranian immigrant subculture in the city. For instance, a significant number of Iranians choose to use the services of Iranian hairdressers who operate from home, as they find Turkish hairdressing services to be more costly. Additionally, some individuals are

[9] The authors have formally amended the name.

[10] An interesting example in the context of event organization is that Iranian refugees organized Halloween for the first time in Denizli.

effectively acting as intermediaries, connecting newly arrived Iranians with local real estate agents in Denizli. While these relationships foster mutual benefits, they also reveal a concerning dynamic. Longstanding Iranian residents often exploit newcomers by involving them in chains of exploitation, frequently in collaboration with local residents. This pattern poses a threat to the solidarity that should exist among Iranian refugees, highlighting a significant challenge within the community.

3. Conclusion

Marcuse [12] emphasizes the vital role of political practices in challenging the economic order in the pursuit of freedom. Those who manage the social system actively construct "political linguistics" to ensure their administrative continuity and legitimize their authority. It is essential to understand that those in positions of domination also define the meanings of words [12]. Similarly, Habermas [24] asserts that individuals' awareness of freedom is fundamentally rooted in the way of life within the "linguistic structure." To truly liberate oneself from oppression and domination, it is necessary to develop a language that reflects a genuinely free society, removing the language and terminology associated with oppression [12]. In this context, the narratives of Iranian immigrants vividly reveal the influence of the "political linguistics" they encountered during their migration as they strive to achieve their freedom. The experiences of immigrants during the migration process are profoundly influenced by their working relationships and daily lives, often reflecting a totalitarian framework. The qualitative research conducted in this study clearly illustrates that Iranian refugees and asylum seekers experience a degree of freedom in Turkey that they were unable to attain in their homeland. However, this freedom is often temporary and fluid. Adorno's [27] concept of individuals engaging in short-term games of freedom aptly captures their situation. In their pursuit of democracy and freedom, Iranian immigrants frequently find themselves entrenched in low-wage and socially insecure conditions within the immigrant workforce. Moreover, as Habermas [24] points out, the democratic process must serve to unite society. It is the state's responsibility to provide citizens with negative freedoms and to ensure freedom of communication that is grounded in social welfare.

Iranian immigrants embark on an anthropological journey that significantly diverges from the democratic ideals proposed by Habermas. They navigate a complex array of identities, including Bahaism, Christianity, opposition to the regime, LGBTQIA+ rights, and ethnic backgrounds such as Kurdish and Azeri. Many flee Iran in pursuit of settling in countries like Canada, the USA, and Australia, driven by the desire to escape despotism and attain higher standards of freedom and social welfare. However, they often first gravitate toward Turkey, where they experience freedoms that are unattainable in Iran. In Turkey, immigrants can consume alcohol, opt out of wearing a headscarf, and live free from the constraints of an oppressive political regime. While this represents a notable shift in their experience of freedom, it is essential to recognize that it remains both partial and temporary. The refugee and asylum status of migrants often overshadows their deep desire for freedom. The document provided to Iranian migrants during their stay in Turkey, commonly referred to as "*kimlik*" in Turkish, grants them some limited social rights but does not provide most of the rights associated with citizenship. Those Iranians who are waiting for this document continue to experience feelings of loneliness and alienation, similar to what they endured back in Iran. Furthermore, individuals whose application files have been closed due to the United Nations canceling their destination country face a sociopsychological burden, as they are compelled to return to Iran. As Adorno [28] eloquently expressed, hope in a world plagued by domination is found in the extreme positions.

The study indicates that the principal form of unfreedom experienced by Iranian immigrants is found within the labor process. These individuals represent a precarious labor force, with their work being objectified and desocialized by what is termed the "social power apparatus" [14]. The fluid and transient nature of immigrant identities pushes them into accepting lower wages than domestic workers, often in conditions that lack adequate occupational health and safety measures, as well as social security. Consequently, Iranian immigrants are pushed to the bottom of the labor market, where the machinery of industry undermines their dreams of freedom. The complexity of the immigrant experience is reflected in the interconnected and diverse identities that arise from this flexible labor market. For instance, within the framework of the Frankfurt School, an individual who strives to transition from "instrumental reason" to "critical reason"—ultimately seeking liberation from captivity—may initially be an educated, qualified white-collar worker in Iran. However, upon moving to Turkey, this individual may find herself/himself diminished to a precarious, low-wage, undeclared blue-collar worker, effectively categorized as unqualified labor within the labor market. As Fromm [8] emphasizes, true freedom does not merely involve understanding the requirements of Hegelian rationality. Instead, it means that the individual is fully conscious of her/his options and the consequences that those choices will entail. "Freedom is a quality of our personality: we are more or less free to resist pressure, more or less free to do what we want, and to be ourselves. Freedom is always a question of increasing freedom one has, or decreasing it" [29].

Author details

Hakan Topates* and Aslican Kalfa-Topates

Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences, Department of Labor Economics and Industrial Relations, Pamukkale University, Denizli, Turkey

*Address all correspondence to: pm@suercro.com

References

[1] Bottomore T. Frankfurt School and İts Critics. İstanbul: Say Publication; 2016. p. 37

[2] Geuss R. The Idea of a Critical Theory Habermas and the Frankfurt School. İstanbul: Ayrıntı Publications; 2013. p. 14, 95

[3] Assoun PL. Frankfurt School. Ankara: Dost Publication; 2014. p. 50

[4] Park P. Critical theory of public life. American Journal of Sociology. 1989;**94**(5):1249-1251, 1249-1250

[5] Beverly J. Frankfurt School: Critical Theory as the Negation of Culture [Internet]. p. 35. Available from: https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED232163.pdf [Accessed: July 12, 2025]

[6] Collomp C. 'Anti-Semitism among American labor': A study by the refugee scholars of the Frankfurt School of Sociology at the end of world war II. Labor History. 2011;**52**(4):417-439, 423-424

[7] Bauman Z. Liquid Life. İstanbul: Ayrıntı Publishing; 2018. p. 193

[8] Fromm E. The Heart of Man: Its Genius for Good and Evil. İstanbul: Öteki Publishing; 1999. p. 50, 148

[9] Fromm E. The Dogma of Christ and Other Essays on Religion, Psychology and Culture. New York: Open Road Media; 1963. p. 77

[10] Marcuse H. Counterrevolution and Revolt. İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları; 1998, pp. 86, 12, 143, 120

[11] Marcuse H. An Essay on Liberation [Internet]. 1969. p. 26. Available from: https://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/marcuse/works/1969/essay-liberation.pdf [Accessed: May 20, 2025]

[12] Marcuse H. An Essay on Liberation. İstanbul: Ayrıntı Publishing; 2013, pp. 37, 53, 51, 76, 15, 39

[13] Marcuse H. One-Dimensional Man: Studies in the Ideology of Advanced Industrial Society. İstanbul: İdea Publishing; 1997, pp. 12, 21, 126

[14] Horkheimer M. Eclipse of Reason. İstanbul: Metis Publishing; 1998, p. 158, 186, 187

[15] Fromm E. Escape from Freedom. İstanbul: Payel Publishing; 1996. pp. 96-99, 104, 152, 157-158, 165

[16] Habermas J. The entry into postmodernity: Nietzsche as a turning point. In: Dochherty T, Habermas J, Rorty R, Laclau E, editors. Postmodernist Bourgeois Liberalism. İstanbul: Mavi Ada Publishing; 2000. pp. 55-70, 164, 55

[17] Hardt M, Antonio N. Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire. İstanbul: Ayrıntı Publishing; 2004, pp. 149, 150

[18] Keyman F, İçduygu A. Globalization, security and migration: The Turkish case. Global Governance. 2000;**6**(3):383-398, 384

[19] Castles S, Mark JM. The Age of Migration. İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi University Publishing; 2008. p. 250

[20] Moghissi H. Away from home: Iranian women, displacement, cultural resistance and change. Journal of Comparative Family Studies. 1999;**30**(2):1-10, 2

[21] Kellner, D. Herbert Marcuse. In: Turner, BS, Elliot, A, editors. Profiles in Contemporary Social Theory. İstanbul: İletişim Publishing; 2017. p. 69-90, 80

[22] Horkheimer M, Adorno T. Aspects of Sociology. Ankara: BilgeSu Yayınları; 2015. p. 161

[23] Fromm E. The Dogma of Christ: And Other Essays on Religion. İstanbul: Say Yayınları; 2022, pp. 145, 153, 95

[24] Habermas J. Between Naturalism and Religion: Philosophical Essays. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Publishing; 2009, pp. 190-191, 154, 177, 200, 103

[25] Iranian Queer Watch Report [Internet]. 2016. p. 30. Available from: http://irqr.net/2016/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/IQWReport.pdf [Accessed: February 8, 2025]

[26] Fromm E. On Disobedience and Other Essays. İstanbul: Mert Publishing; n.d. p. 9, 13

[27] Adorno T. Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life. İstanbul: Metis Publishing; 2000. p. 188, 180

[28] Adorno T. Critics: Essays on Society. İstanbul: Belge Publishing; 2011. p. 23, 99

[29] Fromm E. The Art of Listening. New York: Open Road Integrated Media; 2013. p. 238, 56

[30] Fromm E. The Art of Listening. İstanbul: Say Publishing; 2023. p. 167, 169

[31] Reich W. The Mass Psychology of Fascism. İstanbul: Payel Publishing; 1979. p. 66

[32] Marcuse H. Reason and Revolution. İstanbul: Kitaş Publishing; 1971

[33] Weber M. The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism. London and New York: Routledge; 2005. p. 123

[34] Sert D, Yıldız U. Autonomy despite restrictions: Asylum seekers in Isparta, Istanbul, and Yalova. Marmara university journal of. Political Science. 2013;**1**(1):135-151, 140

[35] Koser K. Social networks and the asylum cycle: The case of Iranians in the Netherlands. International Migration Review. 1997;**31**(3):591-611, 591

[36] Fromm E. The Freedom Problem of our Age. Ankara: Özgür İnsan Publishing; 1973. p. 85

[37] Allsopp J, Nando S, Jenny P. Poverty Among Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the UK: An Evidence and Policy Review [Internet]. p. 23. Available from: https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/iris/2014/working-paper-series/iris-wp-1-2014.pdf [Accessed: July 12, 2025]

[38] Grungras N, Rachel L, Slotek A. Unsafe heaven: Security challenges facing LGBT asylum seekers and refugees in Turkey. The Fletcher Journal of Human Security. 2009;**XXIV**:41-61, 50-51

[39] Horkheimer M, Adorno T. Dialectic of Enlightenment. New York: Continuum; 1997. p. 242

Chapter 6

The Anthropology of Religious Art in Early China: Boars for Ancestors?

Elizabeth Childs-Johnson

Abstract

The history of the wild boar in ancient China may speak volumes about late Neolithic belief systems. As recently analyzed, there is a plethora of material that amplifies a cosmological structure based on a people's belief in transformation. Control over the power of the wild boar during a transitional, pre-state structural settlement of the Hongshan culture, for example, is manifest in imagery decorating jade works of art. The emphasis upon the attributes of the wild boar, particularly the tusks, at this time in the social development of the Hongshan, also prevails in other Jade Age (late Neolithic) cultures, such as Liangzhu and Longshan. Is this long-lasting imagery a factor in the empowerment of the living and their ancestors? Is this practice of wild boar iconolatry a reflection of the survival and success of early ritual and belief?

Keywords: wild boar, pig domestication, jade imagery, ancient Chinese belief in metamorphism, fertility worship, Hongshan culture, boar tusk imagery

1. Introduction

Extensive research on pig domestication and pigs in prehistory (see, e.g., [1]) exists, but in the case of prehistoric China, there is no explanation for the prominence of the pig's ancestor, the wild boar, in Hongshan period art. The culture, from ca. 4700–2900 BCE, was spread in small settlements throughout the northeast, in Liaoning, southeastern Inner Mongolia, and northern Hebei provinces (see **Figure 1**).

Pig and possibly boar remains are known in excavations, although the details are not plentiful in distinguishing Suidae family bones in burials or sacrificial pits. Pigs (boars?) accompanying deceased members are known in pre-Hongshan Xinglongwa and Zhaobaogou burials in northeast China (see, e.g., **Figure 2**), yet are only occasionally identified in successive Hongshan period burials. Jade art offerings appear to have completely replaced pig offerings in elite burials during the Hongshan cultural period. The domestication of pigs is clear from remains of these animal bones at various late Neolithic northeastern Chinese sites. Pigs had been domesticated since 6000 BCE [1], and in the later historic period, elite burials served as a symbol of prosperity, wealth, and fertility. Strings of wild boar tusks, serving as necklaces, on the other hand, are present in a few Hongshan burials (see [4]), indicating familiarity with the wild species and hunting. It is difficult

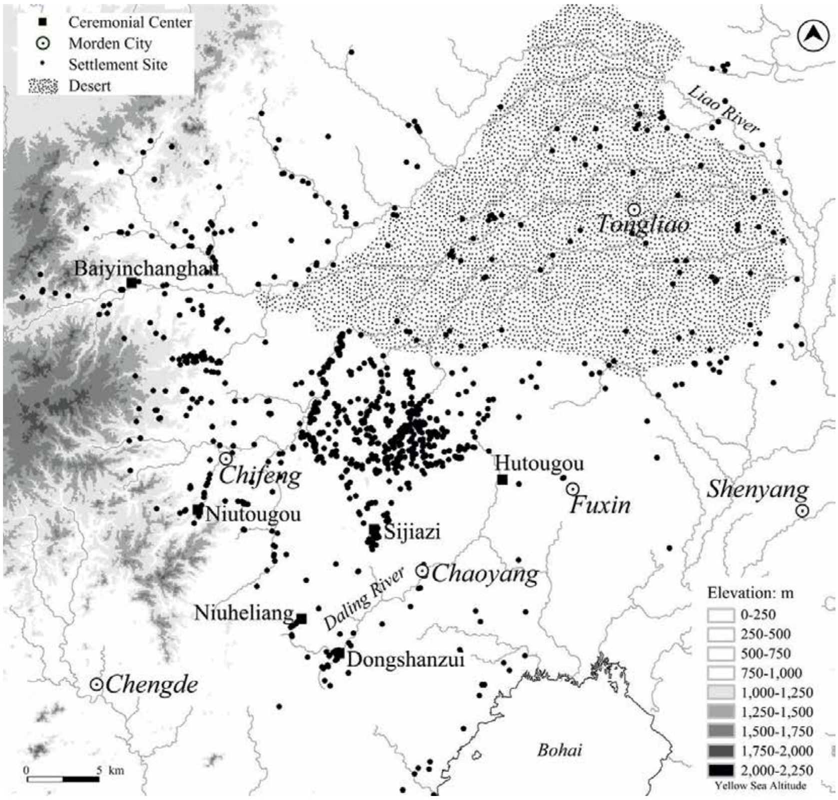


Figure 1.
Distribution map of major Hongshan sites. After Zhang et al. ([2]: Figure 1).

Figure 2.
Burial M118 of a 50-year-old male with two pigs, one female and one male, Xinglongwa Culture, Xinglongwa, and Liaoning. After Shao ([3], p 14).

to speculate how wild pigs or boars were managed before they became domesticated as household members. As will be discussed, the wild boar made a deep impression on the Hongshan people and their successors as an icon of supernatural metamorphic power.

The Hongshan people were not a typical late Neolithic culture. As documented by archaeological finds, the Hongshan was not a chiefdom dominated by a ruler from one major settlement. Rather, the Hongshan people emerged as a late phase of hunter-gatherers championing a complex theocratic system. Archaeologists term the Hongshan as a culture of supra-local communities, with Niuheliang, the largest, a possible pilgrimage center (**Figure 1**) (see the latest analysis of [5–7]). "In non-anthropological terms, Hongshan peoples populated a vast area with sparse distribution and without an integrated political institution. Ritual and ceremonial interests were what allied the Hongshan people" [8].

The question looms: in what ways did the wild boar appear as the preeminent symbol of transformational power during the Hongshan period (ca. 4700–2900 BCE)? The image of the wild boar shows up in major ritual and ceremonial contexts. For example, partial remains of a large-scale ceramic sculpture identify a boar jaw, face, if not, body (see **Figure 3A** and **B**). This image is found within the so-called "Goddess Temple" at Niuheliang. The clay fragments exist alongside other large-scale ceramic sculptures of what can be reconstructed as over-life-size and life-size images of pregnant females (see **Figure 4A**). Pregnant females in clay and in smaller sizes have also been discovered at

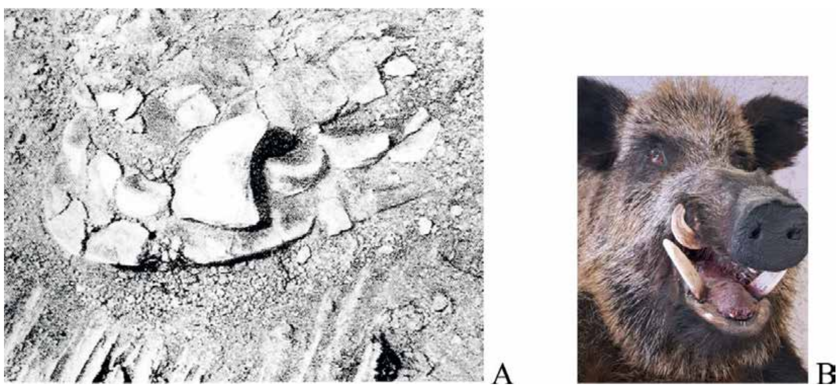


Figure 3.
A. Ceramic sculpture remains of the lower jaw of a boar head with tusks, possibly belonging to the boar dragon, "Goddess Temple," Niuheliang, Liaoning. After China Pictorial *1986.8: 3–4 and Childs-Johnson ([9], p. 90, Figure 18). B. Living boar with double sets of tusks. After https://www.istockphoto.com/search/2/image-film?phrase=wild+boar+head.*

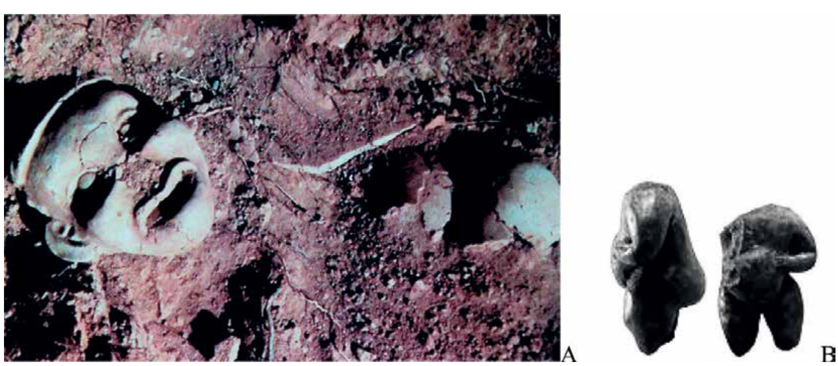


Figure 4.
A. Remains of a life-size head and breast of a female, probably pregnant, wood and straw covered and modeled in clay, mounted and projecting from a wall; 38.82 × 23.02 cm tall and wide. After WW 1986.8, colorpl 1. B. Clay sculpture of a pregnant female, Dongshanzui sacrificial mound, 5.8 cm. After Tian et al. [10]: Figure 7; and WW 1984.11: pl. 2:1, 5.

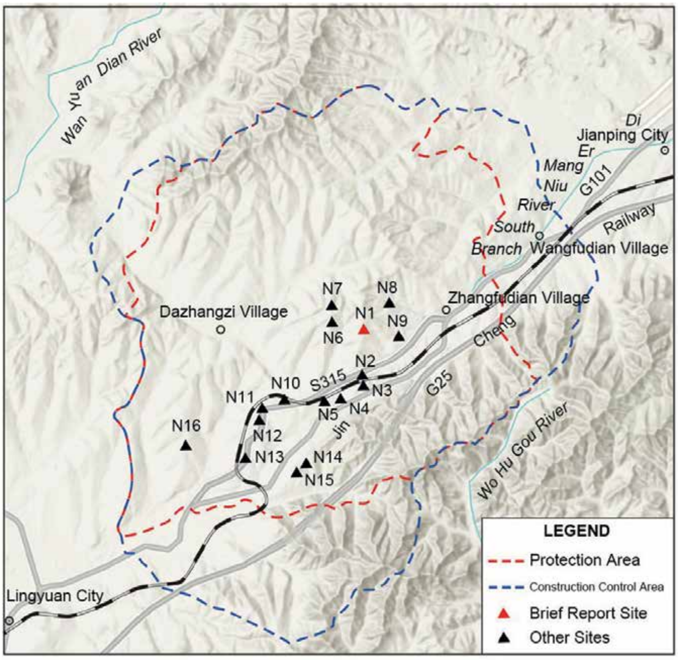


Figure 5.
Map with Chinese cities and ceremonial sites, numbered N1–16 at Niuheliang core, Jianping/Chaoyang, Liaoning. After Jia and Ming (2024). Illustration redesigned with English by Zhenbang Zhang.

other sacrificial sites, primarily on top of elite burial mounds and altars lying beyond Niuheliang (**Figure 4B**). The geographical distribution of the latter sheds light on what may be recognized as fertility worship at Niuheliang and other Hongshan ceremonial settlements (see, e.g., [9]). Since these images are found primarily on top of elite burial

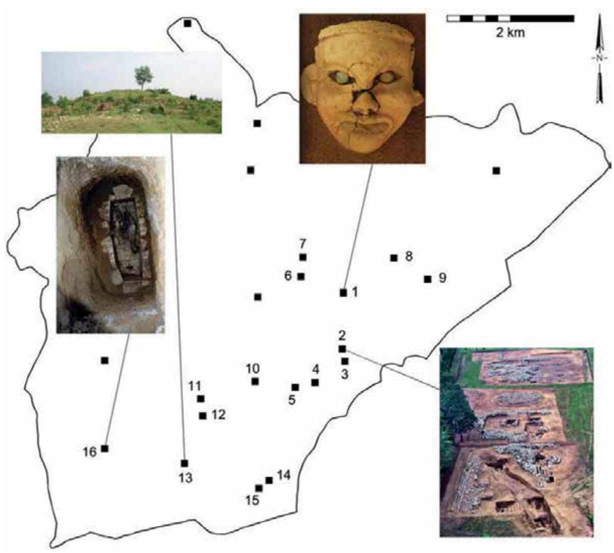


Figure 6.
Map of Niuheliang core zone showing ceremonial centers nos. 1–16. After Drennan et al. ([5], p. 46).

altar sites, their function appears to have been primarily ritual and ceremonial. Ritual also appears to have been the singular objective at the core and central site of Niuheliang. Over 16 large-scale circular and square burials are raised as altars (**Figures 1**, **5** and **6**). These accompany a geographical area not only incorporating the *ya*-shaped "Goddess Temple" but also what has been recently mapped as an extensive platform ending in three further stone-stacked raised altars. The altars take the shape of 品 (**Figure 7**). Niuheliang was the core locale for ritual and ceremony of the Hongshan people.

There are no remains of residential structures at the site of Niuheliang. Residential sites were constructed separately and are distinguished by different, primarily domestic remains (see, e.g., [5, 6]).

Wild boar and pig progeny are directly linked to fertility, but also to control, associated with the transformative power that must have been in the hands of an

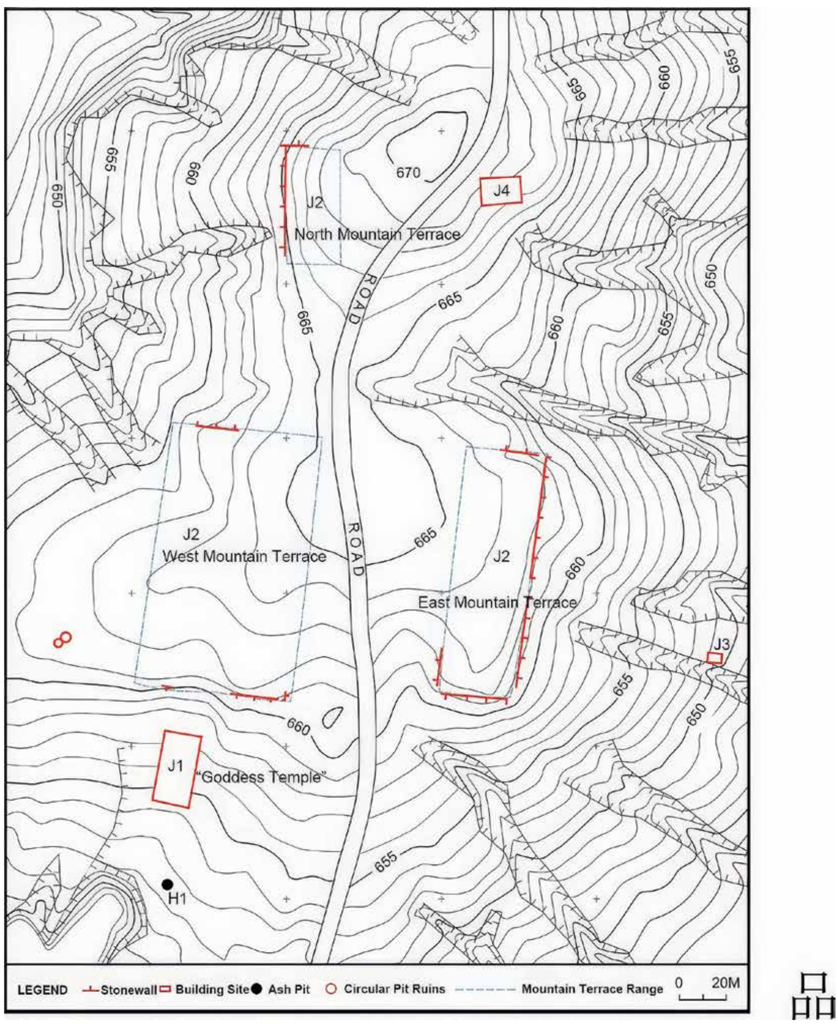


Figure 7.
Ground plan showing the extent of foundation platforms J2 Western Mountain Platform, J2 Eastern Mountain Platform, J2 Northern Mountain Platform, and J1 (Goddess Temple). After Liaoning [11]: Figure 2. Illustration redesigned into English by Zhenbang Zhang. Graphic 3 squares is a hypothetical layout of flanking west and east platforms and rear central ritual platform.

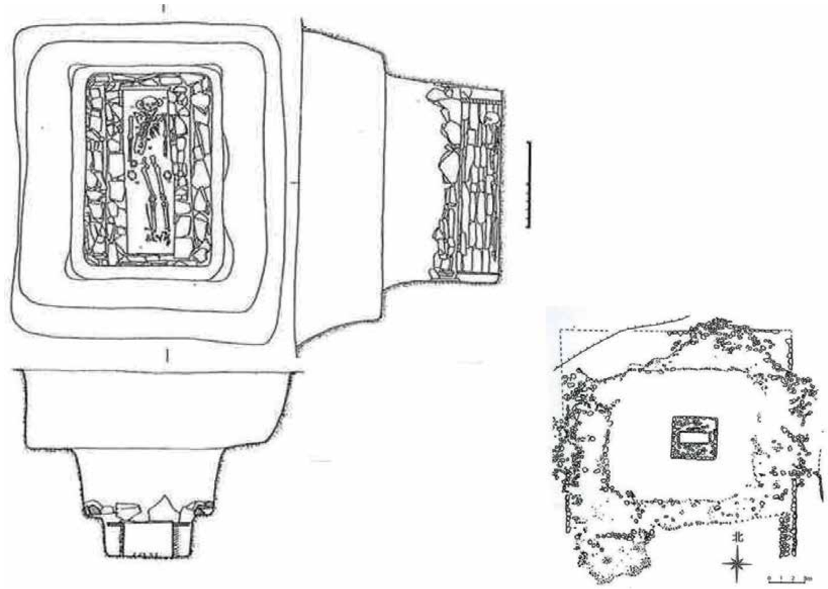


Figure 8.
Big Burial M1, Z2, Niuheliang 2. Stone platform: 3.6 m × 3.6 m. Stone coffin: 2.2 m × 0.85 × 1.4 m deep. Based on Childs-Johnson ([12], p. 303, Figure 7)

elite theocrat or group of theocrats. Large and thick nuggets of boar-shaped "dragons" adorn the chests of many, if not most, elite males buried deep underground at the center of large-scale, stone-packed burial mounds at Niuheliang, as noted above (see **Figure 8**).

2. Boar-headed dragon imagery

The image of boar-headed dragons and related jades reflects potent power, one associated with fertility, as we have seen, and metamorphosis. An example of the boar-headed dragon in jade and a drawing of its imagery are represented in **Figure 9A** and **B**. The attributes of the wild boar head include pairs of tusks, teardrop-shaped nostrils, circular eye sockets, and large, overlapping ears. These simplified and abstracted shapes typify the style of most other Hongshan jade images (see Childs-Johnson [8]). What is remarkable is that this jade sculpture is part boar and part dragon, the latter of which takes the form of a thick, curling body.

As identified elsewhere, this image foreshadows the earliest graph for dragon in the Shang oracle bone script (**Figure 10A**). The form is artistically meaningful and significant since it mimics the shape of a fetus in nature, whether belonging to a human, pig, or boar (**Figure 10B**). A standard definition of fetus is "an offspring of a human or other mammal in the stages of prenatal development that follow the embryo stage." The Hongshan artist and theocrat adviser evidently sought to use nature, and in this case, the wild boar head extended in a fetal form as inspiration for what became established as a symbol of fertility and mythic, supernatural power. Mythic is defined by the combination of natural and constructed forms: the boar head and fetal body shape.

Wild boar imagery extends beyond this one widely represented image in Hongshan art. For example, the same jade boar head appears as an ornament for

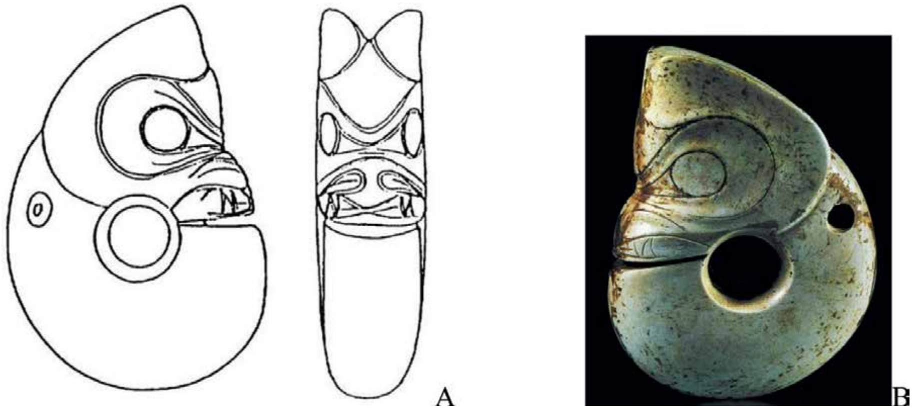


Figure 9.
A. Drawing and image of a boar-headed dragon, H: 15 cm, Jianping, Liaoning, and the Hongshan culture. After WW 1984.6, pl. 2:2; Liaoning Provincial Museum (photo: Childs-Johnson).

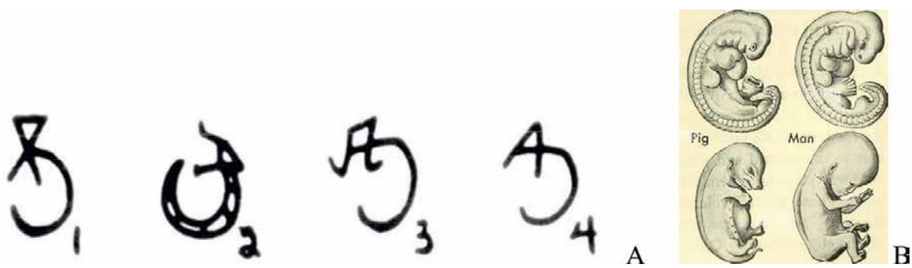


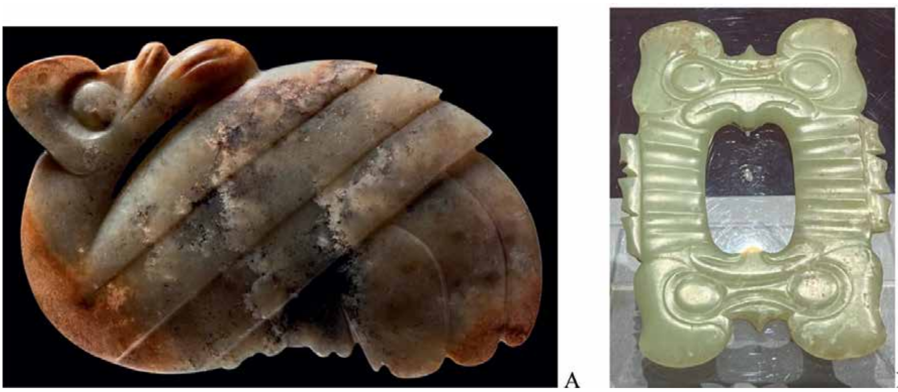
Figure 10.
A. Qiu 虯 *graph in oracle bone script. After Shima 1967: 242.1.4; Childs-Johnson [9], p. 93, Figure 25. B. Drawings of human and pig fetuses. Stock photo, Getty Royalty-free images.*

Figure 11.
Jade boar head attachments, jade boar plaque, rod for suspension, jade boar head staff pommel with inner hole. Hongshan culture, NAEJ Private Collection: NAEM Collection. Photos by Morayama Bechtel.

an attachment (**Figure 11A**), as a rod-shaped handle (**Figure 11B**), and as a two-dimensional type of pommel (**Figure 11C**). Although tusks may be deleted, and eyes or ears simplified, the image of the wild boar stands out for its prominence in these other Hongshan jade works of art.

Two of the most enigmatic images in Hongshan art include large-scale plaques in the form of recumbent birds with wry necks connected to a version of the boar head (**Figure 12**). The boar's head is reverted in resting on the bird's back. The other plaque, designed for attachment, on the other hand, looks more like an owl than a boar head due to a simulated beak rather than a jaw (see **Figure 12B**). The beady eyes and overlapping ears, nonetheless, may refer to an artistic variation of the boar head.

The Hongshan artist renders the boar icon of fertility in one more version (see **Figures 13** and **14**). The latter large plaque is also designed for attachment due to pairs of eyelet holes worked on the back side. Here, in this case, the wild boar icon is frontal, flat, and simplified. A central pair of what look like fangs may reference tusks. Flanking the latter extension below the eyes are what I interpret to be pettitoes



A B

Figure 12.
A. Jade plaque of couchant bird with wry-neck and boar head. 14.4 × 10.8 cm tall. NAEJ Private Collection. B. Flat jade plaque with double heads and a central aperture, measuring 9 × 9.5 cm and 0.6 cm thick, N2Z1 M26 Liaoningsheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo (photo: Childs-Johnson). Posted by Jac July 27, 2015, Asian Art Forums. Shengjie shouzang www.scc.cn.

Figure 13.
Plaque with boar face, boar pads, boar tusks, and framing clouds, 25 in long × 9 1/2 in tall × 0.5in thick. NAEJ Private Collection, Wiesbaden, Germany.

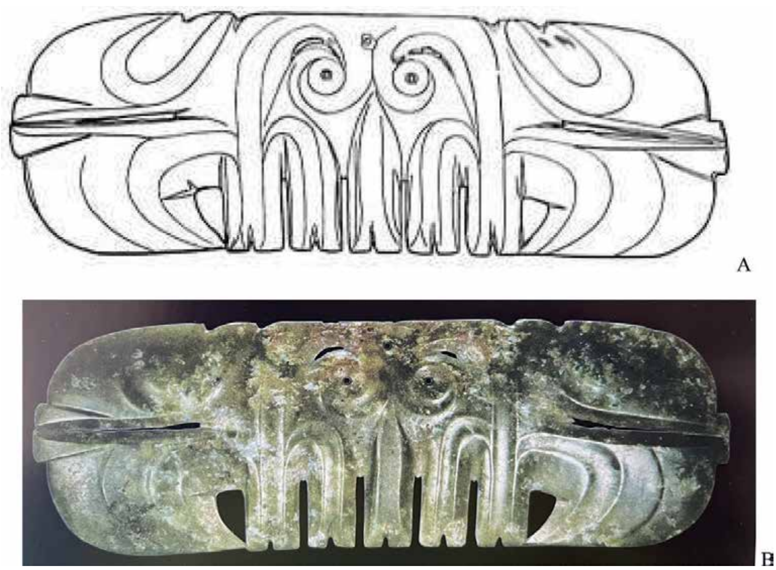


Figure 14.
A. Jade plaque featuring boar face, boar pads, boar tusks, and framing clouds, and a drawing of its imagery. N2Z1 burial M27, Niuheliang, Liaoning, 28.6 cm long, Niuheliang, Chaoyang, Liaoning. After Gu [13].2: colorpl 133.

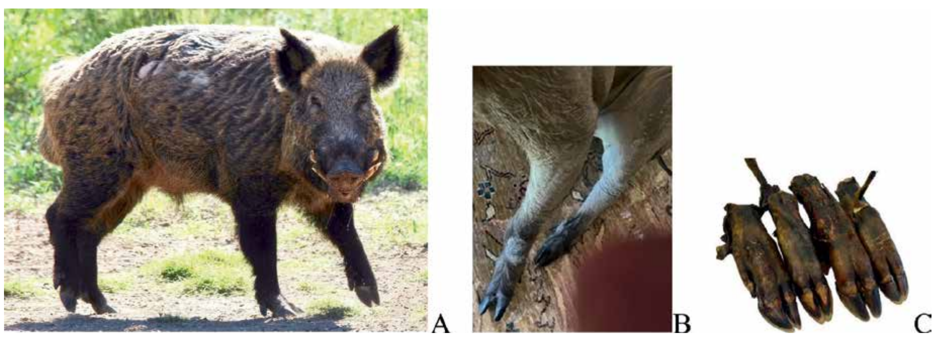


Figure 15.
Feral hog. A. After https://brazos.org/about-us/environmental/species/invasive-species/animals/feral-hogs. B. Photograph of the pettitoes of a hunted wild boar trophy, Namibia, Africa, restored and created by a taxidermist, NAEJ Private Collection. C. Image of wild boar trotters air-dried as a treat for dogs. After https://www.caninecommandoclub.com/wild-boar-trotters.

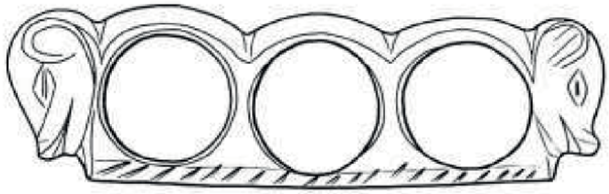


Figure 16.
Drawing of a jade comb ornament with pig heads, 8.9 cm long, Sanguandianzi, Inner Mongolia. After Kaogu *(1986).6: 501, Figure 8.1.*

of the wild boar. Each simulates an extended foot of "boar trotters," shown in images of the living wild boar and its pig trotters (see **Figure 15A**–**C**). Abstract versions of cloud pairs frame the entire image and provide what is a supernatural context for this other image of the mythical fertility icon.

The head of a pig is occasionally reproduced in jade as a simplified yet realistic interpretation of the pig head (see **Figure 16**). The Hongshan artist apparently was gifted not only in creating mythic icons but in creating what may be more naturalistic forms (see Childs-Johnson, [8]). The pig head has no jaw with tusks, which is one important difference between the representations of boar and pig heads in Hongshan period art.

3. The influence of the Hongshan boar on other late Neolithic jade age cultures

The Hongshan artist and theocrat from northeast China plays a significant and influential role during the late Neolithic period. As outlined earlier, there are several pre-Hongshan and Hongshan period artifacts displaying versions of a human face with boar tusks (see **Figure 17A** and **B**).

Although no statistics are yet available to account for the number of wild boar images or evidence of boar bones, the suggestion is that the boar armed with ferocious

Figure 17.
Human faces with tusks, Xinglongwa Culture. A. Small face with tusks, pyrophyllite and shell, 5.8 cm tall, Baiyinchanghan site, Linxi, Inner Mongolia, ICRA, IM. B. Small face with tusks (copy), stone and shell, Baiyinchanghan, Linxi, ICRA, Inner Mongolia. Ca-b. Stone rectangle carved with human face and tusk pairs, 7.8 cm tall × 4.4 cm wide × 2.7 cm thick. Fumengxian, Fuxin, Liaoning, and Liaoningsheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo.

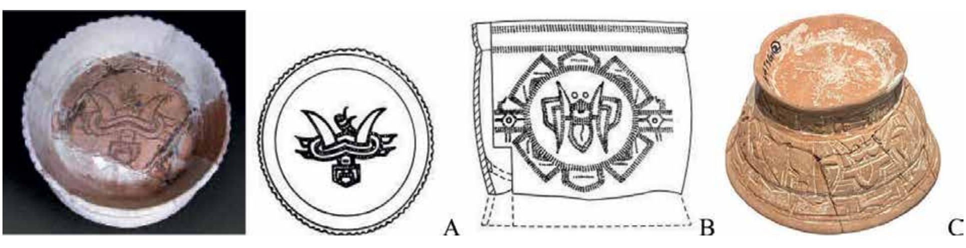


Figure 18.
Facial images with boar tusks from late Neolithic sites. Drawings and images of three ceramics, 05 T15-02 and 91 T2003 from Gaomiao高庙, Hunan, late Neolithic, and one from burial M41:9.3. Tangjiagang 汤家岗, Hunan, late Neolithic, 4300–2300 BCE. After Li ([14], p. 97, Figure 2); Hung and Zhang [15]: Figures 7–8; Hunan Institute ([16]; C) After Lin [17] China Daily *Hong Kong.*

Figure 19.
Liangzhu jade art with attributes of the wild boar dragon head and tusk pairs decorating a three-prong ornament, Liangzhu culture (3300–2250 BCE). After Zhao [18] and https://www.chinadailyhk.com/hk/article/348054.

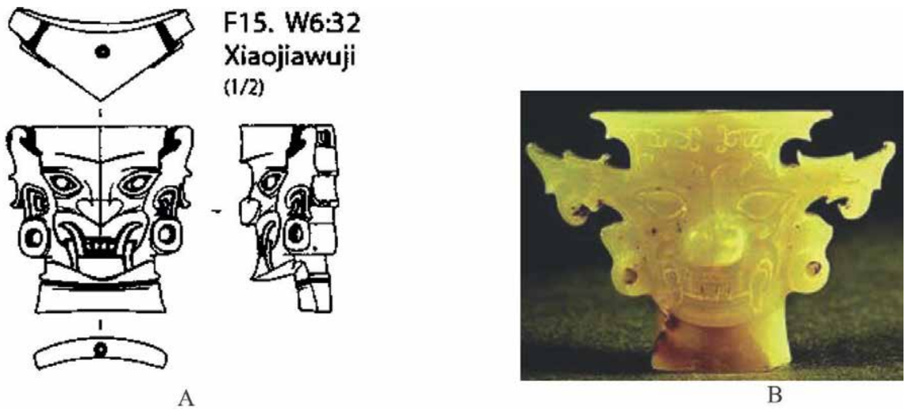


Figure 20.
Longshan (ca 2600–2000 BCE) jade images of semi-human heads with pairs of boar tusks. A. Xiaojiawuji, Shijiahe culture. After Childs-Johnson ([12]: Figure 12). B. Tianmen, Urn burial Tangjialing W9:7, Shijiahe culture (2600–2000 BCE), height 2–3 cm, Hubei Provincial Museum.

tusks was a significant animal that required harnessing and honoring in ritual ceremonies in northeastern pre-Hongshan, Hongshan, and post-Hongshan cultures. The wild boar not only inspired the earliest version of the mythical dragon in Chinese tradition, as noted above, but Sus Scrofa also bequeathed one of its major attributes to metamorphic power images in successive late Neolithic cultures. These overlapping and successive late Neolithic images include the flat and frontal boar jaw and face with prominent tusks from as far south as Gaomiao and Tangjiagang sites in Hunan (4300–2900 BCE) (see, e.g., **Figure 18A-D**). The same characterizes the semi-human mask images decorating Liangzhu culture jades, also far south in Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces (3300–2250 BCE) (**Figure 19**). A similar but slightly different interpretation of the masked semi-human with boar tusks characterizes the last leg of the late Neolithic period known as Longshan at Shijiahe culture sites (2600–2000 BCE) (**Figure 20A** and **B**).

The same characterizes the semi-human mask images decorating Liangzhu culture jades, also located far south in Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces (3300–2250 BCE) (**Figure 19**). A similar but slightly different interpretation of the masked semi-human with boar tusks characterizes the last leg of the late Neolithic period, known as Longshan, at Shijiahe culture sites (2600–2000 BCE) (**Figure 20A** and **B**).

4. Conclusions

In conclusion, it is evident that the wild boar played a significant role as a subject in the metamorphic imagery of ancient China, originating in the Hongshan culture and with influence on other late Neolithic, Jade Age cultures and iconic imagery. The pairs of tusks represented as extending upward and downward, instead of both in an upward direction as on the wild boar in nature, is as much an artistic choice as was the interest of the Hongshan jade theocrat and followers in selecting the wild boar and its most prominent attribute. The wild boar stands out as a unique characteristic of an ancient Chinese icon symbolizing fertility and transformational power of a practicing theocrat leader.

Additional information – Consulted sources

This section lists sources that were consulted during the research process but were not directly cited in the text.

Barnes GL, Guo D. The ritual landscape of 'Boar Mountain' basin: The Niuheliang site complex of northeastern China. World Archaeology. 1996;28(2):209-219. DOI: 10.1080/00438243.1996.9980341

Childs-Johnson E. Dragons, masks, axes and blades from four newly documented jade-working cultures of ancient China. Orientations. 1988;April:30-37

Childs-Johnson E. Jade as a Confucian ideal, immortal cloak, and medium for the metamorphic 'fetal pose'. In: Childs-Johnson E, editor. Enduring Art of Jade Age China. Volume II: Chinese Jades of the Late Neolithic through Han Periods. New York: Throckmorton Fine Art; 2002. pp. 15-24

Childs-Johnson E. The jade age revisited, ca. 3500-2000 BCE, 101-117. In: Childs-Johnson E, editor. The Oxford Handbook of Early China. New York: Oxford University Press; 2020. p. 2020

Ching J. Mysticism and Kingship in China: The Heart of Chinese Wisdom. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1997

Tang C, Tang MH, Liu G, Wen Y. The Neolithic jade revolution in Northeast China. In: Childs-Johnson E, editor. The Oxford Handbook of Early China. New York: Oxford University Press; 2020. pp. 73-100

Cui Yanqin 崔岩勤. Analysis of animal-shaped Jades unearthed from the Hongshan culture site of Niuheliang 牛河梁红山文化遗址出土动物形玉器探析. Journal of Chifeng University 赤峰学院学报. 2017;5(38):1-6

Deng Shuping (Teng Shu-ping) 邓淑苹. Research on hooked-clouds and Fanged Jade ornaments of the Hongshan culture 红山文化勾 _云与带齿类玉饰的研究. In: Fei Xiaotong 费孝通, editor. 玉魂国魄. The Jade Soul and the National Spirit. Beijing: Yanshan Chubanshe; 2002. pp. 109-127

Dong Jie董婕. Hongshan Jades of Niuheliang and an Analysis of Ritual Practice 牛河梁红山文化玉器与礼制文化探析. Li lunjie Hongshan Culture理 论 界红山文化. 2015;7(503):152-156

Forsyth A. Five Chinese jade figures: A study of the development of sculptural form in Hongshan Neolithic jade working. Orientations. 1990;21(5):54-63

Gap Yunyi 高云逸14. Beifudi yizhi chutu yuqide xiangguan wenti yanjiu 背负地遗址出土玉器的相关问题研究. Beifang minzu kaogu. 2014:72-81

Guo D. Hongshan and related cultures. In: Nelson SM, editor. The Archaeology of Northeast China. New York: Routledge; 1995. pp. 21-64

Guo D. The Hongshan culture complex at Niuheliang and the origin of ritual in China. In: Yang X, editor. New Perspectives on China's Past: Chinese Archaeology in the Twentieth Century. New Haven: Yale University Press; 2004. pp. 144-159

Hinsch B. Prehistoric images of women from the North China region: The origins of Chinese goddess worship. Journal of Chinese Religions. 2004;32(1):47-82. DOI: 10.1179/073776904804759978

Hubei Shijiahe. Green Mysteries. (Hubei Info Culture Opening, News). China Daily 2016

Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology 内蒙古自治 区文物考古研究所. Baiyinchanghan: Excavation report of a Neolithic site 白音长汗–新 石器时代遗址发掘报告. Beijing: Kexue Chubanshe; 2004

Inner Mongolian Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology and Research Center for Chinese Frontier Archaeology of Jilin University. The excavation of the Neolithic site at Hamin Mangha in Horqin left middle banner, Inner Mongolia in 2011. Chinese Archaeology. 2014;14:10-17

Jao T-I. Some notes on the pig in early Chinese myths and art. Orientations. 1988;19(12):39-41

Ji Yuqiao, Lou Kang. New discoveries shed light on China's Neolithic Hongshan culture. Global Times; 2023

Jingzhou Museum 荆州博物馆, editor. Jades of the Shijiahe Culture石家河文化玉器. Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe; 2008

Larrivé-Bass S. Embodied materials: The emergence of figural imagery in prehistoric China [PhD dissertation]. New York: Columbia University; 2015

Larrivé-Bass S. Jade for bones in Hongshan craftsmanship: Human anatomy as the genesis of a prehistoric style. ARTS. 2023;12(5):206. DOI: 10.3390/arts12050206

Liaoning provincial institute of archaeology and cultural relics 辽宁省文物考古研究所. In: Niuheliang: Excavation Report on a Hongshan Culture Site (1983–2003) 牛河梁: 红山文化遗址发掘报告 (1983–2003 年度). Beijing: Wenwu Chubanshe; 2012

Liu Shuhui 刘书惠, Gu Ying 谷颖. The symbolic meaning of pig dragon and Female goddess image at Niuheliang猪龙的象征意义兼论牛河梁女神塑像. Journal of Changchun Normal University 长春师范大学学报. 2015;34(7):66-68

Nelson SM. Ritualized pigs and the origins of complex society: Hypotheses regarding the Hongshan culture. Early China. 1995;20:1-16

Nelson SM. Ideology, power, and gender: Emergent complex Society in Northeastern China. In: Nelson SM, Rosen-Ayalon M, editors. Pursuit of Gender: Worldwide Archaeological Approaches. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press; 2002. pp. 73-80

Peterson Christian E. Crafting Hongshan communities? Household archaeology in the Chifeng region of Eastern inner Mongolia, PRC [PhD Dissertation]. Pittsburg: University of Pittsburg; 2006

Reinhart K. Religion, violence, and emotion: Modes of religiosity in the Neolithic and bronze age of northern China. Journal of World Prehistory. 2015;28:113-177

Shelach-Lavi G. The Archaeology of Early China: From Prehistory to the Han Dynasty. New York: Cambridge University Press; 2015. pp. 1-10

Tang Chung 唐聰, editor. East Asian Jade: Symbol of excellence 東亞玉器. Vols. 1-3. The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Centre for Chinese Archaeology and Art; 1998

Tang C, Tang MH, Liu G, Wen Y. The Neolithic Revolution in Northeast China. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, Centre for Chinese Archaeology and Art; 2020

Wang Dongli王冬力. Tracing ancestral worship and primitive religions in Northern China based on the discovery of the head portrait of the Hongshan goddess 从红山女神头像的发现追溯中国北方原始宗教的祖先崇拜. Journal of Hubei Arts Institute湖北美术学院学报. 2020;1:16-23

Wang Fen 王芬, Luan Fengshi栾丰实. Dating and chronology of the stone pile mounds of the Hongshan culture at Niuheliang牛河梁红山文化积石冢的分期和年代. Zhongyuan Wenwu. 2016;4:27-33

Womack A. The Neolithic revolution in the north ca. 7/6000-2000 BCE: Xinglongwa, Xinlei, Yangshao, Hongshan, and related cultures (inequality/social complexity) in Neolithic northern China. In: Childs-Johnson E, editor. The Oxford Handbook of Early China. New York: Oxford University Press; 2020. pp. 15-52

Zhongguo shehui kexueyuan kaogu yanjiusuo neimenggu gongzuodui. Aohanqi Xinglongwa juluo yizhi 1992 nian fajue jianbao (preliminary report of the 1992 season of excavations at the Xinglongwa site, Aohan banner, Inner Mongolia). Kaogu. 1997;1:1-26

Author details

Elizabeth Childs-Johnson
Independent Scholar, Chinese Art History, Archaeology, and Paleography

*Address all correspondence to: echildsjohnson@gmail.com

References

[1] Nelson Sarah M, editor. Ancestors for the pigs: Pigs in prehistory. In: MASCA Research Papers in Science and Archaeology. Vol. 15. 1998

[2] Zhang H, Andrew B, Dashun G. The Neolithic ceremonial complex at Niuheliang and wider Hongshan landscapes in North-Eastern China. Journal of World Prehistory. 2013;**26**(1):1-24

[3] Shao Guotian 邵国田, editor. Aohan Wenhua Jinghua 敖汉文化精华. Chifeng: Neimenggu Wenwu Chubanshe; 2004

[4] Hebeisheng Wenwu Yanjiusuo 河北阳原县姜家梁研究所. Excavation of Neolithic Remains at Jiangjialiang Site in Yangyuanxian, Hebei 河北阳原县姜家梁新时代的遗址的发掘. Kaogu. 2001;**2**:13-27

[5] Drennan RD, Xueming L, Peterson CE. A place of pilgrimage? Niuheliang and its role in Hongshan society. Antiquity. 2017;**91**(355):43-56. DOI: 10.15184/aqy.2016.227

[6] Peterson CE, Xueming L, Drennan RD, Zhu D. Hongshan chiefly communities in Neolithic northeastern China. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America. 2010;**107**(13):5756-5761. DOI: 10.1073/pnas.1000949107

[7] Ran W. Sustaining ritual: Provisioning a Hongshan Pilgrimage Center at Niuheliang [doctoral dissertation]. University of Pittsburgh; 2022. Available from: https://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/42109/

[8] Childs-Johnson E. Lustrous Magic: Hongshan Culture and Jade. Vol. 1. NAEJ Collection. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Publishers; 2025

[9] Childs-Johnson. Jades of the Hongshan culture: The dragon and fertility cult worship. Arts Asiatiques. 1991;**XLVI**:82-95

[10] Tian Guanglin [田广林], Zhou Zheng [周政], Zhou Yujie [周宇杰]. Research on the seated statues of the Hongshan culture [original title: 红山文化人形坐像研究]. Journal of Liaoning Normal University (Social Science Edition) [original title: 辽宁师范大学学报(社会科学版)]. Sep 2015;**38**(5):699-706

[11] Liaoning Provincial Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology [疗宁省文物考古研究所], Cultural Bureau of Chaoyang City [朝阳市文化局]. The Niuheliang Site [original title: 牛河梁遗址]. Beijing: Xueyuan Chubanshe; 2004

[12] Childs-Johnson E. The art of working Jade and the rise of civilization in China. Elizabeth Childs-Johnson 江伊莉_, Gu Fang 古方, editors. 玉器时代: 美国博物馆藏中国早期玉器 Jade Age: Early Chinese Jades in American Museums. Beijing: Science Press; 2009. pp. 291-382

[13] Gu F. The complete collection of unearthed jades in China [中国出土玉器全集]. Vol. 15. Beijing: Science Press; 2020

[14] Li Xinwei 李新伟. New understanding about the meaning of Hongshan Jades 红山文化玉器内涵的新认识. Zhongyuan Wenwu 中原文物. 2021;**1**: 96-104

[15] Zhang C, Hung HC. The neolithic of southern China–Origin, development, and dispersal. Asian Perspectives. Fall 2008;**47**(2):299-329

[16] Institute of Cultural Relics and Archaeology of Hunan Province湖南省考古文物研究所. Preliminary report on

the excavation at Gaomiao, Qianyang, Hunan 湖南黔阳高庙遗址发掘简报. Wenwu. 2000;**4**:4-23

[17] Lin Q. Once upon a time in Liyang. China Daily, Eng ed, Hong Kong. 2025. Available from: https://www.chinadailyhk.com/hk/article/

[18] Zhao Binfu [赵宾福], Bai Yuquan [白玉川]. From settlement to cemetery: Changes in the functions of Niuheliang Site, Hongshan culture in different ages [original title: 从居址到墓地:红山文化牛河梁遗址的时代变迁与功能转变]. Journal of Liaoning Normal University (Social Science Edition). 2016;**39**(2):132-139

Chapter 7

Challenging Disciplinary Knowledge Production in the Global South: The South African Experience

Minga Mbweck Kongo

Abstract

This chapter examines the limitations in social science when black colonised people's experiences are concerned. It seeks to understand why mainstream social science is unable to do much, such that we must disobey and turn to other formulas in order to be able to capture the reality of blacks colonised in South Africa. The chapter further grapples with asking, and perhaps answering, the question of what it would mean to think about the reality and the condition of the black colonised in South Africa outside of mainstream social science. The chapter uses Mignolo's framework to respond to the questions. It argues that the reason for the limitations was, and still is, empiricism, which allows knowledge production of the colonial discourses, and comprises/engages 'tools of education dominance that must be challenged in the context of disobedience, decolonisation/transformation'. The chapter aims to clarify the historical effort to capture the perpetuation of empiricism by institutions reproducing a shared vision of colonial discourses. It also challenges the paradigms and practices that guide and govern disciplinary knowledge production. It draws attention to the links that not only cut across disciplines but were, in fact, responsible for formulating those disciplinary boundaries within the context of the history of Africa since slavery, colonialism and the development of the disciplines that study this continent.

Keywords: disobedience, knowledge, decoloniality, empiricism, pedagogy

1. Introduction

With a history of land conquests, slavery, colonial rule, and apartheid domination, South Africa finds itself ambushed on all fronts and socio-politically disoriented by the lingering influence of colonial powers in the education system. The effects of colonialism and apartheid's divide-and-rule policy, which pitted the coloniser against the African colonised, haunt every effort at reconciliation and reconstruction. Examining such historical undercurrents has become a sacred mandate for African scholars to be aware of the implications of empiricism and knowledge production for the present.

This chapter grapples with asking, and perhaps answering, what it would mean to think about the reality and the condition of the black colonised in South Africa outside of mainstream social science. What limitations occur in social science where black colonised experiences are concerned? Or what is it that mainstream social science is unable to do much about/with such that the colonised have to disobey and turn to other formulas in order to be able to capture the reality of blacks colonised in South Africa?

Epistemic disobedience is employed as a framework to clarify the historical effort to capture the perpetuation of empiricism by institutions that reproduce shared visions of colonial discourses. According to Mignolo [1], a productive voice in decolonial thinking, the Renaissance and European Enlightenment periods represent prosperous times in human history when scientific, creative and intellectual advancements flourished. Colonial dominance during these times casts a shadow over humanity's progress. Mignolo [2] refers to it as the '*Darker side of Western modernity*'. Nevertheless, Mignolo [1] argues it is time to disobey, and people are beginning to see beyond ideas of Western knowledge as the only form of legitimate or 'universal' knowledge.

The term 'epistemic disobedience' was introduced by Mignolo [1], implying the delinking from the misconception of the 'zero point' epistemology. By 'zero point', Mignolo [1] refers to the now untenable impression that the knowing subject knows and undertakes knowledge construction and dissemination from a neutral and disconnected zero point. This, he indicates, does not consider the complexities of geopolitical processes that have shaped epistemological inroads and developments over the past four centuries.

Mignolo [1] also argues that, due to our entanglement, Western society perceives history as unilinear when multiple histories converge at specific points. One convergence point is the period of colonial conquest. History always favours those who 'discover' a place in the dominant/hegemonic unilinear version of history that the matrix of power has legitimated. As Mbembe [3] puts it: 'all struggles have become struggles of representation'. Certainly, 'Rhodes Must Fall' is evidence of the yearning and need for symbolic and political representation and for students to find relevance and validity in the curriculum, as per Nyamnjoh [4].

Using Mignolo's [1] concept, the chapter argues that the main reason for the limitations of social sciences was, and still is, empiricism. These allow knowledge production of the colonial discourses in Africa/South Africa that thrived during the colonial settlement, which are tools of educational dominance. They must be challenged in the context of decolonisation/transformation. Empiricism, here, represents something larger: this chapter will demonstrate the need to think outside mainstream social science to be able to write about the reality and experience of the black colonised. The chapter illustrates how paradigms and practices that guide and govern disciplinary knowledge production are being challenged. Furthermore, it suggests the need to examine these paradigms through the complex relationship between power and knowledge within the context of African history since slavery, colonialism and the development of the disciplines that study the African continent.

Nyamnjoh [5] argues that colonialism emphasises the worldview of the coloniser over that of the colonised. Therefore, the mainstream social sciences in South Africa are influenced mainly by European epistemologies (Nyamnjoh [5]; Ndlovu-Gatsheni [6]). Samir Amin terms this ontological positioning as 'Eurocentrism' (Amin [7]). Critical thinking that emerged from other parts of the global South has emphasised that, while the historical period of colonialism might be over, coloniality – the fundamental hierarchising logic which places people and knowledge into a classificatory framework such that colonised ontologies are invalidated – continues to hold sway (Mignolo [2]).

2. Disobedience through #RhodesMustFall

South Africa has a long history of student protests in higher education. With the collapse of apartheid in 1994, it was necessary to merge university structures previously divided along racial lines (Hendricks [8]). In 2014, black academics brought the caucus discourse to the public through media articles and letters to the editor from disgruntled black academics teaching a cohort of students focused on black consciousness in the Faculty of Humanities.

The continued inequalities at the historically white universities have been acutely felt by black South Africans since 1994, after which there were only expectations of equality. Students argue that they were still studying *Canterbury Tales* in English literature rather than African literature, which, if it was taught, was not considered mainstream literature. Furthermore, when African literature was studied, it was through the lens of South African white literature (James Coetzee [9] and Nadine Gordimer [10]). This was already two decades after the establishment of democracy under a black government in South Africa.

In March 2015, South Africa experienced the disruption caused by the Rhodes statue at the University of Cape Town (UCT). The statue was defaced by students and later removed from its plinth. The removal of the statue, driven by student protests, was motivated by a determination to confront the challenging history faced by black people and the relation to curricula in the Humanities, a faculty which has been a subject of contestation over knowledge and power for decades (Nyamnjoh [4]; Morreira [11]). Hendricks [8] argues that previously white students had access to better resources, more extensive programmes and more skilled lecturers than their black counterparts.

The #RhodesMustFall (#RMF) movement has highlighted many of the material contradictions and the ongoing nature of apartheid and its legacies in public discourse in very convincing ways, effectively challenging the production of knowledge (Nyamnjoh [4]). This was the largest student protest movement the country had witnessed in higher education since 1994. This revolutionary moment became popularly dubbed by the media as the historic 'class of 2015'. It largely represented a black South African struggle regarding class, intergenerational trauma, and the unresolved issues stemming from the end of apartheid (which did not truly conclude for black South Africans).

In the past decades, Mahmood Mamdani [12] advised that student movements in post-apartheid South Africa are demanding recognition of differences set in historical, socio-economic injustices that have been ineffectively addressed. Furthermore, he contends that a political shift from common citizenship towards recognition of differences is a crisis that has ended colonial rule (Mamdani [13]). The 2015 #RhodesMustFall movement should be contextualised within that enduring tradition, as archived in the work of Badat [14].

Nyamnjoh [15] asserts that universities have been thrust into a cycle of compromise with 'the outside', including the Western world. These concerns and the value of 'the outside' are visible in the mimicry of powerful actors, dichotomies in knowledge production, the construction of the 'other', and the maintenance and promotion of the status quo. Nyamjoh's [15] argument derives from an impoverished reality where the convivial uniqueness of African creativity and intellectual perspective is devalued and delegitimised.

Attention is drawn to the links between colonialism and the formation of disciplines, between imperialism and language studies. The links not only cut across disciplines but were, in fact, responsible for formulating those disciplinary boundaries in the first place. The need to go beyond mainstream social sciences is not peculiar to South Africans. Other traditional or geographically cultural places of knowledge production are somewhat similar to the experience, particularly of the Caribbean. The experience of the former slaves of the whole community of the Caribbean is extremely similar to the South African experience of colonisation.

Drawing from the Caribbean experience, this chapter demonstrates how the Caribbean has exited from mainstream social science and how, within South Africa, there exists a tradition of writing and thinking that is not recognised within mainstream social science. It exists but is hardly heard of.

3. The foundation of empiricism

Empiricism has been and remains a catalyst within the social sciences. Its argument was that if natural sciences can adduce concrete empirical evidence for their claims, in order for the social sciences also to claim to be scientific, they should also be able to adduce concrete evidence as in the case of the natural sciences. This concrete evidence is referred to as 'empirical evidence' or 'positively identified evidence'. Empiricism refers to what you can apprehend with your senses, meaning what appeals to the five senses. Empiricism was regarded as the only source of knowledge because it is apprehended through sensory states and can be completely identified. As a result of the influence of the American academy, empiricism, over time, came to be closely identified with statistics. When scholars, academia and researchers state that they are doing empirical work, one finds the deployment or the use of statistical evidence somewhere in that work.

The supposition of the American academy remains prevalent today. It encompasses virtually every aspect of social science studies represented through statistics. Therefore, it becomes challenging to produce a PhD in an American academy (outside of philosophy and literature) in every other discipline in social sciences and not include statistics as part of the PhD. When one pursues what is called comprehensive education in the USA, they will have to study statistics because it is emphasised as a cornerstone of empiricism. The empirical data is virtually reducible to statistics. This arguably was and still is a characteristic feature of South African social sciences. Therefore, one of the limitations of social science in South Africa and across the globe is that, if one writes in the traditions of mainstream social sciences, empiricism is given a privileged status, even though it is unable to capture the reality (lived experience). Especially the lived experience of the black colonised.

The chapter provides several illustrations that reflect on land dispossession in South Africa which enables disobedience to understand empiricism. Forced removals are where a demonstrable claim can be made. A demonstrable claim for an individual is: 'I lived here, and I was forcibly removed, and I must adduce evidence for it'. Therefore, anything other than these two categories is impossible to address. Resultantly, land restitution in South Africa requires proof of dispossession beyond a reasonable doubt. Colonialism is a project based on the assumption that there are lesser humans whose land can be taken by settlers with no natural claim over it. That land is implicitly entwined in the fact that they are a superior people and culture. Throughout history, colonialism has always been accompanied by dispossession. Otherwise, colonialism would not be possible if the dispossession of the colonised were not part of it.

Thus, what happens when one writes off the moral and ethical basis of the coloniser's ownership of land in South Africa? Why is it suddenly possible for settlers never to be short of land, and the reverse to be true for the black colonised? Empiricism does not allow for that consideration. There is a specific thing that is more important. How does one address the anguish that my people endured when they were dispossessed of their land? With what empirical impartiality can we talk about that?

Nyamnjoh argues that mainstream social sciences have allowed colonial epistemology to privilege an ahistorical mode of thinking about Africa, which 'sacrifices pluriversity for university' (Nyamnjoh [15]). This maintains that colonial power and the colonised, who enter the university with different mindsets or with different social capital that falls outside its paradigm, are positioned as the other (Moreira [11]), whether or not they are provided with epistemic access to the university. Therefore, there is an urgency within academic development work, and within the disciplines more broadly, to transform. It is not just the need to provide epistemic access to disciplinary viewpoints but also to shift the terms of how knowledge is produced, such that they create a space for a more comprehensive epistemological range.

What kind of empirical evidence will enable one to talk about that reality? The reality of those who were dispossessed of land? How does one become a part of those who were dispossessed of land empirically, since one does not have any evidence to prove they were indeed forcibly moved from their land?

The consequences of the colonial and apartheid legacies of Western canonical knowledge have affected the education system at the expense of knowledge production and propagation that embraces multiple ways of knowing. Therefore, it only benefits the West and perpetuates the 'Western way of knowing', allowing one to conclude that there is a dominant or better way of knowing (Mignolo [1] xii in Morreira [11]). A one-dimensional approach to knowledge is problematic because it loses its holistic perspective, not to mention the loss of equally valuable forms of knowledge from the colonised.

This chapter also points out that if one belongs to a people who were dispossessed, they were not only dispossessed of their land. Their culture was destroyed; languages were robbed of the possibility of flourishing. So, there is a sudden pain that the colonised everywhere feel. How does one write about it academically, addressing the pain the colonised feel as people whose cultures are destroyed? How does one write about all those experiences of dispossession by cultural imperialism in empirical social science? There is something which means mainstream social science cannot capture the anguish of the black colonised.

The logical conclusion to all this is to ask what the history of apartheid and colonialism in South Africa would look like if they were written by, and thought about, the positionality of the black colonised. To reach that point, we must first juxtapose the South African experience with that of black Americans. In her analysis of the subaltern, Gayatri Spivak refers to this as 'epistemic violence', in which the colonised are constituted as 'other' (Ashcroft et al. [16]). Hence, knowledge produced by the colonised falls outside mainstream social sciences in favour of validated empiricism. Frantz Fanon and Steve Biko also drew attention to the destructive exercise of power on the colonised. Biko [17] asserted that it had 'disfigured' the African past and came close to 'destroying' the African imagination (Biko [17]). Therefore, in creating the perception of an 'other', the development and evolution of the Western canon of knowledge have promoted and valorised certain forms of knowledge and devalued others (Nyamnjoh [15]).

4. Disobedience in the Caribbean context

Borrowing from black radical thought from America, one can argue that, if one traces it back to its beginning, it reveals something that significantly preceded most of it. Most prominent radical thinkers who write theoretically are very recent. The early pioneers of black radical thought all took the path of various genres: they wrote either biographies, autobiographies or other literary works. The simple reason is that a large part of the black population in America did not belong to any family. These people had been enslaved with no brother, sister, or grandmother. They did not have a family history as we know it today. So, they had to begin forming a new community.

Most likely, an enslaved family would have been separated somehow: either one of them would have been sold further away, or the master would have decided to dispense with them. Therefore, these are people who did not have a community as we have it today. They had no sense of community, which makes it as recent for black Americans as 1804, post-slavery in the Northern states. But it did not end in the South at the same time. It ended in earnest when it was abolished on paper with the ratification of the 13th Amendment in 1863.

Therefore, for most black Americans, the so-called family can only be traced to that period when the mother and father of those children were freed. It means that to write about the experiences of black Americans, they had to turn to something other than knowledge as it had come out of mainstream social science. Thus, if one hears closely about black radical thought, the people who provide foundations for it are scholars and people who wrote their biographies, for instance, Frederick Douglass and Maya Angelou. Douglass wrote his slave memoirs, a canonical text on black radical thought.

The foundational text of black radical thought, therefore, comprises biographies and autobiographies; the only means by which black Americans could articulate their reality. Maya Angelou, a pioneer in that field, is closely linked to black solidarity. She recounts how enslaved people on the journey to their destination, known as the Middle Passage, lived in the ship's hold: males and females together. They were crammed into limited space with no facilities for washing or voiding their waste, which meant they would endure those conditions for months. Empirically, how does one write about such an experience? If one has been confined for months in a dungeon, unable to clean oneself, with males and females in the same space, what would one say empirically about it? There were 200 to 600 people on board, but something else that cannot be empirically reduced transpired among them.

Maya Angelou [18, 19] argues, 'They were male and female, and all lived in the ship's dungeon. There was not enough space for all of them to sleep. So they devised the mechanism of coping while they would lie down on their backs on top of each other; something further happened because there were women who did not have the privilege of attending their menstrual cycle; we lay in each other's menstrual blood'. Drawing from Maya's quote, how does one write about this lived experience of being colonised in an empirical fashion? Thus, black Americans turned to literature, poetry and novels to articulate their experiences, as this was the only way they could do so.

The same is true for the South African experience, as black Africans' knowledge often lies outside traditional political boundaries. Modern science can only function with people politically within their boundaries, but black people were not recognised as humans, so they lie outside the boundaries of humanity. How does one write about that experience?

5. Disobedience during apartheid

Disobedience means different things to different people. For anthropologists from the global South, it arguably holds special importance, as it offers (or should offer) tools outside the hegemonic lines of disciplinary connection.

In South Africa, there exists a long-standing tradition of writing about the conditions of the black colonised, yet this tradition is being pushed out of the mainstream social sciences. Although there are numerous texts, only two examples will be used to illustrate these traditions of epistemic disobedience. One example is an autobiography by Bloke Modisane, *Blame me on history*, published in 1968. Modisane [20] employs his life to exemplify what being black signifies in South Africa. He also discusses dispossession. One of the narratives of forced removals, as we understand it today, recounts how about 60,000 inhabitants were relocated from Sophiatown, resulting in families being disrupted due to their new classifications, some as coloured and others as black (Sullivan [21]; G'sell [22]). This is the well-known tale of forced removals, but Modisane expresses dispossession in Sophiatown as follows: 'Something in me died; a piece of me died with the dying of Sophiatown'.

Modisane [20] argues that something in him died; a piece of him died along with Sophiatown. This signifies that the impact of forced removals on many others was not merely physical displacement from their places of birth. They were deprived of something more: the memories of childhood and the experiences of growing up in a community. All that displacement is irreversible, and this is not the experience of just one or two individuals. This is the reality for numerous black people who were forcibly removed from their homes. Therefore, if we are to rewrite the narrative of apartheid in South Africa, it can never be complete, as we must reflect upon that which died in Modisane with the demise of Sophiatown. What exactly perished in Sophiatown within Modisane? The answer will provide a much fuller restoration of those colonised.

The second text illustrating disobedience is by Ellen Kuzwayo. She had been incarcerated for 5 months, enduring solitary confinement throughout that time. Kuzwayo [23] indicates that 'It is not easy to live and to bring up children in a community deprived of its traditional moral code and values. A community lost between its old heritage and heart of its coloniser'.

Now, here, of course, there is a mother but also someone who lived through colonialism. It destabilised not just people's physical communities but also destroyed the culture in which they raise their children. she argues that it is difficult to bring up children in a community deprived of its traditional moral code. This loss of culture and moral code is not empirical. Therefore, one must find a way to write about it, whether through literature or biographies. Reference has been made to the fact that colonised people were deprived of their culture, so how does one approach a dispossessed community and empirically document the loss of its culture? There is something else that needs to be done. We must draw on other resources to write about that loss; a loss that is not material but one of sentiment, emotions, and intangible symbolic resources that people lost as a result of colonialism. The loss of culture, or the loss inflicted by colonialism, was not merely a material loss. It represented something greater; for Kuzwayo [23], part of what symbolises this loss is that people must raise their children in a context where they can no longer access the cultural resources they once had to nurture their upbringing.

Now, to exemplify what this means in present-day South Africa. Many children in South Africa no longer speak their indigenous languages because they attend predominantly white schools. This is what Kuzwayo [23] refers to when she states that people must raise their children in a context where the community has lost its cultural values that were once prevalent. Kuzwayo's [23] statement can be better understood when considering Fonlon's [24] assessment. Fonlon [24] indicates that colonialism was a fundamentally violent system that 'repressed where it should have fostered, tamed instead of inspired and enervated rather than strengthened' (Fonlon [24] in Nyamnjoh [15]). Therefore, it becomes evident that colonisation has not only obstructed the lived experiences of the colonised, but also their cultural structures, socio-political processes and how they perceive each other, their development, their ideologies, and the natural evolution of their knowledge.

So instead of writing history in the way it is traditionally recorded, they chose what they refer to as updating memory. They aim to refresh their recollection of their experiences. If you approach it this way, seeking to update memory solely through disciplinary procedures and expectations, you will end up with indistinct images. However, memory can be updated in various ways: through artistic works, films, novels, and other forms of representation, not merely mainstream social science.

So, if it is indeed correct that imperialism restricts how we can talk intelligently about lived experiences, it means that in South Africa, we must look elsewhere to discuss the black colonised. Therefore, supposing we were to write the history of apartheid exclusively from these texts, what would it look like? It would clearly appear different from what it is today, because we would no longer focus on the statistics of how many people were dispossessed, but rather on the pain people felt. We would be concerned about the collective trauma experienced today as a result of denuded cultures and languages, along with social customs that no longer exist. Those are the aspects that would concern us. If you study history, there is something called historiography, a method of writing history that places great importance on dates and events.

When Ngugi wa Thiong'o [25] speaks of 'decolonising the mind', he refers to how colonialism has stripped the colonised of subjectivity and dignity, effectively unmaking the subject. This unmaking of the subject serves as another perspective of the colonised other, who is perceived as having lost dignity and, consequently, the genocide of the subject.

6. Entanglement in knowledge production

Drawing from Moreira [11], this chapter further recognises the deep entanglements in knowledge production that exist in post-colonial Africa, as opposed to promoting only certain types of knowledge or delineating distinctions between 'Western' and 'African' knowledge. This latter position reproduces colonial dichotomies and does not recognise the significant contributions that African scholars have made to what is commonly considered 'Western knowledge' (Nyamnjoh [5]).

Mudimbe [26] examined various discourses about Africa, founded on theological foundations, and suggests that knowledge about Africa is produced through the perpetuation of systems and categories based on Western thought. Mudimbe [26] interrogates bodies of knowledge using the concept of Africanism as an alternative philosophy. It is defined as the belief that black Africans and their culture should predominate in Africa. Thus, his method of resisting Western discourse involves inserting African theoretical perspectives. Mudimbe [26] also states that the production of knowledge over time through the Western epistemological order is problematic. He argues that, even when we use African language and ideas as a new model for analysing and understanding the world, we are still influenced by the West. It is evident that despite attempts to change how discourses are created, the manufactured frameworks remain constrained by a non-African epistemological locus.

A significant contribution that disrupted African discourse, history, and development (economic/political) is colonialism. Mudimbe [26] states that 'it signified a new historical form and the possibility of radically new types of discourses on African traditions and culture' (Mudimbe [26]). Mudimbe [26] discusses three hypotheses of colonialism. It manifests in the domination of physical space, the transformation of the African mind and the integration of local economic histories into the Western perspective (Mudimbe [26]). He introduces the idea of a colonising structure and proposes that this particular structure has left an imprint on ideologies and theory.

Two critiques emerge from colonialism and how it can act as another factor that influences knowledge production. The first point of debate suggests that colonialism itself was not consistently realised over time to justify any sweeping assertions, nor were its objectives sufficiently coherent to achieve any particular outcome (Mudimbe [26]). Proponents of colonialism might argue that it was a historical accident. The other debate centres on the notion that colonialism should have produced a corpus of knowledge on exploiting dependencies, and it should also have developed a kind of empirical technique for implementing structural distortions (Mudimbe [26]).

Mazrui [27], on the other hand, emphasises that the coexistence of 'imperialist' ideology, economic and political processes for extending control over African space, and capitalist institutions ultimately led to dependence and underdevelopment (Mazrui [27]). This suggests that the colonial period influenced the functioning of development, and that, leading into the post-colonial period, efforts are still being made to address these effects. This is because economic, social, or political development is consistently measured against Western standards. There is a perpetual expectation of progress, and if one does not adhere to these values, one is considered backwards.

In the context of knowledge production during the nineteenth century and the first quarter of the twentieth century, discourses were generally characterised by functionalism and naturalism. Epistemological ethnocentrism is the belief that, scientifically, there is nothing to be learnt from 'them', unless it is already 'ours' or comes from you (Mudimbe [26]). When things are understood solely in terms of truth, fact, and objectivity, it leaves little room for fluidity within discourses and analysis. Consequently, at the centre of human and social sciences, there is now a pronounced desire to radically interrogate the space of knowledge and the foundation of discourses that express it (Mudimbe [26]).

In the 1950s, a new phenomenon emerged concerning ideological activity related to African identity. This brought about new standards for the collectivisation and democratisation of historical reason and reformulated residual questions regarding ideological power and scientific reason (Mudimbe [26]). Three initiatives were established to recapture the entirety of the African experience, including the integration of Islamic sources and imaginations into the 'newly expanded library', the creation of a corpus of traditional texts, and a critical renewal of anthropological authority (Mudimbe [26]). However, despite this significant shift, many contradictions arose. Although Africanism serves as a perfect conceptual framework, establishing an authentic African identity proves challenging. It also raises numerous questions about developing new epistemologies: how do we find new methods when we have become so accustomed to Western ways of knowing?

Mazrui [27] raises the point that Africa could be defined as a product of its interactions with other civilisations. He questions Mudimbe's [26] idea of the invention of Africa and Said's concept of Orientalism. Although Mazrui [27] does not present a definitive argument, he critiques how African identity is formed. He explains the external conceptualisation of Africa across specific historical timelines. One of the most significant phases was the third phase, which saw expansion later consolidated by the effect of Europe (Mazrui [27]). For him, the fact that Islamisation in Africa awakened Black consciousness without promoting Black inferiority is best illustrated by the fortunes of classical Timbuktu (Mazrui [27]). The examples he provides demonstrate his influence from his earlier scholarly work focusing on African and Islamic studies. Mazrui [27] notes that one of the great ironies of modern African history is that it took European colonialism to awaken Africans to their true identity. Mazrui calls the positive version 'Invention of Africa' (Mazrui [27]).

In critique of the notion of Africa's positive invention, the invasion by colonialism, as noted by Mudimbe [26], had a far more significant impact. It initiated new forms of false memories and perceptions that illustrate how Africa is projected to the outside world. Prior to contact with the European continent, one school of African thought emphasised that Africa indeed possessed its complex civilisations, the kind that Europeans regarded as valid and essential. However, while we have extensively focused on the colonial period and are now looking towards the post-colonial era, there is insufficient evidence to substantiate the true complexities of pre-colonial societies.

Mafeje [28] aimed to transform perspectives on Africa and the existing epistemologies, particularly the concept of alterity, which is defined as the state of being the other or different. This approach emerged because the dominant viewpoint has predominantly been Eurocentric, influencing his perspective on the West and leading him to dismiss race and biology as significant social agents, viewing them instead as mechanisms for othering. Many of his arguments are rooted in this idea. In his critique of anthropology, he suggests that particular nations and specific classes promote modes of thought at different times. During the nineteenth century, positivism and functionalism were central to explaining theories and methods of understanding.

Meanwhile, scientific utilitarianism shaped American society, whereas in Britain and France, bourgeois society focused on functionalist approaches and scientific racism. Mafeje [28] contended that intellectual efforts served colonialism, not due to crude assumptions of direct conspiracy or collusion, but mainly because of prevailing thought categories (Mafeje [28]).

Mafeje [28] focuses on the debates among various types of anthropologists. On one side are older anthropologists who still employ functionalist methods and mechanisms of otherness. On the other side, a radical shift has occurred with newer anthropologists seeking to transform the historical narratives associated with the discipline. He approaches anthropology in at least two ways: one concerning ontological discourses and the other defining it as a historical field (Adesina [29]). Nevertheless, he maintains that anthropology is primarily orientated towards studying the 'other', and practitioners frequently write from an outsider's perspective (Adesina [29]). This chapter posits that anthropology is inherently challenging to navigate, and there is, in essence, no definitive way to observe and write ethnographies. The anthropologist will perpetually remain an outsider, and it is up to them to determine how they wish to conduct their fieldwork. Bias will always exist, remaining subjective; however, some of these barriers can be overcome through participant observation.

Functionalism has previously served as the starting point for understanding theories. However, it seems that functionalism also manifested in imperialism. Consequently, attention shifted to how African societies functioned in their production and political structures. Discrimination and difference were outcomes of imperialism. Its consequences were particularly severe during the colonial period; however, it intensified when Europeans sought to instil their Western economic and political systems upon African societies that were fluid at the time. He also argues that Europe's sole generator of modernity and capitalism leads to ontological and epistemological shortcomings.

Mafeje [28] proposed the idea of creating an independent continent that moves away from Eurocentric ways of knowledge production, suggesting that Africa's failure stems from the continent not being its own guide and that it perpetuates modernist perspectives. Mafeje's [28] rejection of epistemology is rooted in the establishment of a branch of philosophy that examines the nature of knowledge, its presuppositions and foundations, as well as its validity (Adesina [28]). He articulates two crucial theories: endogeneity and Afrocentrism. Mafeje [28] employs the concept of endogeneity, which is grounded in and driven by the affirmation of African experiences and an ontological accounting for the self (Adesina [29]). One way he resists alterity is through the ideology of 'Tribalism', which again seeks to centre the African self-knowing (Adesina [29]).

Moreover, Afrocentrism represents a legitimate demand for African scholars to study their societies from within and to cease being purveyors of alienated intellectual discourse (Adesina [29]). Mafeje asserts that when Africans speak for and about themselves, it must be authentic. 'If we are adequately Afrocentric the international implications will not be lost on the others' (Adesina [29]). Mafeje [28] helps us understand that African state capitalism did not emerge from existing African structures. The response to, and product of, colonialism relates to the arguments of Mudimbe [26] and Mazrui [27]. The dual economy theory illustrates the conflict between Western and African ideas and their desire to resist each other. It posits that two types of economies exist within the same region. Another way to define it is to propose two sectors in underdeveloped countries governed by different economic laws (Mafeje [28]). The first is the traditional one based on surplus labour, whereas the other is more modern and capitalistic. The introduction of capitalist production preceded the specific socio-economic formations that are now in competition or conflict (Mafeje [28]).

Aside from their economic intrusion, certain standards and requirements were established in accordance with traditional systems. For Mafeje [28], social division plays a significant role in shaping societal norms, reinforcing the ideology of capitalism. He continues to argue that this type of division solely benefits imperial countries. It creates an institutional framework that ensures a ready supply of cheap, unskilled labour for foreign capital (Mafeje [28]). This suggests that within the capitalist system itself, there exists an uneven rate of exploitation of labour by capital (Mafeje [28]).

7. Incompleteness, convivial scholarship in relation to critical pedagogy

The concept of incompleteness is deeply rooted in mathematical reasoning, introduced by Kurt Gödel in the 1930s. Gödel's incompleteness hypotheses concerned the limits of demonstrability in formal axiomatic theories. This showed that any logical system to describe mathematics must contain accurate statements that cannot be proven within the system. This means there are always limitations to what we can understand and know, even in hard science and precise fields, such as mathematics. Nyamnjoh [5] explains incompleteness from the vantage point of understanding humanity and social science. He argues that incompleteness can be applied in any field. Everything is incomplete without encounters or relationships (Nyamnjoh [5]). Incompleteness is a feature of life and a theoretical antidote to colonial epistemologies (Nyamnjoh [5]). Nyamnjoh illustrates how incompleteness provides space for conviviality, which is activated as a tool for survival through encounters (Nyamnjoh [5]).

According to Nyamnjoh [5], conviviality is the idea of living together in a friendly and harmonious manner. This can be applied to different aspects of life, such as in scholarship, family, community, or society. Conviviality is also about creating a sense of connection, belonging, and tolerance, where everyone is valued and respected regardless of status and differences. Conviviality is also about finding common ground and working together to achieve shared goals, even with different perspectives and ideas (Nyamnjoh [5]).

In the past, critical pedagogy was associated with Paulo Freire's seminal work, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1970). For Freire, an essential part of concretisation permitted the colonised to rethink the relationship with the coloniser by removing the hierarchy between teacher and student, thereby breaking out of the coloniser's hold on the education system. Freire's [30] technique was applied in the 80s in South Africa, challenging an apartheid education system (Kallaway [31]). Freire has been criticised for not being able to provide a powerful method that can be replicated for critical pedagogy. However, Freire's [30] theory has been the foundation for open dialogue and for bringing scholars' lived experiences into knowledge production to decolonise the curriculum. In South Africa, in the 80s, the People's Education Movement (Kallaway [32]; Harley [33]) used Freireian approaches to make education and literacy accessible.

Primarily, critical pedagogy was used to try and bring marginalised and oppressed people into the classroom as a way of resisting apartheid and its domination (Kallaway [32]; Harley [33]). However, the People's Education Movement was lost with the advent of democracy, and worker education was obscured by neoliberal ideologies (Harley [33]).

Critical pedagogy and decolonisation can be viewed as challenging the old way of doing things through the acknowledgement of lived experiences of scholars that recognises differences: who is being taught, what they are being taught, and by whom. Subsequently, with more accessibility to information through technology, some more self-taught scholars suggest shifting the education system and learning direction. Therefore, in the South African (SA) context, research on critical pedagogy is required to consider these developments.

Moreover, Giroux [34] supports critical pedagogy and suggests a focus on the relationship between power and knowledge. The power/knowledge nexus highlights the conventional learning model and shows why breaking out of the dependency created by the conventional model is essential. Furthermore, Tony Monchinski [35] comments on the US education system, suggesting that hierarchy should be abolished from the classroom space, implying that critical pedagogy should respond to the continuous changes in both local and global contexts. In the global north, critics of Freire's [30] method of critical pedagogy accuse Freire [30] of being obscure and vague without an identifiable oppressor (colonialism), making the reader the oppressor (Knudson, Rafferty, Egerton). However, for these pessimists, without an identifiable oppressor or coloniser, there still lacks a criticality of historical systems of oppression such as slavery and capitalism, which perpetuate blind spots around critical pedagogy. Therefore, critical pedagogical scholarship is understood as praxis, 'reflection and action to transform the world' (Freire [30]), whilst Giroux emphasises the need to deconstruct the power/knowledge nexus.

This framework for critical pedagogy can then be tested to see if it complements the process of decolonising the curriculum. The importance of building new ways of thinking and reflecting (power/knowledge nexus) that challenge beliefs and hegemonic societal positions to bring about necessary changes in epistemological explorations (Badat [14]). Therefore, theoretical positions are not a given but are deconstructed and evaluated through a critical lens to develop a reflexive methodology (Badat [14]). Furthermore, in this way, it is possible to shift language to reflect new possibilities for change. 'The process of construction thus demands something to construct (out there, so long as we are not talking about pure objects of fantasy), a constructing subject (the researcher) and a social context that constructs the researcher (society, language, paradigms, the local research community). Simply put, reflexivity, in the research context, means paying attention to these aspects without letting any one of them dominate' (Badat [14]).

In Ngugi wa Thiong's [25] statement, 'decolonising the mind[1] before decolonising the space', Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni [38] argues that 'one of the continuing struggles in Africa is focused on resisting the objectification and dehumanisation of black people on a world scale.' Ndlovu-Gatsheni's [38] understanding of decolonisation aligns with Freire's [30] interpretation of oppression and the relationship between coloniser and colonised. 'Making ourselves subjects' hooks [39] needs to reverse the social and psychological effects of colonisation.

South African scholar Crain Soudien [40] argues that South Africans need to extend their imagination to notions of intersubjectivity, language being a unifier and identity regarded as a form of celebration of difference. A common language is crucial for celebrating differences (Nyamnjoh [5]). However, creating space for more languages and new understandings of how people speak and think is crucial. Soudien's work complements Mamdani's and that of feminist psycholanalyst, and [41], in that it builds into the notion of sameness and difference whilst relating to Freire's [30] understandings of praxis as a basis for critical pedagogy in an intercultural society.

For instance, many South African academics never broke into the South African academy because mainstream South African journals would not publish their writings. These individuals were published by what we call the alternative press. The mainstream could not accommodate this knowledge.

Nyamnjoh [5] critically analyses the African epistemology and contends that Africa has been a victim of 'epistemicide'. Educational institutions within Africa have been subjected to conceding mainly to already legitimised changes of knowledge. Furthermore, Nyamnjoh [5] argues that the main methods that legitimise and validate new knowledge are social; these include peer review within the disciplines, publication and editorial networks and professional associations linked to the academy. These social networks, their values and codes of practice are fundamental to the

[1] Ngugi [36] and Lacan [37] argued that through language, we come into being so that the coloniser's language shapes our perceptions and affects our sense of self. Therefore, it is crucial to decolonise our minds to tackle decolonisation in other spheres.

14 social processes of advancing and validating both knowledge and curricula (Moore and Young in Moore).

Much of South Africa's current political discourse about transforming the curriculum is synonymous with 'decolonising the curriculum'. However, some discrete boundaries within this discourse set the dichotomies between 'African knowledge' and 'Western knowledge' (Nyamnjoh [5]). It is crucially central to acknowledge that these boundaries do not exist in how they are constructed. While Western concepts and modes of thinking have certainly been privileged, this has, in turn, led to the repression of non-Western discourses (Said [42]).

The #RMF movement challenges academics' power in defining what and how knowledge should be taught in the Humanities. Nyamnjoh [5] demonstrates academics' centrality in recommending curriculum change. He argues that the change in curriculum provides ways of discriminating between what is essential and what is not.

He recommends Edward Said's contrapuntal analysis to acquire and analyse knowledge effectively. A contrapuntal pedagogy, he highlights, accounts for the perspectives of both the colonised and the coloniser, their intertwined histories and their discursive entanglements – without necessarily harmonising them or attending to one while erasing the other (Nyamnjoh [5]). This demonstrates how intellectuals are 'mediators of knowledge' and how they have the power to influence the recontextualisation and transmission of knowledge. The Humanities curriculum is, therefore, a disputed space where the complex interactions between multiple players, ways of knowing and histories blend and where we see the 'convivial scholarship' (Nyamnjoh [5]).

8. Conclusion

This chapter engages with the question of what it means to consider the lived experience of black colonised individuals in South Africa beyond the conventions of mainstream social science. The questions posed provide a potent antidote to a logocentric, concept- or text-based tradition. They also facilitate the development of the conceptual and theoretical foundation already established. Their implications are significant for rethinking colonialism and Western rationalism within a specifically African context.

Furthermore, the chapter discusses epistemic disobedience developed by Mignolo [1] as a framework for resisting European ideology and considers an alternative approach to writing, learning, and thinking that challenges knowledge production. The chapter presents various examples and oppositional moments drawn from the Caribbean and South Africa's recent history. It starts with a few instances that explore the knowledge production of an anti-colonial revolution. It illustrates the enduring Western dominance over Africa, which often remains invisible to Africans even in the post-colonial era, due to the architecture of a world rooted in a capitalist system that lies at the core of the Western world. This idea suggests that Africa can think, produce, and write differently while also being distinct: constructing the self and a given lifeworld along distinctly divergent lines. By embracing incompleteness, one becomes capable of moderating the complex interactions of conflicting social forces for the ends of inclusivity, which may be the antidote to the extant dysfunctionality of our society. Exploring these boundaries would bring several propositions into the discourse. To begin with, no one should claim the monopoly of knowledge. This is the sense that incompleteness is better embraced in terms of its centrifugal forces.

Author details

Minga Mbweck Kongo
University of Cape Town, South Africa

*Address all correspondence to: minga.kongo@uct.ac.za

References

[1] Mignolo WD. "Epistemic disobedience and the decolonial option": A manifesto. Transmodernity. 2011;**1**(2):3-23

[2] Mignolo WD. The Darker Side of Western Modernity. Global Futures, Decolonial Options. Durham, NC: Duke University Press; 2012

[3] Mbembe A. Ways of seeing: Beyond the new nativism. Introduction. African Studies Review. 2001;**44**(2):1-14

[4] Nyamnjoh FB. #RhodesMustFall: Nibbling at Resilient Colonialism in South Africa. Mankon: Langaa RPCIG; 2016

[5] Nyamnjoh FB. Incompleteness Mobility and Conviviality: Ad. E. Jensen Memorial Lectures 2023 Frobenius-Institut Goethe-University. African Books Collective. Cameroon: Langaa Research & Publishing Cig; 2023

[6] Ndlovu-Gatsheni S. Empire, Global Coloniality and African Subjectivity. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books; 2013

[7] Amin S. Eurocentrism. New York: Monthly Review Press; 1989

[8] Hendricks C. Decolonising universities in South Africa: Rigged spaces? International Journal of African Renaissance Studies-Multi, Inter-and Transdisciplinarity. 2018;13(1):16-38

[9] Coetzee JM. Age of Iron. Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin; 1990

[10] Gordimer N. The House Gun. London: Bloomsbury; 1998

[11] Morreira S. Steps towards decolonial higher education in southern Africa? Epistemic disobedience in the humanities. Journal of Asian and African Studies. 2017;**52**(3):287-301

[12] Mamdani M. Teaching Africa at the post-apartheid University of Cape Town: A critical view of the introduction to Africa' core course in the social science and humanities faculty's foundation semester. Social Dynamics. 1998;**24**(2):1-32

[13] Mamdani M. Identity and national governance. In: Wisner B, Toulmin C, Chitiga R, editors. Towards a New Map of Africa. Abingdon, Oxfordshire, UK: Routledge; 2012. pp. 265-279

[14] Badat S. Deciphering the meanings, and explaining the South African higher education student protests of 2015-16. Pax Academica. 2016;**1**(1):71-106

[15] Nyamnjoh FB. "Potted plants in greenhouses": A critical reflection on the resilience of colonial education in Africa. Journal of Asian and African Studies. 2012;**47**(2):129-154

[16] Ashcroft B, Griffiths G, Tiffin H, editors. The Postcolonial Studies Reader. London: Routledge; 1995

[17] Biko S. Black consciousness and the quest for a true humanity. Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies. 1978;**8**(3). DOI: 10.5070/F783017354

[18] Angelou M. And still I rise. Random House; 1978

[19] Angelou M. The Complete Collected Poems of Maya Angelou. NY: Random House; 1994

[20] Modisane B. Blame me on History. Johannesburg: Donker; 1986

[21] Sullivan C. Nelson Mandela and the soul of Sophiatown. 2013. Available from: http://sabotagetimes.com/people/nelson-mandela-and-the-soul-of-sophiatown/ [Accessed: July 17, 2022]

[22] G'sell B. Reworking Citizenship: Race, Gender, and Kinship in South Africa. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press; 2024

[23] Kuzwayo E. Call me Woman. Johannesburg, Gauteng, South Africa: Pan Macmillan South Africa; 2018

[24] Fonlon F. Idea of culture I. ABBIA: Cameroon Cultural Review. 1965;**11**:5-29

[25] Thiong'o NW. Decolonising the mind. Présence Africaine. 2018;**197**:99-102

[26] Mudimbe VY. The Invention of Africa. Bloomington: Indiana University Press; 1988

[27] Mazrui AA. The re-invention of Africa: Edward Said, VY Mudimbe, and beyond. Research in African Literatures. 2005;**36**(2):68-82

[28] Mafeje A. Science, Ideology and Development: Three Essays on Development Theory. Uppsala, Sweden: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet; 1978

[29] Adesina JO. Archie Mafeje and the pursuit of endogeny: Against alterity and extroversion. Africa Development. 2008;**33**(4):133-152

[30] Freire P. Pedagogy of the Oppressed. New York, NY: Continuum Publishing; 1970

[31] Kallaway P. The Changing Face of Colonial Education in Africa: Education, Science and Development. Abingdon, Oxfordshire, UK: Routledge; 2020

[32] Kallaway P. Knowledge for the people: Understanding the complex heritage of colonial education in South Africa. Yesterday and Today. 2022;**28**(1):44-81

[33] Harley AA. Post-schooling people's education. Education as Change. 2015;**19**(2):58-81

[34] Giroux HA. On Critical Pedagogy. London: Bloomsbury Publishing; 2020

[35] Monchinski T, Monchinski T. Critical Pedagogy in the Everyday Classroom. Netherlands: Springer; 2008. pp. 115-139

[36] Currey J, Ngũgĩ wa T. Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature. 1986

[37] Lacan, Jacques. Écrits. A Selection (A. Sheridan, Trans.). London: Tavistock; 1977

[38] Ndlovu-Gatsheni SJ. Decoloniality in Africa: A continuing search for a new world order. Australasian Review of African Studies. 2015;**36**(2):22-50

[39] hooks B. Writing beyond Race: Living Theory and Practice. New York: Routledge; 2013

[40] Soudien C. South Africa: The struggle for social justice and citizenship in South African education. In: Peterson A, editor. The Palgrave International Handbook of Education for Citizenship and Social Justice. London: Palgrave Macmillan; 2016. pp. 571-591

[41] Flax M. Strategies for enhancing teaching excellence: Providing real-world examples and building rapport. New Vistas. 2023;**9**(1):1-10

[42] Said EW. Orientalism. New York: Pantheon Books; 1978

Chapter 8

If Anthropology Is Not Ethnography, Then What Is It?

Jack David Eller

Abstract

Almost two decades ago, Tim Ingold declared that anthropology is not ethnography, in one of the latest moments of anthropological soul-searching. His comments have spawned an industry of anthropological response, positive and negative; interestingly, they were contemporaneous with other reformulations of the discipline along more philosophical lines (e.g., ontological, phenomenological, or existential anthropology). This chapter explores the implications of separating the anthropological enterprise from the ethnographic one, providing an opportunity to reflect on the long history of anthropology, a century or more before Boas and Malinowski transformed it into an empirical activity, wedding anthropology and ethnography. The chapter argues that, indeed, anthropology and ethnography have always been two distinct undertakings—ethnography originally done by amateurs for practical reasons, anthropology initially focused on biological and racial questions before cultural ones—and that, even at the height of ethnographic anthropology, anthropologists had other, more-than-ethnographic interests. Finally, the chapter attempts to sort out the jumbled terminology of fieldwork, participant observation, ethnography, ethnology, and anthropology and contribute to the development of not a post-ethnographic but a supra-ethnographic anthropology.

Keywords: anthropology, ethnography, ethnology, fieldwork, participant observation, Tim Ingold

1. Introduction

It is just over a century since Bronislaw Malinowski's seminal 1922 *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, and just under a century since Franz Boas' equally classic 1928 *Anthropology and Modern Life* [1, 2]. These two books helped settle the identity—or rather, we should say the *identities*—of anthropology as an ethnographic science and an applied/engaged science, respectively. Since those formative days, anthropology has donned and shed identities more than once, in a continuous (and relatively abject) history of self-criticism and reinvention.

The most recent of these calls for reinvention came with Tim Ingold's assertion that anthropology is not ethnography, which surprised and disconcerted some practitioners of the discipline [3]. He is, of course, not the first to take this position, as he openly admits and as we will explore below. At even a cursory glance, he is self-evidently correct, if only because anthropologists are not the only scholars who do ethnography and because ethnography is not the only thing that anthropologists do. Furthermore, in the four-field version embraced by the current volume, at least two of the four (archaeology and biological/physical anthropology) are not particularly ethnographic. Finally, if we take the etymologies of the two terms seriously—*anthropos + logos*, the study of humanity, versus *ethnos + grapho*, writing about a people, nation, or folk—the difference is more apparent. Thus, the two nouns are not synonymous.

Ingold left us with some provocative but general suggestions on what anthropology distinct from or beyond ethnography is, can be, or should be. This chapter seeks to more fully realize that project, the project of anthropology's future, which demands that we revisit anthropology's past to (re)discover what anthropology was *before* it became so closely identified with/as ethnography and how it became so—if the claim or accusation is even entirely valid. This mission allows us to survey the rich but contentious history of anthropology, which is a fitting project for a volume that examines and celebrates but also interrogates the achievements and status of the discipline in the twenty-first century.

2. Ingold's critique of anthropology as ethnography

In his 2008 essay "Anthropology is *Not* Ethnography" and in a series of subsequent writings, Ingold shatters the largely taken-for-granted connection between the two, which are traditionally linked by a third, namely, participant observation. In common parlance, and in standard practice, ethnography is what anthropologists *do* or, perhaps better yet, ethnography is what we *produce* as a result of our research activities. "The object of ethnography," he writes, "is to describe the lives of people other than ourselves, with an accuracy and sensitivity honed by detailed observation and prolonged first-hand experience"; in contrast, anthropology's objective "is to seek a generous, comparative, but nevertheless critical understanding of human being and knowing in the one world we all inhabit" ([3], p. 69). For this reason, he contends that ethnography is not the method or output of anthropology but instead that they "are endeavors of quite different kinds."

About ethnography, Ingold argues that it is in fact not a method but "a practice in its own right," which entails various methods (some research-related, some interpretive, some literary), specifically "a practice of verbal description" ([3], p. 88). As a practice in its own right, it is surely something that (at least some) anthropologists do, but it is far from "a means to the end of anthropology," which is a much more capacious undertaking. Anthropology, as a separate practice, is "an inquiry into the conditions and possibilities of human life in the world" and certainly not merely the composition of ethnographies or, worse yet, "the study of how to write ethnography" ([3], p. 89). As such, it is not a study *of* people but a study *with* people, one that precisely "opens our eyes and minds to other possibilities of being" and so approaches the deepest questions "of what it means to be a human being or a person, of moral conduct and the balance of freedom and constraint in people's relations with others," and such ([3], p. 82). He concludes, therefore, that anthropology is much more akin to philosophy in asking the big questions; in fact, anthropology "can do it better thanks to its embedding in our observational engagements with the world and in our collaboration and correspondences with its inhabitants" ([3], p. 90). (Ingold has, I think, been misunderstood as insisting that we "correspond" with our interlocutors in the sense of agreeing with them or sharing like minds, when it is apparent that he means "correspond" in the sense of verbal or written back-and-forth, like the exchange of letters or messages.)

In a follow-up essay, Ingold posits that anthropology is "philosophy with the people in," which again differentiates it from both ethnography and participant observation ([4], p. 393). Here, he extends his critique of ethnography and what he calls *ethnographicness*, in which real-life interpersonal encounters and correspondences are treated as, or frozen or objectified into, "data." This allows him to introduce two other cherished terms from anthropology—fieldwork and participant observation. He emphasizes and endorses that anthropological knowledge (and, even more so, anthropological *skill*) grows from fieldwork and participant observation, or what he calls "the crucible of lives lived with others" ([4], p. 387). But this encounter, this correspondence, as he previously dubbed it, is not "ethnographic" as such; it becomes ethnographic, or achieves ethnographicness, in retrospect, when we convert our memories and field notes "into material—sometimes spun quasi-scientifically as 'data'—upon which you subsequently hope to draw in the project of offering an account" ([4], p. 386).

Ingold resists this objectification and datafication of the lived encounter in the field, which is less grist for ethnographic writing than an "education" for the anthropologist. In fact, he explicitly opines that "there are good grounds for substituting the word 'education' for 'ethnography' as the most fundamental purpose of anthropology," that is, to see anthropology "as a *practice* of education" ([4], p. 388). Participant observation is how the anthropologist undergoes this education; it is a practice "that calls upon the novice anthropologist to *attend*: to attend to what others are doing or saying and to what is going on around and about; to follow along where others go and to do their bidding," and thereby to open oneself to the "becomings" of others and self ([4], p. 389). The one thing that exasperates him is the recent (since the 1980s) obsession with the craft of writing itself; he declares himself "sick and tired" of "the conceit that turns the project of anthropology into the study of its own ways of working" ([4], p. 383), especially the fretting and navel-gazing about the process of turning the fieldwork encounter into anthropological knowledge and that knowledge into textual form. Ethnography, in the sense of "a craft of writing," is not even quite a method in its own right in his eyes and certainly not one that can be "applied in the service of some greater end," namely, the anthropological end. Rather, he concludes, "Ethnography is not a prelude to anthropology, as fieldwork to writing up. If anything, it is the other way around. The ethnographer writes up; the anthropologist—a correspondent observer at large—does his or her thinking in the world" ([4], p. 391).

He returns to the subject one more time in a 2017 essay, "Anthropology contra Ethnography." Here, we get clear definitions: anthropology "is a generous, open-ended, comparative, and yet critical inquiry into the conditions and possibilities of human life in the one world we all inhabit," whereas ethnography is about "render[ing] an account—in writing, film, or other graphic media—of life as it is actually lived and experienced by a people, somewhere, sometime" ([5], pp. 21–2). He clarifies that he is not opposed to ethnography, so long as we recognize it as "an end in itself" and "not a means to anthropological ends." Similarly, reiterating his earlier point, participant observation is to be understood as "an anthropological way of working, not a method of ethnographic data collection," making the essence of anthropology "not so much ethnographic as educational" ([5], p. 21).

Furthermore, the importance of participant observation resides not in being "a technique for data gathering but an ontological commitment," specifically a commitment to living and studying *with* others; it is "a way of learning" and thus a process of education and transformation ([5], p. 23). His analogy is school, where we take classes with teachers and masters: "We do so in order that we may grow in wisdom and maturity, in our powers of observation, reason, and critical thinking, in the hope and expectation that we can bring these powers to bear on whatever problems we may tackle in the future" ([5], p. 23). This ultimately returns him to philosophy, now that anthropology has been rediscovered as "fundamentally a speculative discipline," one "akin to philosophy" but also open to and collaborating with art, archaeology, history, and all the social sciences and humanities.

3. Radcliffe-Brown's and Leach's critique of anthropology as ethnography

Ingold's original 2008 essay refers liberally to Radcliffe-Brown, even at one point calling itself a "defense" of the ancestor, which is unsurprising and entirely fitting as the occasion for the paper was the 2007 Radcliffe-Brown Lecture. To be sure, Radcliffe-Brown voiced some of the same objections to anthropology as ethnography more than half a century earlier but in a distinctly different register.

In an essay originally published in 1923, the year after the publication of his ethnography *The Andaman Islanders*, which was coincidentally the same year of Malinowski's grand ethnography, Radcliffe-Brown noted the inconsistent usage of the terms "ethnology" and "anthropology." Invoking a division between two methods—the "historical" or particularizing and the "inductive" or generalizing—that would inform all of his future work, he characterized ethnology as "the study of culture by the method of historical reconstruction" in contrast to anthropology as "the study that seeks to formulate the general laws that underlie the phenomena of culture" ([6], p. 8). As the "study of 'peoples,'" ethnology describes and classifies particular (usually "primitive") groups, but, he subsequently wrote, anthropology uses this information "to establish valid and significant generalizations about social phenomena," which makes it "a kind of sociology" ([6], p. 138). Because of this unequal hierarchy, he reckoned that anthropology could function without ethnology but not vice versa, a claim we will assess below.

In his famous 1940 paper "On Social Structure," he took the stronger stance that anthropology is "a branch of natural science," specifically "the theoretical science of human society, that is, the investigation of social phenomena by methods essentially similar to those used in the physical and biological sciences," rendering it "comparative sociology" ([7], pp. 1–2). Since social phenomena are merely a type of natural phenomena, then ethnographies constitute "the intensive study of single societies," which is only the prelude to the task of anthropology, which is again "the systematic comparison of many societies"; in other words, the first order of business is to acquire knowledge about "the varieties, or diversities" of social systems through "field research" ([7], p. 5). Therefore, the work of ethnology precedes that of anthropology, which makes it difficult to accept that anthropology could advance without ethnology.

His thoughts on the topic continued to develop and crystallize throughout his life, culminating in two pieces in the early 1950s. In the introduction to his 1952 *Structure and Function in Primitive Society*, he proposed the distinction between "idiographic" and "nomothetic" inquiry, equivalent to his previous historical versus inductive methods. The former strives for "factual propositions or statements," in this case regarding society, compared to the latter's goal of "general propositions" or, dare we say, laws ([8], p. 1). Ethnography, obviously, qualifies as idiographic, since its mission is "to give acceptable accounts of [primitive or backward peoples] and their social life" ([8], p. 2). Anthropology differs in being a "theoretical" rather than descriptive discipline and, therefore, by his account, a branch of comparative sociology. To be more precise, anthropologists are not ultimately interested in particular societies or cultures but in what he dubs "social process." Perhaps his 1951 Huxley Lecture on the comparative method is his clearest and strongest statement on the topic. There, after again defining anthropology (or comparative sociology) as "the theoretical study of human social phenomena," he bemoaned the fact that, partly under the influence of Boas, the discipline had come to concentrate on "the reconstruction of history" or what he considered the idiographic project of ethnology, to the exclusion of "the study of discoverable regularities in the development of human society insofar as these can be illustrated or demonstrated by the study of primitive peoples" ([9], p. 54). This had led to "a relative neglect" of the comparative or nomothetic method, which had become pejoratively associated with "armchair" or library anthropology. Resisting the tide of the profession, he advocated a combination of field/descriptive and armchair/theoretical methods, with a definite division of labor: ethnology should be "the historical [i.e., particular and idiographic] study of primitive societies," freeing anthropology for the "systematic comparison" of those societies, for the purpose of elucidating "a general, or preferably a universal, tendency in human societies" ([9], p. 68).

If Radcliffe-Brown was critical of the abandonment of generalizing anthropology in favor of particularizing ethnology, his contemporary, Edmund Leach, was passionately opposed to it. In his 1961 *Rethinking Anthropology*, he orated on page one that, "Most of my colleagues are giving up the attempt to make comparative generalizations; instead they have begun to write impeccably detailed historical ethnographies of particular peoples" ([10], p. 1). Leach blamed much of the "strength of the empirical bias" on Malinowski, but surprisingly, he did not adopt Radcliffe-Brown's attitude toward comparison. Indeed, he explicitly expressed his "dislike" for his peer's approach, which he contrasted with true and meaningful generalization: comparison, he gesticulated, "is a matter of butterfly collecting—of classification, of the arrangement of things according to their types and subtypes. The followers of Radcliffe-Brown are anthropological butterfly collectors and their approach to their data has certain consequences" ([10], p. 2).

For Leach, then, Radcliffe-Brown's allegedly nomothetic method was not generalizing at all but merely amounted to arranging societies into types and subtypes, which Leach judged as tautological. True and meaningful generalizing, in his view, was muscularly nomothetic in the sense of deriving "mathematical patterns" and "possible general laws." Revealingly, Leach confessed that he was trained as an engineer, which may have influenced his anthropological thinking. At any rate, what he mainly warned against was imposing our own cultural and linguistic assumptions on our ethnographic data: ethnographic facts, he ruled, are better understood "if we approach them free of *all* such *a priori* assumptions" (a message that ontological anthropologists would echo decades later), and "If you feel you must start with assumptions then let them be logical (that is mathematical) assumptions" ([10], p. 27).

4. Anthropology before ethnography, ethnography before anthropology

From this brief survey, we can see that the project to separate anthropology from ethnography long predates Ingold, reaching back—even before the 1950s—at least to Radcliffe-Brown's earliest work a century ago. Moreover, scholars of the highest caliber have taken conflicting and sometimes idiosyncratic positions on the question, with little substantial agreement other than that at least two different things are going on, and that, of those things, anthropology is the grander and more ambitious. However, in actuality, the problem of anthropology versus ethnography extends back much further, arguably another century before Malinowski, Boas, and young Radcliffe-Brown. Through this history, we can observe anthropologists grappling for self-definition, while anthropology and ethnography follow relatively independent and occasionally competitive courses.

The understandable and perhaps inevitable split between anthropology and ethnography reflects the actual dualism of human nature. This was recognized by the great philosopher Immanuel Kant, who broached the subject in his 1798 *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*. Arising from his years of lecturing on the subject, he taught that a formal discipline of humankind would necessarily follow two dimensions, because humans themselves were dual—at once a physiological study of humans as biological beings like all others and a "pragmatic" or practical (in the surprisingly modern sense of "practice") study of humans as free, non-biologically determined beings who make themselves and their social relations through their particular, local practices, or what we now call culture.

4.1 Ethnography without anthropology

Long before there was any such concept as anthropology, there were thinkers and travelers doing "ethnography," if by that we mean writing about the peoples they encountered. Ancients like Herodotus and Julius Caesar composed accounts of diverse peoples, even if these were not scientific, systematic treatises of the modern sort. Herodotus' *Histories*, for example, described funeral and mummification processes in Egypt and aspects of life among the pastoral Scythians, while Caesar mixed details about the land and people of Gaul in his record of the conquest of the region. Xenophon's *Anabasis* is an account of his journey through ancient Persia.

As time passed, travel writing became a fairly established (although not always entirely trustworthy) genre across civilizations, sometimes for entertainment and sometimes for actionable information. In the second century BCE, China's Zhang Qian sojourned deep into Central Asia, returning with "military, political, and economic" profiles of the area [11]. In the early premodern period, Chinese, Japanese, and Arab travelers left written chronicles of their voyages and explorations; there was even a Chinese term, *youji wenxue* (travel record literature), for the genre. One of the most famous Japanese documents is Basho's *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, and early Arab travelers composed such works as the ninth-century *Kitāb al-Buldān* ("Book of Countries") and *Akhbār al-Ṣīn wa 'l-Hind* ("News of China and India"). One of the most important documents for Western audiences was Marco Polo's thirteenth-century *Book of the Marvels of the World*, or *Il Milione*, bringing news of China and India to Europe. In the late 1500s, Richard Hakluyt added his *Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries*, summarizing English travels to North America.

Although none of these would qualify as ethnography in the professional sense, they did provide invaluable information about the world beyond the homeland of their readers, as well as sources for thinkers like Hobbes and Rousseau (see below). This was especially so for rich records like *The Jesuit Relations*, a set of annual reports from Jesuit missionaries in Canada containing discussions of First Nations North American peoples from 1610. It was not long before explorers and researchers organized more formal field studies that can properly be labeled ethnological, in the sense that their purpose was to produce knowledge about various peoples, nations, or societies. These tours were often commissioned by governments for overtly administrative reasons. Among these outings were Daniel Gottlieb Messerschmidt's early-eighteenth-century explorations of Siberia for Russian czar Peter the Great, gathering data on local populations in Peter's expanding empire. Not long afterward, the Second Kamchatka Expedition (1733–1743) did research that Vermeulen calls "descriptive, comprehensive, systematic, and comparative" ([12], p. 132). Around this time, the notion of *Völker-Beschreibung*, "description of people," or basically ethnology, emerged, and within a few decades, August Ludwig Schlözer introduced the idea of *Völkerkunde*, or "peoples study," and even employed the more familiar terms *Ethnographie* (ethnography) and *Ethnograph* (ethnographer). Meanwhile, in the coalescing British Indian empire, the Asiatic Society was founded in 1784, followed a century later by an 1881 census collecting cultural and racial information on the subject population. Around the same time, the Bureau of Ethnology (later, Bureau of American Ethnology) was created in 1879 in the United States, sponsoring fieldwork on the languages, cultures, and archaeology of Native American peoples.

Despite some early institutionalization, ethnographic research largely remained an amateur or incidental undertaking. Travel writing of the older sort continued in such publications as Joseph Lafitau's 1724 *Customs of American Savages Compared with Those of Earliest Times*, Mungo Park's 1799 *Travels in the Interior of Africa*, Charles Sturt's 1848 *Narrative of an Expedition into Central Australia*, Richard Burton's 1856 *First Footsteps in East Africa*, James Johnston's 1896 *My Experiences in Manipur and the Naga Hills*, and Henry Stanley's 1898 *Through South Africa*. Armchair scholars fully accepted the fact that they themselves were usually not ethnographers, depending on the reports of what they called "the man on the spot," be he an explorer, missionary, soldier, merchant, or colonial administrator. To give those reports some structure, the field guide *Notes and Queries* was first released in 1874, containing a list of standardized questions and topics that visitors could investigate so as "to supply the information which is wanted for the scientific study of anthropology at home" ([13], p. vii). Consequentially, ethnography received lower attention in the handbook than "anthropography," or the measurement of bodies, consigned as it was to the second and briefer section of the manual. We will return to this matter shortly.

Partly out of dissatisfaction with this undisciplined and inadequate research approach, the era of more professional scientific field study was dawning. Many of these preliminary efforts took the form of "expeditionary ethnology" in two senses: First, they tended to recruit teams of researchers rather than the intrepid solitary fieldworker of the Malinowskian or Boasian tradition, and second, they usually consisted of short visits to multiple sites during a prolonged outing. We have mentioned a few very early examples, like the Second Kamchatka Expedition; another was the 1761–1767 Danish-German Arabia Expedition to Egypt and Yemen. It would be another century before Walter Baldwin Spencer (a biologist) and Francis Gillen (a telegraph operator) would undertake their seminal tour of interior Australian Aboriginal societies, resulting in 1899's *Native Tribes of Central Australia* and 1904's

The Northern Tribes of Central Australia. Note that neither of these publications is an extended ethnography of a single society or culture. Soon thereafter, the Jesup North Pacific Expedition launched in 1897, followed by the Cambridge Anthropological Expedition to Torres Straits in 1898, the French *Mission Raquez* to Laos in 1906, and the Percy Sladen Trust Expedition to the Solomon Islands in 1908. The day of modern ethnography was approaching.

4.2 Anthropology without ethnography

Present-day anthropologists often forget two things about their discipline. First, it was already recognized as a distinct activity by the mid-1800s, well before Malinowski and Boas put their stamps on it. Second, it was from the start much more physical or biological than cultural. In fact, so well established was the field that Theodore Waitz could draft an *Introduction to Anthropology* in 1863, in which he maintained that it was "the science of man in general; or, in precise terms, the science of the nature of man," which would thus "study man by the same method which is applied to the investigation of all other natural objects" ([14], pp. 3, 5). Granted, his anthropology differed dramatically from ours today, both by incorporating the decontextualized hodge-podge style of his day and by placing the physical before the cultural (literally, with the bulk of the text committed to topics of anatomy and race and only the final quarter of the book turning to "civilization"). Just over a decade later, Armand de Quatrefages offered his 1875 *Natural History of Man*, which Paul Topinard, in his own 1876 *Anthropology*, described as intent on investigating humanity "as a zoologist studying an animal would understand it"; Topinard too was certain that anthropology is "the branch of natural history which treats of man and the races of man" ([15], pp. 2–3).

If Kant set the precedent of anthropology as two unique sciences (again, reflecting the inherently dual nature of humankind, both biological and free/practical/cultural), this division was still visible in Topinard's work a century later, who construed anthropology as the science of "Man and the races of mankind" (essentially our physical aspect) and ethnology as the study of particular "peoples and tribes" and their observable "manners, customs, religion, language, physical characteristics, and origins" ([15], p. 9). Such was the environment in which the first institutionalizations of the discipline(s) transpired. As early as 1839, the French *Société Ethnologique de Paris* was founded; the Ethnological Society of London followed shortly in 1843. Even British ethnology of that moment was more physical than cultural: one of its foundational documents was Ernest Dieffenbach's 1848 "The Study of Ethnology," which identified ethnology as "the Natural History of Man" and commissioned the organization to collect facts on "the varieties of the physical and mental development of nations." Significantly, he also drew a distinction between ethnology and ethnography, the latter naming "an authentic description of the physical condition of each nation" ([16], p. 18). More tellingly still, an Anthropological Society of London formed by schism from the Ethnological Society in the 1860s, populated by scholars distinct from their ethnological peers by their "interests in craniology and race, by a resistance to evolution, and by widespread support of polygenist views" ([16], p. 14). The two institutions merged in 1871 as the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, which survives today.

Although biological and racial thinking permeated both sides of the ethnography/anthropology divide, it was particularly prominent in the anthropology of the day. Indeed, during the 1800s, especially in France and Germany, anthropology essentially meant *physical anthropology*, and Little and Sussman explain that the aforementioned Anthropological Society comprised mostly "physicians, anatomists, and physical anthropologists" ([17], p. 14). Many of the pioneers of anthropology were men of medicine, like Johann Friedrich Blumenbach, Francis Galton, Havelock Ellis, Aleš Hrdlička (who founded the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* in 1918), Adolf Bastian, and W. H. R. Rivers. In France in particular, the eminent anatomist Paul Broca was crucial to the founding of the *Société d'Anthropologie de Paris* in 1859, the *Laboratoire d'Anthropologie* of the *École Practique des Hautes Études* in 1867, and the *École d'Anthropologie* in 1876. Because of their fixation on human biology (and alleged racial biological differences or inequalities), ethnographic fieldwork was not of primary importance to them, and such fieldwork as they did often consisted of measuring native bodies or collecting physical specimens.

By the later 1800s, a breed of what Radcliffe-Brown might consider comparative or nomothetic anthropologists emerged, above all, E. B. Tylor and James George Frazier. Tylor's path-setting 1871 *Primitive Culture* obviously brought culture to the forefront, and for that achievement and his 1881 *Anthropology* he was awarded the first professorship of anthropology at Oxford University in 1896. Frazier's equally renowned *The Golden Bough* was also an armchair work in cultural (specifically mythological) comparison, extracting some general principles or laws about culture/mythology and environment/economics. Other projects of the age concentrated on the historical development of various cultural institutions, such as marriage and kinship, government and law, and of course religion. (For such purposes, many contributors to early anthropology, other than physicians and anatomists, were lawyers.) Of course, the most ambitious comparative/nomothetic eighteenth-century anthropological thinker of all was Lewis Henry Morgan, whose 1877 *Ancient Society* placed all societies on an evolutionary timeline from savagery to barbarism and civilization.

These scholars, and many more along with and before them (like Thomas Hobbes in the 1600s and Jean-Jacques Rousseau in the 1700s), took advantage of the knowledge that was pouring into Europe and America from travelers and their writings. It is not quite fair to say, though, that they were all idle armchair speculators. Many traveled themselves, some extensively, others just enough to whet their curiosity. As a ship's surgeon, Bastian visited Africa, Asia, Australia, and the Americas in the first half of the nineteenth century before settling into the role of Berlin's Curator of Ethnography. Tylor at least toured Mexico, basing his 1861 *Anahuac; or Mexico and the Mexicans* on that experience. And even for Morgan (a lawyer), who to many epitomizes the armchair anthropologist, actual contact with non-Western peoples was pivotal; he visited numerous Native American societies, worked closely with Seneca member Ely Parker, and solicited data from fieldworkers around the globe through his "schedule" or list of questions on kinship terms and systems.

For the rest of the anthropologists of that day who were interested in culture, but not in doing ethnography, there were other venues for observation. One was the ethnological museum, which became a popular sort of institution in the nineteenth-century heyday of colonialism and empire. Among the earliest were collections in Haarlem, Netherlands (1784); St. Petersburg, Russia (1836); Leiden, Netherlands (1839); and Copenhagen, Denmark (1839), as well as Harvard University's Peabody Museum (1866); Boas began his American career as curator of New York's American Museum of Natural History. Less tasteful were exhibitions, fairs, and zoos, where indigenous peoples and their cultures were commonly displayed. The most (in)famous of these was the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition, also known as the Chicago World's Fair. Held 4 years after the Paris Exposition of 1889, among the organizers were three of America's leading anthropologists—John Wesley Powell, Daniel Garrison Brinton, and Frederic Ward Putnam—as well as Boas. For these and similar events, individuals or entire families or villages from remote parts of the world were transported to Western sites for display and popular and scholarly gaze; sometimes, they were outfitted with props like huts and tools, becoming living tableaux for viewers (including scholars) who would not or could not make the long voyages to their places of origin. Far from being looked down upon, "commercial exhibitions began to be routinely advertised as educational opportunities for budding ethnologists" ([18], p. 187). Respected scientists attended such events, believing that the people on display were "usable experimental material," and "the opportunities they provided for research were…taken up with enthusiasm" (p. 221).

Whether it was revulsion against such spectacles or a more general dissatisfaction with the low-quality and unsystematic knowledge flowing from "the man on the spot," together with the excesses of the nineteenth-century comparative method and its racialist biases, the feeling began to grow that anthropologists required better and more complete and in-depth information *and that anthropologists themselves should collect it*. In fact, the transition from armchair anthropologist to professional ethnographer had commenced by the late 1800s, illustrated by Boas' 1888 ethnography *The Central Eskimo*. Not far behind was Rivers' 1906 *The Todas*, leading eventually to Radcliffe-Brown's own 1922 *The Andaman Islanders*. Finally, anthropology and ethnography converged.

5. Was anthropology ever ethnography?

From that moment, Radcliffe-Brown would have us believe, the grander calling of anthropology was lost in the collapse of anthropology into ethnography. He gave the impression that no one after 1922 did anthropology, becoming instead enamored of narrow ethnographic studies of particular peoples. So complete, the story goes, was this absorption of anthropology into ethnography that, a half-century later, Clifford Geertz could assert that they were one and the same thing. In his classic *The Interpretation of Cultures*, he announced:

> *In anthropology, or anyway social anthropology, what the practitioners do is ethnography. And it is in understanding what ethnography is, or more exactly what doing ethnography is, that a start can be made toward grasping what anthropological analysis amounts to as a form of knowledge ([19], pp. 5–6).*

The very essence of anthropology, its definition as a "kind of intellectual effort," was thus ethnographic representation, or what he memorably and influentially called *thick description*.

As recently as 2018, Rees concurred that during the twentieth century, "most anthropologists understood themselves as ethnographers," that is, that their business was "the careful, fieldwork-based description of faraway others" ([20], p. 1). But we should ask, is this true today? Was it true at the time of Geertz's writing, or even of Radcliffe-Brown's? Ironically, the chapter in which Geertz made his pronouncement was not an ethnographic chapter, nor were most in that volume, which includes theoretical and conceptual essays like "The Impact of the Concept of Culture on the Concept of Man," "The Growth of Culture and the Evolution of Mind," "The Integrative Revolution: Primordial Sentiments and Civil Politics in the New States," and the celebrated "Religion as a Cultural System." Surely, Geertz did ethnography, but clearly much of his most important work was not ethnographic.

Looking back at the three decades between Radcliffe-Brown's first statement on anthropology-versus-ethnography (1923) and his last (1952), we can confess that ethnography moved conspicuously to the top of the anthropological agenda. This is understandable and laudable: anthropology prior to the 1920s operated too much on the basis of superficial and amateur cultural information. Boas was correct that the discipline needed to refrain from theorizing until it had better data. But Radcliffe-Brown's (and still more so Leach's) blanket condemnation of ethnography seems exaggerated, for at least two reasons. The first is that anthropologists during those decades were doing non-ethnographic or supra-ethnographic work alongside ethnography. This 30-year period featured Boas' aforementioned 1928 *Anthropology and Modern Life* near the start and David Bidney's 1950 *Theoretical Anthropology* near the end, both of which took a much broader view of the discipline. In between, anthropologists considered big questions, as in Paul Radin's 1927 *Primitive Man as Philosopher*, Edward Sapir's various writings on anthropology, language, and psychiatry, Leslie White's attempt to redefine anthropology in his 1949 *The Science of Culture*, and Claude Lévi-Strauss's first foray into structuralism in his 1949 *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, not to mention less savory but still ambitious works like Lucien Lévy-Bruhl's *Les fonctions mentales dans les sociétés inférieures*, which only hit the Anglophone world in 1926 as *How Natives Think* but was originally published in 1910.

Anthropologists in the first half of the twentieth century had not utterly surrendered to ethnography. And even when they indulged in it, those writings were not always what we might call description for description's sake, which is what Radcliffe-Brown seems to object to (he and like thinkers held up Evans-Pritchard's 1940 *The Nuer* as a singular betrayal). Instead, a significant amount of ethnographic writing during the period (and beyond) could be classified as *description for a purpose*, the purpose being either to make a comparison or to test a theory. Under the latter heading, we would include Malinowski's 1927 *Sex and Repression in Savage Society*, explicitly testing Freud's Oedipus theory in Trobriand society. Among the former, arguably the most important, and certainly the most famous, is Ruth Benedict's 1934 *Patterns of Culture*, which compared three societies (Pueblo, Dobu, and Kwakiutl) to draw out theoretical lessons; this was followed immediately by Margaret Mead's similarly-oriented 1935 *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, and then two volumes edited by psychiatrist Abram Kardiner: 1939's *The Individual and His Society* and 1945's *The Psychological Frontiers of Society*, which combined multiple ethnographic case studies (Marquesas and Tanala/Madagascar, both provided by Ralph Linton, in the former; Comanche by Linton, Alor by Cora Du Bois, and "Plainsville, USA" by James West in the latter) with psychological analysis. This comparative-ethnographic approach continued outside the critical time period, for instance, in Beatrice Whiting's 1963 *Six Cultures: Studies of Child Rearing*.

The years since Radcliffe-Brown's final statement have seen, if anything, a greater liberation of anthropology from ethnography or a greater or higher-level synthesis of ethnographic knowledge. In the introduction to the 2021 edited volume *Anthropology and Ethnography are not Equivalent*, directly addressing Ingold, Irfan Ahmad lists some prominent examples, like Arjun Appardurai's 1996 *Modernity at Large*, Talal Asad's 1993 *Genealogies of Religion* and 2003 *Formations of the Secular*, Michel-Rolph Trouillot's 1995 *Silencing the Past*, and Peter van der Veer's 2001 *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain*, not to mention Eric Wolf's 1982 *Europe and the People Without History* ([21], p. 6). This practice has only expanded, with, for instance, Michael Fischer's 2003 *Emergent Forms of Life and the Anthropological Voice* and David Graeber and David Wengrow's 2021 *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity*. Other anthropologists do not write ethnography at all but instead investigate and inscribe the history of anthropology, foremost among them George Stocking and Regna Darnell.

Then there is the fact, which was true already in Radcliffe-Brown's day and more than ever the case today, that many, if not most, anthropologists are not ethnographers by any means. It is common knowledge that, in the twenty-first century, the majority of anthropologists are not academics but are "applied" professionals, lending their skills to such domains as government, law, business, medicine, the military, development planning, indigenous rights, and many others. These applied jobs often if not typically do not entail ethnography, at least in the familiar academic sense; known by various titles such as applied, practicing, engaged, activist, etc., anthropologists, these individuals may write reports or other documents for their employers or they may lead focus groups, advise colleagues, do training, or run organizations or consulting firms, but they are not principally writing ethnography (some, admittedly, do compose ethnographies about their practical activities).

Furthermore, this is not a new circumstance. Anthropologists were intimately involved in colonial administration, military affairs, and business during and before Radcliffe-Brown's time, which could not have been unknown to him. By World War I, anthropologists were already disseminating propaganda, contributing geographic and ethnographic knowledge to the war effort, and practicing anthropometry on soldiers and prisoners [22]. Indeed, so enmeshed in the conflict were anthropologists that Boas issued a stinging rebuke in his 1919 "Scientists as Spies." World War II absorbed nearly all anthropologists: Margaret Mead advocated a national morale program, Cora Du Bois applied her area expertise to the Southeast Asian Branch of the American Office of Intelligence, Ruth Bunzel translated messages from Spain, and Clyde Kluckhohn participated in the Strategic Bombing Survey. On the English side, Evans-Pritchard did military service in Libya and saw military action in Ethiopia and Sudan, Leach joined the Burma Rifles and trained and led local resistance, Raymond Firth worked in the British Naval Intelligence Division, and S. F. Nadel rose to Secretary for Native Affairs in Eritrea. Meanwhile, to mention just one more application in the corporate world, in the 1930s W. Lloyd Warner studied worker productivity at the Western Electric Company and in 1946 joined some other experts in establishing Social Research Incorporated, an anthropological consulting firm with such clients as Sears, Roebuck and Company.

Finally, it is neither pedantic nor trivial to emphasize that anthropological research and writing have not been primarily or exclusively ethnographic in the strict sense for a long time. If we take the term literally (*ethnos* + *grapho*), ethnography means writing about *an ethnos*, that is, *a people, a nation, a folk*. Hence, classic studies about *the* Toda or *the* Nuer, or *the* Andaman Islanders are ethnographic. Today, what Bourdieu dubbed "synoptic" studies of (purportedly) an entire society or ethnos are largely a thing of the past. Instead, anthropologists tend to write about particular settings (say, Kazakhstan's capital city of Astana [23] or a Sarajevan apartment building [24]), particular events (say, the Arab spring), or particular groups or subcultures (say, homeless youths, rock musicians, or cancer patients) within a society, people, or nation. Anthropology has long since outgrown the constricting confines of traditional ethnography.

6. Resetting the relation between anthropology and ethnography (and other terms)

In other words, as the previous section reveals, anthropology has never been synonymous with ethnography, and not all anthropologists have been ethnographers, nor has all of their work been ethnographic. Both Radcliffe-Brown's and Ingold's critiques of anthropology as ethnography are late and overstated.

What, then, is anthropology, if not ethnography? Radcliffe-Brown, Leach, and Ingold offered their opinions, as have others. One additional perspective, contemporaneous with Radcliffe-Brown and Leach, was that of Lévi-Strauss, who broached the subject in a 1949 essay subsequently anthologized in his epochal *Structural Anthropology*. He took the position that ethnography refers to observations "of human groups considered as individual entities": ethnography, or perhaps better *an* ethnography, "aims at recording as accurately as possible the respective modes of life of various groups" ([25], p. 2). He then stipulated that ethnology is the enterprise that puts that knowledge to use, implying that the ethnologist and the ethnographer are different people. Also, he suggested that ethnology roughly corresponds to anthropology. In a 1954 essay that closes the volume, he refined his thinking somewhat, propounding that ethnography, ethnology, and anthropology are three sequential stages in an intellectual process. Ethnography, as the first stage, entails "observation and description," which takes place in the field, resulting in a monograph on a specific social group. Ethnography, therefore, also designates "the methods and techniques connected with field work" ([25], p. 355). As the next stage, ethnology is the first step of "synthesis," which comes in three flavors—geographical, historical, or systematic. Finally, anthropology represents a third stage and a second level of synthesis that, with ethnographic and ethnological data in hand, "aims at a global knowledge of man."

Lévi-Strauss was onto something, but we cannot quite be satisfied with his treatment. In his analysis, too, we see confirmed the judgment of Hockey and Forsey that "Anthropology, ethnography, and participant observation slip and slop around contemporary anthropological discourse as interchangeable terms" or at least as less than fully conceived and delimited ones ([26], p. 72). We should add to this list ethnology and fieldwork. So let us attempt a clarification and delimitation of all of these terms. *Ethnography* we will reserve, hopefully not completely pedantically, for written accounts of a specific sociocultural group (an ethnos or some more specific subgroup). Ethnography is *not*, on this analysis, a method but rather a *product*. It is one of the things that anthropologists produce from their experience with other people. Nor is ethnography the only product emanating from fieldwork. Ethnography, or *an* ethnography, is one medium to represent, or if we prefer to avoid that loaded word, to communicate or convey, the knowledge that fieldworkers gain from their experiences. Writing is the preferred medium of scholarship—in that regard, the fact is that academic anthropologists write because academics write, writing being the most respected form of academic productivity—but ethnographers also render or communicate their knowledge in other ways, such as film, photography, posters, classroom lectures, and conference presentations. Conversely, not all anthropological writing is ethnographic; I think, for instance, of Paul Stoller's blogs for *Huffpost*, which he assembled into his 2018 book *Adventures in Blogging*, full of commentary on major topics of the day.

Ethnography is, therefore, not synonymous with fieldwork or participant observation (if for the simple reason that a researcher may conduct fieldwork and never write it up into an ethnography). Again, ethnography is a product distilled from fieldwork. It is a project and a skill in its own right, and, apparently contra Ingold, shifting the conceptual load from ethnography to anthropology does not ameliorate any of the problems of the creation or communication of anthropological knowledge. All of the challenges concerning "writing culture" remain. At any rate, fieldwork or participant observation is methodological, although neither is a method, or better yet, *a* method. In reality, fieldwork is the umbrella term for all the things researchers do in the field, that is, when interacting or corresponding with others. Participant observation is one of those things—or, more likely, a set of things, including at least watching people, joining in with people, and asking people what they are doing. Other methods under the fieldwork umbrella include taking field notes, constructing genealogies, making quantitative measurements, conducting interviews, reading documents, and, doubtless, many more. (In other words, to borrow from Ingold, fieldwork is not [exclusively] participant observation.)

What is the relationship between fieldwork and ethnography, then? If pressed to give it a name, we could call it *conversion*: by some means (what Malinowski labeled "the ethnographer's magic"), experiences in the field—ideally, lived alongside local people—are converted or transformed into a written document. This will and can never be a simple, straightforward move.

Ethnology, a term that gets neglected these days but was part of the debate for most of anthropology's history, is therefore the science of peoples, folks, or nations. Lévi-Strauss was probably right to distinguish it from ethnography, but probably not as a second stage or synthesis after ethnography. Ethnology proceeds *via* ethnography but also precedes it; ethnography is the outcome of particular ethnological research. Some might be ready to dispense with the term, but if Ingold (and presumably Radcliffe-Brown and Leach) have something higher or grander in mind for anthropology, then it arguably still has its uses. Furthermore, ethnology is not necessarily purely descriptive, nor is any particular ethnography; as we witnessed above, an ethnography may have a profound comparative or theoretical point, whether it is Margaret Mead's ethnography of Samoan girls or Evans-Pritchard's ethnography of Azande witchcraft.

In sum, we can agree with Hockey and Forsey that "ethnography is a documentary product capturing the dynamic interactions of a particular people in a particular time and place (or places), and that participant observation is but one way to arrive at ethnographic knowledge" ([26], p. 84). Accordingly, anthropology is neither of those things, and Ingold is justified in positing that anthropology is not ethnography (or ethnology or fieldwork or participant observation). But does that mean that anthropology could be *or should be* detached and freed from ethnography? Rees weighs the possibility and benefit if we were to "cut loose the former from the latter" ([20], p. ix), and Aishima ponders "what an anthropological work would look like after removing ethnographic details from its writing" ([27], p. 20). Surely, Ingold never intended that, and even Radcliffe-Brown mobilized considerable ethnographic material to arrive at his generalizations and laws; indeed, it is inconceivable that anthropologists could do comparative analysis without something to compare.

What Ingold seems most disturbed about is treating the ethnographic encounter as a mere source of "data," yet surely too, (a) no sincere anthropologist or ethnographer is so indifferent to the interpersonal, reflexive aspects of fieldwork and the documenting of the experiences thereof and (b) once documented, those experiences *are* data, although always deeply human data. Part of the problem lies in Ingold's apparent presumption that generosity, openness, and critical inquiry are unique to anthropology, while in reality, the entire project of fieldwork, participant observation, and ethnography from its first moments until its consummation is suffused with them. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine good fieldwork and good ethnography that are not "ontological commitments," without generosity, openness, and critical inquiry, the last of these into our interlocutors and ourselves.

Ingold's objection is not to ethnography but to the idea of ethnography as "the be-all and end-all" of anthropology ([5], p. 21), and that we can hardly dispute. However, we can and must take exception to the suggestion, made by Radcliffe-Brown and echoed by others, that anthropology could function without ethnography, whereas ethnography could not function without anthropology. The exact opposite is the case: our survey of early and amateur ethnographic work indicates that authors can write about other peoples and cultures for many reasons other than anthropology (e.g., administration, scientific knowledge, popular entertainment, sheer curiosity), but how would anthropology operate without ethnographic knowledge? That is, if anthropology is to be an inquiry "into the conditions and possibilities of human life in the one world we all inhabit" ([5], p. 21), then a prerequisite for such a discipline is precisely *knowledge of those conditions and possibilities*, which comes from the ethnographic encounter.

If anthropology and ethnography are indeed distinct enterprises, what is the relation between them? Whereas fieldwork and ethnography are linked by conversion, we might regard anthropology as linked to ethnography by *inspiration* or *transcendence*. That is to say, anthropology goes beyond particular accounts of circumscribed groups but is in no way independent of them; from this accumulated acquaintance with humanity in all its diversity, the anthropologist extracts lessons or draws out implications. *But these lessons, implications, or inspirations are only possible in the light of the fullness of the knowledge of humankind*. Hence, rather than "data," it is fruitful to regard the knowledge gained in ethnographic encounters and shared in ethnographic documents as what Mattingly rightly calls "perplexing particulars"—about any subject, from kinship terminologies or food practices to religious beliefs—that have the capacity to alert us to unforeseen and unimagined conditions and possibilities, to "disrupt" and unfreeze or "defrost" our previously unquestioned and taken-for-granted realities ([28], p. 415).

This is probably, and hopefully, what Ingold means by anthropology as "education," specifically an education or reorientation of "our *perception* of the world [that] opens our eyes and minds to other possibilities" ([3], p. 82). (Is there a modicum of selfishness in this project, using other people's lives as fuel for our own improvement and advancement? Further, does this not presuppose a value judgment that our way of being needs other possibilities? Those are questions that anthropologists should contemplate.) Ultimately, what is anthropology supposed to learn about the world—and perhaps more importantly, how is it supposed to convey this knowledge or perception to others beyond the discipline, since the goal must not be just to educate ourselves but our neighbors and our entire society? One way to restate the question is to ask, along with Walton, "if not ethnography, what sort of –graphy should we practice?" ([29], p. 54). Anthropology and social science in general have long since forsaken generalization of the sort perpetrated in the nineteenth century, especially ostentatious narratives of unilinear evolution of specific cultural institutions or of culture (or Culture) as a whole; the idea of "laws" in society or culture is also anachronistic.

If we take seriously Ingold's suggestion that anthropology is or should be philosophy, albeit with "the people in," then it seems that anthropological writing (for, as we all understand, writing remains the chief medium of scholarship) will more resemble philosophical writing. Some movement in this direction has already happened:

versions or variants of anthropology have adopted some of the terms and concepts of philosophy, such as ontological anthropology, phenomenological anthropology, or even existential anthropology. These approaches and theories ask many of the same questions as philosophy, the principal difference being that the anthropological incarnation tends to activate ethnographic knowledge in its ruminations. For example, Jackson invoked Australian Aboriginal culture in his 1995 *At Home in the World*, and, within 20 years, his work was profoundly phenomenological or existential, incorporating terms like "lifeworlds" (introduced to philosophy by Husserl) and directly referring to Heidegger and the study of "being." Like Ingold, he identifies the goal of ethnography (Jackson says "ethnography" rather than "anthropology") as metanoia, self-change, transformation, or Ingold's "education" [30].

Speaking of Husserl and Heidegger, the question that anthropology shares with philosophy, at least philosophy of a certain stripe, is the nature of human beings, or we might say the nature of being human. Accordingly, anthropologists could start with phenomenologists, ontologists, and existentialists, who attack these issues head-on. Husserl gives us the concepts of *intentionality* and, as mentioned, *lifeworld*. Intentionality designates how humans reach out to the Other (other people, other species, other objects) through meanings, categories, interests, and commitments; consciousness or knowledge, he teaches, is always consciousness/knowledge *of something*, and the possible "somethings" are shaped by cultures or ontologies. The lifeworld is the taken-for-granted, "natural" realm of experience and meaning, but Husserl had to concede that there is not a single human lifeworld but many with their own truths which "are by no means the same as ours" ([31], p. 139). Therefore, we students of humanity must always "bracket" or set aside our own "natural standpoint," which only seems natural to us. Heidegger's *Being and Time* confronts the problem of humanness squarely, accusing anthropology by name of commencing the study of *anthropos*, basically through the empirical device of ethnology, without first answering—or even asking—"the questions about the kind of Being which belongs to those entities which we ourselves are" ([32], p. 75). For Heidegger, the quality of being distinct to humans is *Dasein*, being-there, being-in-the-world, which is inherently and unavoidably "historical" or, as anthropologists say, particular or cultural. Echoing Husserl and anticipating 1970s practice anthropology, he added that human being is human doing: "the person exists only in the performance of intentional acts," which are also always performed with an other—ideally, attentive to the care of the other—who are "bound together by the unity of meaning" (p. 73). As he also stated, "The essence of *Dasein*," this special way of being human, "lies in its existence" (p. 67), foreseeing Sartre's mantra that existence precedes essence, that human being is fundamentally human *becoming*.

If anthropology is going to become more philosophical—and I personally welcome the development—then anthropologists will need to be better versed in this and associated philosophical thinking. One place where this is called for is ontological anthropology, the prime advocates of which, such as Holbraad, Pedersen, and Viveiros de Castro, construe it as strictly methodological (and therefore ethnographic rather than anthropological), without a deeper appreciation for the stakes of ontology in philosophy (not to mention in "applied ontology" in the natural and information sciences). For such purposes, then, I would recommend more training in philosophy—including and especially comparative or non-Western philosophies—for anthropologists in doctoral programs. It would also be valuable for anthropological training to include and respect applied or engaged anthropology, not only because this is valid anthropology or because it is the direction that many of their careers will take but because it would help establish that ethnography (in the conventional academic sense) is certainly not the be-all and end-all of the discipline.

Finally, the overt message can and should be communicated that ethnography is not the only worthwhile thing that anthropologists do, encouraging students and mature scholars to explore the potential of their discipline more fully. (I have a dream of an anthropological journal that accepts *anything but* ethnographies, providing a place to publish non-ethnographic anthropology and to help legitimate it. I actually pitched the idea to a major publisher once, which fretted that anthropologists might not submit work to it and that tenure committees might not value it. That is exactly the challenge we face.) Meanwhile, students will and should continue to learn the skills of doing fieldwork and writing ethnographies, including usually as a requirement for the doctorate, not only as a rite of passage but because this is where and how they acquire and perfect the ontological commitment, the generosity and openness, on which anthropology thrives.

Can anthropology complete this task? Can it ever be *finished*? Probably (and hopefully) not, and not just so that our employment persists. Rather, as Geertz, who also learned from philosophers such as Ryle and Langer, declared, humankind is an unfinished animal—in Kant's words, biological yet biologically undetermined beings—and as long as humans finish themselves diversely, culturally, ontologically, and as long as these finishings implicate fellow humans, non-human species, and non-biological objects and technologies, there will be new manifestations of humanity to describe and understand. Ethnography will continue to serve these emerging lifeworlds at the table of anthropology, which will continue to metabolize them (in the deepest sense of the term) into ever-richer self-knowledge.

7. Conclusion

Anthropology is not ethnography. Ingold is correct about that, as were Radcliffe-Brown and Leach, a generation or two before him. This chapter has argued that, while ethnography became a major preoccupation of anthropology by the second quarter of the twentieth century, the distinction between the two has a much longer history. Anthropology was not originally ethnography: ethnography or writing about peoples occurred well before professional anthropology was organized and was often, or usually, conducted for nonacademic purposes, and anthropology was initially focused on biological or racial matters, which were not conducive to ethnographic investigation. However, despite their complaints, anthropology during the 1900s was not limited to ethnography, with anthropologists experimenting not only with other forms of representation, but with various theories and comparative (not to mention practical and engaged) activities.

The long view of anthropology illustrates that anthropology has never been (exclusively) ethnography, but that, untethered to concrete empirical observations, some anthropological (i.e., comparative, generalizing, or nomothetic) thinking wandered far from the facts. The turn to ethnography was no misstep; it was an essential corrective to fanciful theorizing. But anthropologists always had their eyes on the bigger questions, even if, occasionally, it appeared that they had traded the forest for the trees. However, the forest of humanity consists precisely of the trees of humanity's diverse instantiations; to paraphrase Heidegger, the essence of humanity lies in its multiple and evolving *experiences*, which are its local cultural experiences. Thus, to know humanness generously, openly, critically, and philosophically is to be conversant with its many actual and potential ways of be(com)ing. We already see, and applaud, the expansion of anthropology into the glorious science of humanity as it was originally conceived.

Conflict of interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Author details

Jack David Eller
Woxsen University, Hyderabad, India

*Address all correspondence to: jdeller@bu.edu

References

[1] Malinowski B. Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; 1922. 527 p

[2] Boas F. Anthropology and Modern Life. New York: W. W. Norton; 1928. 255 p

[3] Ingold T. Anthropology is *not* ethnography. Proceedings of the British Academy. 2008;**154**:69-92

[4] Ingold T. That's enough about ethnography! HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory. 2014;**4**:83-95

[5] Ingold T. Anthropology contra ethnography. HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory. 2017;7:21-26

[6] Srinivas MN. Method in Social Anthropology: Selected Essays by A. R. Radcliffe-Brown. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press; 1958. 189 p

[7] Radcliffe-Brown AR. On social structure. The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland. 1940;**70**:1-12

[8] Radcliffe-Brown AR. Structure and Function in Primitive Society. New York: The Free Press; 1952. 219 p

[9] Kuper A, editor. The Social Anthropology of Radcliffe-Brown. London and Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul; 1977. 296 p

[10] Leach ER. Rethinking Anthropology. London: The Athlone Press; 1971 [1961]. 143 p

[11] Gosch SS, Stearns PN. Premodern Travel in World History. New York and London: Routledge; 2008. 183 p

[12] Vermeulen HF. Before Boas: The Genesis of Ethnography and Ethnology in the German Enlightenment. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press; 2015. 718 p

[13] Garson JG, Read CH, editors. Notes and Queries on Anthropology, or A Guide to Anthropological Research for the Use of Travellers and Others. 3rd ed. London: The Anthropological Institute; 1899

[14] Waitz T. Introduction to Anthropology. London: Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts; 1863. 404 p

[15] Topinard P. Anthropology. new ed. London: Chapman and Hall; 1890 [1876]. 535 p

[16] Dieffenbach E. The study of ethnology. Journal of the Ethnological Society of London. 1848;**1**:15-26

[17] Little MA, Sussman RW. History of biological anthropology. In: Larsen CS, editor. A Companion to Biological Anthropology. Malden, MA and Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell; 2010. pp. 13-38

[18] Qureshi S. Peoples on Parade: Exhibitions, Empire, and Anthropology in Nineteenth-Century Britain. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press; 2011. 392 p

[19] Geertz C. The Interpretation of Cultures. New York: Basic Books; 1973. 470 p

[20] Rees T. After Ethnos. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press; 2018. 174 p

[21] Ahmad I. Introduction. In: Ahmad I, editor. Anthropology and Ethnography are Not Equivalent: Reorienting Anthropology for the Future. New York and Oxford: Berghahn; 2021. pp. 1-19

[22] Price DH. Anthropological Intelligence: The Deployment and Neglect of American Anthropology in the Second World War. Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press; 2008. 370 p

[23] Laszczkowski M. "City of the Future": Built Space, Modernity and Urban Change in Astana. New York and Oxford: Berghahn; 2016. 204 p

[24] Jansen S. Yearnings in the Meantime: 'Normal Lives' and the State in a Sarajevo Apartment Complex. New York and Oxford: Berghahn; 2015. 250 p

[25] Lévi-Strauss C. Structural Anthropology. New York and London: Basic Books; 1963. 410 p

[26] Hockey J, Forsey M. Ethnography is not participant observation: Reflections on the interview as participatory qualitative research. In: Skinner J, editor. The Interview: An Ethnographic Approach. London and New York: Berg; 2012. pp. 69-87

[27] Aishima H. Beyond correspondence: Doing anthropology of Islam in the field and classroom. In: Ahmad I, editor. Anthropology and Ethnography are Not Equivalent: Reorienting Anthropology for the Future. New York and Oxford: Berghahn; 2021. pp. 20-35

[28] Mattingly C. Defrosting concepts, destabilizing doxa: Critical phenomenology and the perplexing particular. Anthropological Theory. 2019;**19**:415-439

[29] Walton JF. Graphic designs: On constellational writing, or a Benjaminian response to Ingold's critique of ethnography. In: Ahmad I, editor. Anthropology and Ethnography are Not Equivalent: Reorienting Anthropology for the Future. New York and Oxford: Berghahn; 2021. pp. 53-70

[30] Jackson M. Lifeworlds: Essays in Existential Anthropology. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press; 2013. 339 p

[31] Husserl E. The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology. Carr D, Trans. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press; 1970 [1954]. 405 p

[32] Heidegger M. Being and Time. Macquarrie J, Robinson E, Trans. Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell; 1962 [1927]. 589 p

Chapter 9

The End of Ethnographic Fieldwork? Research Ethics and Methodological Challenges in New Scientific Climates

Mari Rysst

Abstract

The methodological foundation of social anthropology has been—and remains—the possibility of conducting long-term ethnographic fieldwork that includes participant observation. One of the founding fathers, Bronislaw Malinowski, wrote passionately about this research design in *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*. However, since 2018, when for instance the European Union introduced new ethical research guidelines (GDPR), informed by the positivist paradigm, difficulties in doing participant observation have emerged. Therefore, this paper discusses methodological challenges and possibilities of studies having an ethnographic design, particularly in sensitive fields. I discuss how (inter) national research guidelines have resulted in increased reflexivity and more restrictions both before and while doing ethnographic fieldwork. Since anthropologists are increasingly subjected to research regulations that demand research designs which specify in detail the specific procedures to be followed *prior* to fieldwork, there are reasons to fear that ethnographic research may be difficult to do in the future. Anthropological designs are particularly necessary for knowledge construction in sensitive fields like abuse, racism and discrimination. Ethnographic fieldwork and participant observation are inalienable.

Keywords: ethnography, research ethics, children, sensitive fields, reflexivity

1. Introduction

In Norway, as in many countries, local and national ethics committees evaluate research projects, provide commentary, and decide whether to approve them. In Norway, the significance of such committees has increased in the last 10 years or so, particularly after the implementation of the EU guidelines of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) in 2018. After this implementation, the protection of personal data and privacy has become a central focus in research ethics [1]. This emphasis has led anthropologists to encounter obstacles and challenges in designing their research, which is the issue explored in this chapter. More precisely, I will elaborate on the general and dominating research ethics of today, influenced by the GDPR, and discuss with examples, the challenges, possibilities and implications of these guidelines for anthropological research in sensitive field such as race and racism among children. I address these questions:

- How do anthropologists in Norway experience challenges and possibilities doing participant observation and ethnographic fieldwork, and what are eventual implications for knowledge construction?

When I began my Ph.D. project in 2001, no ethics committee was required to approve it before I started fieldwork—only my supervisor and the Ph.D. program at the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Oslo.

Today, research projects that involve people, particularly children, and certainly if personal characteristics of some sorts are involved, must be evaluated and approved by an ethical committee at the institution where you work, or by a national committee. It must also be sent for evaluation at a national data institution concerning privacy protection (SIKT). It is particularly in SIKT that the GDPR guidelines are applied and emphasized, GDPR having these stated aims among others:

- Enable data subjects to have greater control over their personal data whilst also modernizing and unifying European data protection rules.

- As well as creating new rights for data subjects, the GDPR will strengthen and enhance previous rights that data subjects hold under the Data Protection Act.

- The GDPR requires that data controllers (often the University) and processors provide clarity and transparency to data subjects about how and why their personal data is being processed [2].

Norway is not an EU member but nevertheless implemented the GDPR regulations in 2018. Norway aims to be part of research communities worldwide, and research funding abroad is impossible to achieve without approvable research ethics. In addition, an increasing number of scientific journals demand that the research has been ethically approved by a committee. I argue that the present research guidelines fit positivist research designs better than the anthropological interpretivist ones, modeled on quantitative designs, testing of hypotheses, surveys and statistics [1, 3]. Already in 2012, anthropologist Judith Okely wrote that: "Nevertheless, the broader political issue of the subject of research has been transformed and narrowed in recent decades to a *bureaucratic controlling gaze, now labelled ethics*" [4]. Likewise, in 2018, anthropologist Humphris wrote an article with the title "Is anthropology still legal? Notes on the impact of GDPR," in which she discusses how the guidelines often contradict anthropological practice [2]. In the same vein, anthropology professor at Harvard, Hertzfeldt, the first anthropologist to serve in an ethics committee at that university, wrote an article in *Anthropology Today* [3] with the title "Ethnographic responsibility." Here he asks "Can the bureaucratization of research ethics be ethical?" He argues that the GDPR, "intended to protect citizens from commercial data exploitation, has acquired an inappropriately inquisitorial presence in academia" [3]. However, he argues that ethic committees may serve useful ends, but adds that

> *The problem is that most ethics committees are not well-informed about, or particularly interested in, the ethical expectations of the people we study, let alone the epistemological and methodological issues that distinguish anthropology from other social sciences. I am thus not calling for the abolition of ethics reviews but for their redemption from universalist, 'one-size-fits-all' approaches to ethics and knowledge and from the self-interest of institutions protecting themselves from the imaginary consequences of potential legal liability [3].*

In 2020, a group of anthropologists in Norway established a workgroup arguing against the uniform research guidelines (*Forum for Etikk i Etnografisk Forskning*, FEEF) and published a special issue in the Norwegian anthropological journal *Norsk Antropologisk tidsskrift* (2020). One of their concerns is the relationship between GDPR and academic freedom:

> *Although GDPR involves an important and relevant focus on vulnerability and abuse, its implementation has not been followed by a deep concern for the tension between the protection of individual rights and the freedom of research; the latter principle is poorly protected [1].*

FEEF argues and promotes flexibility, respect and understanding for the particularity of anthropological methodology and ethnographic fieldwork in Norway at each academic institution. For instance, at my university a local research ethics committee (KoFE) was set up in 2020. Its mandate is to evaluate, approve and then give permission for research projects to start. All research projects that are not regulated by the Health-Research Act (*helseforskningsloven*) including master and Ph.D. projects of certain kinds, must be submitted to KoFE for evaluation. Research projects cannot start before KoFE has approved of the design. KoFE distinguishes between projects that MUST, SHOULD or CAN be evaluated. The projects that MUST be evaluated are research on human beings, included human biological material that does not categorize under the Health-Research Act and include:

- Individuals who could potentially suffer physical or psychological harm, overload, violation and/or (re)traumatisation by taking part.
- Children (0–16 years) with special health or psychosocial challenges.
- Particularly vulnerable groups, incl. youth (16–18 years) with various burdens, and adults without—or with reduced—capacity to consent.

The projects that SHOULD be evaluated are:

- Projects where a participant's capacity to consent is uncertain and/or they belong to a vulnerable or marginalized group, and/or there are language/cultural barriers (e.g., ethnicity).
- Inclusion of children (0–16 years)—regardless of health—when the intervention places the child in a vulnerable situation (including intrusive surveys/interviews about health, (dis)well-being, incriminating behavior, etc.).

- Large-scale projects with many variables and/or long duration that will require a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA).

- Research on humans in resource-poor settings (see The TRUST Code) [5].

I will not list projects that CAN be evaluated because that is an optional decision for the researcher. The important issue for this chapter is to show the complexity and details expected from ethic committees in the planning of projects. It is important that a university has ethical guidelines, and that research ethics are prioritized. However, a Ph.D. student at my institution experienced that KoFE commented on her methodology, on the relationship between research questions and methods, which strictly speaking, is beyond their mandate. The process of getting permission to do the research was time-consuming, and the student experienced it intrusive and controlling. How researchers experience their relation to ethic committees of course vary, but the point here is to show how comments from local ethic committees may complicate particularly ethnographic fieldwork. In addition, researchers experience that it is not obvious whether a project classifies in the MUST or SHOULD category, as illustrated above.

In general, it is my impression that researchers and anthropologists are very ethical in their research, following the overarching principles of *do no harm*, *openness* and *transparency*, *informed consent* and *reflexivity* throughout the whole process. In contrast to quantitative researchers, for anthropologists, ethical considerations emerge along the research process when the anthropologist start relating to interlocutors to establish trust. The Association of Social Anthropologists of the UK and the Commonwealth (ASA) has published a 10-page pamphlet of Ethical Guidelines for good research practice (ASA Ethical Guidelines 2011) which illustrates that research ethics is high on the anthropological agenda. These guidelines take into consideration that anthropological research is dynamic, processual and dialogic, and impossible to outline in detail before it has started. In the following I will present a short history of core points in anthropological methodology, to illustrate the contrast between these ideals and the demands of new ethical guidelines. Then I will highlight three challenges: anonymization, informed consent and detail-planned fieldwork, which indirectly implies scientific possibilities of anthropological designs.

2. Short history of core points in anthropological methodology

Bronislaw Malinowski is one of the founding fathers of classical social anthropology and its methodology. The following text is from his famous monography from 1922, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific*, in which he writes in detail how he did ethnographic fieldwork and why he believes this a good design for understanding other people's way of life:

> *Again, in this type of work, it is good for the Ethnographer sometimes to put aside camera, notebook and pencil, and to join himself in what is going on. He can take part in the natives' games, he can follow them on their visits and walks, sit down and listen and share in the conversations. I am not certain if this is equally easy for everyone – perhaps the Slavonic nature is more plastic and more naturally savage than that of Western Europeans – but though the degree of success varies, the attempt is possible for everyone. Out of such plunges into the life of the natives – and I made them frequently*

> *not only for study's sake but because everyone needs human company – I have carried away a distinct feeling that their behaviour, their manner of being, in all sorts of tribal transactions, became more transparent and easily understandable than it had been before. All these methodological remarks, the reader will find again illustrated in the following chapters [6].*

His work has inspired generations of anthropology students and researchers, including myself, of which the phrase "*to join himself in what is going on. He can take part in the natives' games, he can follow them on their visits and walks, sit down and listen and share in the conversations*" has been particularly important. I have done participant observation among children and youth in school- and sport contexts, trying to figure out "what the devil they think they are up to" [7]. This phrase implies another famous argument from Malinowski, namely the importance of grasping *the native's point of view*. He writes:

> *This goal (of the ethnographer) is to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, his vision of his world. We have to study man, and we must study what concerns him most intimately, that is, the hold which life has on him. To study the institutions, customs, and codes or to study the behavior and mentality without the subjective desire of feeling by what these people live, of realizing the substance of their happiness – is, in my opinion, to miss the greatest reward which we can hope to obtain from the study of man [6].*

Most importantly, the methods Malinowski recommends for understanding man, are through collection of "minute, detailed observations, in the form of some sort of ethnographic diary, made possible by close contact with native life" [6]. In addition, "a collection of ethnographic statements, characteristic narratives, typical utterances, items of folk-lore and magical *formulæ* have to be given as a *corpus inscriptionum*, as documents of native mentality" [6]. Malinowski recommends long-term participant observation in order to collect the relevant knowledge of people's way of life.

Later, another famous anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, has elaborated on Malinowski's original approach in his essay "From the Native's Point of View: On the Nature of Anthropological Understanding" [7]. Here he discusses epistemological challenges in grasping the natives' point of view and writes that "The trick is to figure out what the devil they think they are up to." I rewrite the sentence to mean "the trick is to figure out what the devil *we* think they are up to," which is what Geertz in fact discusses in his text.

The anthropologist Holy [8] divided the history of anthropology into two paradigms: the positivist and the interpretive, in which the interpretive paradigm essentially is "idealistic." Researchers positioned in the interpretive paradigm understand social facts as constructions rather than facts, as in positivism. They are concerned about meaning rather than structure as in positivism, culture rather than function, description rather than generalization [8]. The paradigm is grounded on symbolic interactionism, ethnomethodology, phenomenology, and hermeneutics, and as such, differ from positivist research designs [8]. In addition, anthropological interpretations have an explicit aim of being "holistic" [9], hermeneutic, or being based in "thick description" [10] which specifies many details, conceptual structures and meanings, as opposed to "thin description," being factual accounts without interpretation.

In sum, these characteristics of ethnographic designs are often not taken into serious consideration in most ethic committees in Norway, including SIKT. For instance, in my institution, the members of KoFE consist of two positivist researchers and a philosopher, no anthropologist. In the following I will discuss some implications of experienced expectations of anonymization, informed consent and planned fieldwork among anthropologists in Norway.

3. Challenges and possibilities

3.1 Anonymization

Anonymization can be understood along a continuum, from little to total. The first involves only change of names and places, which is a situation where the informants may only recognize themselves and others in the study, whom they already know. Often researchers are told that this anonymization is not enough [11]. The total anonymous situation is when nobody can recognize any persons involved included those the text is about. This may happen if persons written about are a mixture of many interlocutors, one "real" person is divided into two or more "new" persons. A Norwegian sociologist, Carolina Overlien, who has done qualitative research with children, violence and post-traumatic stress, writes in the Norwegian journal *Forskningsetikk* (*Research ethics*) (2013): "A researcher has a duty to anonymize so that nobody can recognize anyone or anything. This is a methodological challenge which is solved in a variety of ways" [12]. A relevant question to ask is thus: When have we anonymized "enough"? I argue that total anonymization in anthropology is more or less impossible, because we want thick descriptions, many details on contexts and geographical places, in addition to ethnic backgrounds and gender. In this methodology lies the unique possibilities of writing about peoples' lives in detail, much in line with the aims of Malinowski. A relevant question is also: What kind of text have we written if none of the interlocutors can recognize themselves or others? Is that fiction or science? I want to read anthropological texts about real people and real lives, not "made up" people and places. In other words, I oppose total anonymization for those reasons. If total anonymization becomes a demand of research committees, it may imply the end of ethnographic fieldwork.

3.2 Informed consent

The Norwegian national committee for research ethics in the social sciences (NESH), states this as guidelines for researchers:

Research is not to be done on individuals or groups without them having given a solid consent. This consent shall be free and informed, without any sort of pressure when they give their consent ("free" or "voluntarily"), and that they give their consent based on knowledge about the research to be done (my translation).

In general, these are ideals well worth following, but for ethnographic fieldwork there are some challenges linked to the unpredictability of our research. It concerns if or in what ways we can include "third parties" which have not given consent beforehand. This is often not possible because we do not know if this or these persons will turn out relevant before the fieldwork starts. Anthropological methodology, to enter the field with an open mind, implies that we cannot beforehand know which persons and how many persons we want to observe and talk to. This may happen in situations where relevant and interesting utterances and behavior may emerge from a person we did not ask for consent before the project started. The question then becomes if such persons can be included in the data material or not. According to SIKT, such persons cannot be included in the data material. SIKT also claims that consent cannot be arranged after the project has started. A master student experienced this at my institution. She wanted to include information on other students given by persons in the project, but these other students had not been asked for consent since the student did not know that interesting information on these third parties would emerge. Such an expectation from SIKT may hinder academic freedom and the search for truth, regardless of whether the project is social anthropological or has another qualitative design.

For anthropologists, to include third parties, or persons we did not know were interesting before the fieldwork started, are often parts of the social contexts of the study. As mentioned, anthropological methodology aims at thick description [10] with lots of details that make analysis of social relations and people's lifeworld's richer and closer to their real life. I argue that it is impossible to achieve informed consent from all relevant informants before the fieldwork has started. In addition, in some sensitive fields, such as refugee situations and war, the informants may be very reluctant to sign any papers. Hertzfeld writes of his informants in Greece only wanting to give consent orally og by a handshake [3]. If written consent becomes mandatory in all variations of anthropological research designs, which some have experienced, it will mean the end of ethnographic fieldwork.

3.3 Detail-planned fieldwork

In line with the challenge of inclusion/exclusion of third parties, as discussed above, is the issue of filling out forms about the research design before fieldwork has started. Even if anthropologists are to follow the traditional design of participant observation only, schemas demand attachments of interview guides and an information letter of all topics to be researched. To write a comprehensive interview guide before entering the field is problematic, particularly if the research aims to be as close to the ideals of Malinowski, illustrated above. To enter the field open-minded has the advantage of catching what is going on from the informant's point of view ("the native's point of view") and then adapt an eventual interview guide to the emerged themes of their everyday life.

Close to this challenge is the content of the information letter to possible informants, which is mandatory. This information letter should give information on all aspects of the research, aims, research questions and methods. If the research leads you in directions that deviate from the original information letter, the question arises if you can include information on themes that has not been informed about in the letter. Strictly speaking, the participants have not consented beforehand to talk about those themes, which deviate from the baseline in the informants' consent to participation. According to the guidelines, the researcher can only use information that is the result of questions already agreed to by the informants, which hinders inclusion of data emerged unexpectedly. The GDPR also implies that we should not ask for information we "do not need" in the research [2]. That is not possible to follow for anthropologists following the aims of Malinowski.

As the reader may understand, all the above-mentioned challenges make doing anthropological fieldwork and participant observation difficult. It will not be possible *for the Ethnographer sometimes to put aside camera, notebook and pencil, and to join himself in what is going on. He can (not) take part in the natives' games, he can (not) follow them on their visits and walks, (he cannot) sit down and listen and share in the conversations* [6]. I have added the words in brackets to illustrate what is at stake here: to plan fieldwork as detailed as most ethic committees want, contradicts the core of anthropological methodology. In the next section I will illustrate from my own fieldwork the possibilities and advantages of anthropological methodology in doing research in a sensitive field, which may become difficult in the future if the above sketched guidelines are mandatory and compulsory. It will not be possible to "just hang around" without a detailed plan.

4. The value of "hanging around"

In 2010 I did ethnographic fieldwork in and around a primary school in Oslo, Norway. At that time the research guidelines were not as demanding as they are today. The aims of my study were to look into the relationship between consumption and social inclusion by doing participant observation and informal interviews with the children and school staff. My project was part of an overarching one lead by Thomas Hylland Eriksen, and the project as a whole had been approved by the Norwegian Research Council, which funded the project. That implied that I could start without having my project (a "work package") scrutinized by any committee, although SIKT had to be informed and approve of the design, which they did.

I contacted the headmaster of the school, explained my project, and gave them an information sheet. The school staff found the project interesting and invited me in. I got access to do participant observation in the 5th grade and gave all the 60 students an information sheet to take home. I wanted written consent, which was difficult to achieve; the children forgot them at home. I participated at two school arranged meetings with the parents and informed about the project. I told them that all names of persons and the field site would be changed, in other words, the weakest variant, not total anonymization.

The school catered students from all over the world, and only about 10% of the students were ethnic Norwegians. I spent my time only in 5th grade, the students being 11–12 years old. At that time, only one student had ethnic Norwegian background in 5th grade, while one had mixed race origin. This means that the school had mostly students with non-white skin, and the majority were Muslims.

After achieving access to the school and entering the field site, I was fascinated by the ethnic diversity among the children. When I asked the staff and the children, they all said that they did not think much about it. The staff said the children were "colourblind" and the children themselves said something like "here we are all brown, so why should we bother about skin colours." The utterances implied that race and eventual racism did not exist at the school and among the children. If my research design had included an interview method only, a conclusion had to be that the school milieu appeared free form racial issues. However, because I did participant observation and spent time in the classroom over time, events emerged that showed the opposite. Judith Okely calls these events for "serendipity." I will present a couple of these in the following.

The first event took place in the gym. To girls told me that Adine had gone home because Arsim had beaten her up. When the teacher was informed about this, he took Arsim aside into the wardrobe. While they were gone, I stepped in to look after the others. Suddenly I saw Robert, having east African background, lying on the floor, apparently very upset. It appeared that Adine, who had returned to school, had called him "blackie" (*svarting*), which he obviously did not like. The other boys had witnessed this and fiercely approached Adine shouting "racist," "racist," "racist!" Adine tried to hide behind me, while I tried to calm down the boys. They responded to me "but she is a racist!," implying that such a categorization demands sanctions. They know that being racist is not accepted, which also makes it difficult to make them speak about possible racism and discrimination related to skin color. They are afraid of saying something "wrong" which may give them the label "racist."

The next incident happened during lunch break in the classroom. They eat their lunch there and have free seating. Therefore, many boys gathered around the desks of David and Omar, the two boys having a position as "popular." Suddenly I heared the voice of Kofi, having west African origin, saying quietly and a bit resigned: "Ok, then I am a negro, I am negro on the outside…black on the outside, but inside…. We eat the same, drink the same…." And Omar comments quietly: "Yes, we all have two eyes, two ears, a mouth, nose and hair." Because I sat close by, I indirectly took part in the event, the boys did not take notice of me sitting there. I also got the feeling that this was not the first time Kofi had heard racial comments on his appearance.

The third event happened during a lesson in handicraft, where the children were to make a plaster mask of their face. They had to put sheets of plaster in water and then cover their faces with these. They had to sit with the plaster on their faces for 15 minutes, then carefully remove the mask. Alle their faces were then put on a shelf for all to see, something they all seemed to enjoy, except Kofi. When he removed the mask from his face, he stroked the lines of his face carefully, particularly his mouth and lips. Then one of the children remarked: "Oh, look at Kofi's, *those* big lips!" He looked sad and unhappy about the remark and wanted to throw the mask in the bin. The teacher and I, and some of the children, said the mask was very nice and managed to prevent his attempt to get rid of it. The event shows that the children comment on each other's appearances, and that Kofi experienced having so big lips not to be attractive.

What these events point to is the value of "hanging around," of just being in a social context with no other aim than "look what happens and what people do" and "try to figure out what the devil they think they are up to" [7]. These events made me change my original research focus on consumption and social inclusion, to racial hierarchies and social inclusion. Most importantly, the events above had been impossible to plan beforehand, or to plan at all. They just emerged spontaneously in the middle of an everyday school setting and revealed that the children were conscious about racial differences. The events also revealed that just listening to what people say [13], may be insufficient, particularly in sensitive fields like racism. In this process I got information on a relevant theme from the children, a theme their parents had not given me consent to discuss with them because I did not know that information would emerge. The events on race and racism emerged unexpectedly and were very valuable and important in knowledge construction on children's everyday life and friendship milieu.

5. Conclusions

Anthropologists and other qualitative researchers worldwide experience difficulties in doing ethnographic fieldwork because of new and stricter ethical research guidelines. This is because the guidelines are informed by positivist research designs and the idea that "one model fits all" [1, 3]. The GDPR guidelines are not well suited for ethnographic fieldwork and ethic committees seldom include anthropologists, in Norway at least. Anthropologists worldwide must argue more and higher about the scientific advantages of doing participant observation in the tradition of Malinowski, particularly in sensitive fields. Hertzfeldt concludes:

> *Current procedures, increasingly uniform around the globe, protect neither our interlocutors nor ourselves. Ethical responsibility requires collective action. We must replace those procedures with something more appropriate to anthropology's own ethical stance and the knowledge our discipline produces [3].*

If the present ethical demands of total anonymization, informed consent and detail-planned fieldwork do not permit more flexibility and respect for the advantages of ethnographic fieldwork in the future, there are reasons to believe that the good intentions of GDPR eventually will result in the end of ethnographic fieldwork, and with that, the end of an ideal methodology for knowledge construction in sensitive fields in particular.

Author details

Mari Rysst
University Inland Norway, Lillehammer, Norway

*Address all correspondence to: mari.rysst@inn.no

References

[1] Vike H, Furst E. Forskningsetikk og forskningens frihet: Utfordringer for antropologifaget (Research ethics and academic freedom: Anthropological challenges). Norsk Antropologisk Tidsskrift. 2020;**31**(3):165-176

[2] Humphris R. Is anthropology still legal? Notes on the impact of GDPR. In: The Age of Superdiversity. Blog at wordpress.com; 2018. Available from: https://superdiversity.net/2018/05/16/

[3] Hertzfeld M. Ethnographic responsibility. Can the bureaucratization of research ethics be ethical? Anthropology Today. 2023;**39, 3**:3-6

[4] Okely J. Anthropological Practice. Fieldwork and the Ethnographic Method. New York: Bloomsbury; 2012

[5] Local Research Ethics Committee at INN (University Inland Norway). Available from: https://www.inn.no/english/library/research-support/privacy-and-research-ethics/local-committee-for-research-ethics-/

[6] Malinowski B. Argonauts of the Western Pacific. London: Routledge & Kegan; 1922/1984

[7] Geertz C. From the native's point of view: On the nature of anthropological understanding. In: Geertz C, editor. Local Knowledge. New York: Basle; 1983

[8] Holy L. Theory, methodology and the research process. In: Ellen RF, editor. Ethnographic Research. London: Academic Press; 1983

[9] Pelto P, Pelto G. Anthropological Research. The Structure of Inquiry. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; 1970/1996

[10] Geertz C. Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In: Geertz C, editor. The Interpretation of Cultures. New York: Basic Books; 1973. pp. 3-33. Chapter 1

[11] Rysst M. Antropologisk forskning i sensitive felt- retningslinjer til besvær (Anthropological research in sensitive fields- challenging guidelines). Norsk antropologisk tidsskrift. 2020;**31**(3):191-200

[12] Overlien C. Etikk som linedans (Ethics as walking on eggshells). Forskningsetikk. 2013;**4**:5-8

[13] Jerolmack C, Khan S. Talk is cheap: Ethnography and the attitudinal fallacy. Sociological Methods & Research. 2014;**43**(2):178-209

Chapter 10

"Bad Anthropology": Engagement in a Time of Crisis

Sebastian Braun

Abstract

This text proposes that anthropology needs to engage in new forms to stay relevant. Taking inspiration from "bad environmentalism," it argues that humor, art, and poetry, among other approaches, can do more for a liberatory practice than disciplinary theory. In the current times of ecological and political crisis, anthropology needs to open itself to outside voices more than ever and provide an engaged, practical way toward an understanding of culture and cultures that is applicable. Anthropology has been here before—in its margins, its very founding was in part a response to inequality and hubris. Today, the discipline needs to remember those margins. Alfred Russell Wallace, James Agee, Ernesto Cardenal, Leonardo Boff, and others have left us counterreadings we can and should use to recreate an anthropology that engages meaningfully with the public and that critically addresses important issues. "Bad anthropology" is a way into a future that will see the discipline reinvigorated and relevant.

Keywords: engagement, disciplinary history, crisis anthropology, margins, epistemologies

1. Introduction

Academic anthropological engagement has long been stuck in a place of frustration. While other disciplines have appropriated all kinds of versions of "ethnographic methods" and while applied anthropologists have become more diverse in their fields of practice than ever before, the academy is still struggling to meaningfully engage a public. This has long been a crisis in the discipline—I would argue at least since the 1990s—but the current dual crises of environmental and political destruction have added to the malaise. I say this as an academic with a PhD in anthropology, although looking in from the outside, as I am working in a department of political science.

My first 11 years in academia were spent in a department of American Indian Studies. When I finally came back to teaching in an anthropology department (and that department was merged into a language department 2 years later), I realized quickly that my ideas about a meaningful curriculum and research were now so different that it was at times hard to identify commonalities with my new colleagues. At the same time, I embrace the foundational importance of anthropology in the developing social, cultural, ecological, and political storms of the twenty-first century. Anthropology—the search for how we should live, as Tim Ingold has defined it [1]—is a much needed intervention in times of crises, because it allows to do two things: to look for, identify, and understand alternative ways of living, and to understand the systems of meaning that on one hand govern these alternatives and on the other prevent us from adopting them.

What I want to do here is to lay out a way out of the anthropological crisis as I see it: a way for the field to tackle the dual crises of ecology and politics that dominate our existence. Engagement is critical for that: engagement with communities, with students, with the field, with the public, and with the disciplinary history. Yet, this engagement needs to extend beyond the formulaic. It needs to question our practice, the canonization of specific areas of the discipline, and the often rigid though paradoxically vague definition of the field. I will argue that we have the models for such truly meaningful engagement in our discipline, albeit models that we have relegated to a niche existence and that we no longer teach in a largely canonized understanding of our ancestors.

2. Bad anthropology

The title of this text comes directly from Nicole Seymour's book *Bad Environmentalism* [2]. The ideas I discuss here are ones I have mulled over at least since graduate school, but were re-fueled by Tyler Austin Harper's movie review of Cocaine Bear in Slate magazine. Harper opens his review with a reminiscence of Frank, a psychology professor who fed cocaine to pigeons, and when asked how he landed on this expertise, answers—"with a wolfish grin"—"because they let me" [3]. Similarly, on my good days, that is why I do anthropology. I think it is a perfectly good reason to engage with large questions.

However, what struck a chord was my own experience in teaching capitalism or climate change or American Indian policies. Teaching American Indian Studies for the past 20 years, I realized rather quickly that the only way I could hold the attention of both Native and non-Native students was by inserting sarcasm, irony, and a good deal of self-deprecating humor into the subject. The same holds true, for example, for teaching something like "Culture and Capitalism." My students despaired so much that they implored me to end the classes with something—anything—positive so they would not leave absolutely depressed. Lifting the veil on a system of commodification can do that to us, which brings me to anthropology.

An earnest approach to crucial, sometimes heartbreaking issues often leaves students disillusioned, anxious, and apathetic rather than energized, active, and revolutionary. Seymour argues that in order to be effective, environmentalism should engage its subjects with irreverence, humor, and self-deprecation [2]. As Harper points out, feeding cocaine to a bear might not teach us too much about saving habitat, but, as the film's director articulated, it does teach us that "If you fuck with nature, nature will fuck with you" [3]. That is a fundamental and essential understanding, which is often lost on people who are so alienated from a completely commodified nature that they are amazed when it fights back. It is reminiscent of Jeannette McVay, the budding anthropology graduate student getting lost on the reservation in Susan Power's *Grass Dancer*. All anthropology students should have a moment of realization like hers when she finally realizes that her host does have power: "Jeannette shuddered, and it was so hot that day the movement appeared strange. 'You really do what they say you do,' she finally whispered. … 'I am not a bedtime story,' I told her now. 'I am not a dream'" ([4], pp. 183–184).

In fact, I have used *Grass Dancer* to teach Sioux history courses; without an understanding that some Lakota people have that kind of power, that it exists, truly and actually, Lakota histories cannot be understood. I regularly used Stephen Wright's *Going Native* to teach anthropology, especially the beginning of the "Night of the Long Pigs" chapter ([5], pp. 194–261), which describes the sensations, trappings, assumptions, and doubts of fieldwork better than any anthropological text I know. Neither novel is anthropology, of course. Yet, they capture essential questions of the field. In that sense, they are similar to Robert Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* [6], or *Lila* [7]. The problem, though, might be anthropology's. As the main character in *Lila* realizes, "He could write a totally honest, true and valuable book on the subject, but if he dared call it anthropology it would be either ignored or attacked by the professionals and discarded" ([7], p. 57).

Before I am accused of preferring constructed text over empirical reality, let me say that the opposite is true. People and their power are not dreams, as Charlene Thunder made clear. On the other hand, dreams (and the power gained from them) can also be reality, and empiricism is not equipped to describe, understand, or teach that. To understand reality holistically, we need stories. This is especially true today, when most of our students have been taught that reality is accessible through a Tiktok or Google search and contained in a definition free from all context. Teaching students in this era requires first to show them the world, to introduce them to context and system, to nuance and, as Henry Sharp calls it, indeterminacy [8]. We need to teach anthropology by teaching to "look, listen, read" [9], and then to question and play.

3. Anthropology and critique

Disillusioned with the field, Claude Levi-Strauss found that an anthropology that looks for the authentic and exotic is a fool's errand. His critique of anthropology, *Tristes Tropiques* [10], which perhaps ironically became a (rarely read) classic, goes much further, however. He writes about servitude and oppression throughout the book, be that the oppression of the landscape or his critique that "the primary function of written communication is to facilitate slavery" ([10], p. 299). Anthropology has the potential to overcome servitude and that should be its main goal. To determine how we should live, we have to free ourselves—even momentarily—of the servitude of the mind that controls our discourses and our thinking.

When Levi-Strauss discusses anthropology, he writes that, "Between the Marxist critique, which frees man from his initial bondage – by teaching him that the apparent meaning of his condition evaporates as soon as he agrees to see things in a wider context – and the Buddhist critique which completes his liberation, there is neither opposition nor contradiction" ([10], p. 412). It is this epiphany that opens anthropology to becoming a liberatory practice. The Marxist critique, which stands at the beginning of the process of liberation, aims at "a ruthless critique of all that exists" [11]. Lifting the veil to look behind the idol is the critical engagement that begins any road to freedom of the mind. I agree that this also stands at the beginning of anthropology and actually defines the field in its purpose, wherever we might set that time.

In Europe, I was taught that Lafiteau was the beginning of the discipline, his 1724 *Mœurs des sauvages ameriquains, comparées aux mœurs des premiers temps* the first (though deeply flawed) comparative study; Malinowski's *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* was the first ethnography. In the U.S., I was taught that anthropology begins with Lewis Henry Morgan, and Frank Cushing's *My Adventures in Zuni* fulfills the role of the first ethnography. If we accept that anthropology is a discipline of critique, that critique is what drives the anthropological revolution, I propose we might take another beginning, for both the awakening of the discipline as a whole and for fieldwork as its method of exposure and exploration.

Alfred Russel Wallace traveled in the Amazon from 1848 to 1852. That alone might be remarkable, but in no way unique—European travelers were nothing new at the time. From 1854 to 1861, he went to Indonesia and later wrote a detailed account of the journey in *The Malay Archipelago*. At the very end of it, he wrote an admonishment worth quoting in full:

> *We should now clearly recognize the fact, that the wealth and knowledge and culture of the few do not constitute civilization, and do not of themselves advance us towards the "perfect social state." Our vast manufacturing system, our gigantic commerce, our crowded towns and cities, support and continually renew a mass of human misery and crime absolutely greater than has ever existed before. They create and maintain in life-long labour an ever-increasing army, whose lot is the more hard to bear by contrast with the pleasures, the comforts, and the luxury which they see everywhere around them, but which they can never hope to enjoy; and who, in this respect, are worse off than the savage in the midst of his tribe ([12], p. 457).*

Wallace is of course not the first to note the failure of capitalism. He is not the first to realize that other peoples are Europeans' equals. Yet, in many ways, this is a truly anthropological argument because it comes out of an exposure to others, the practical experience that the existence of others in their actuality questions the assumptions of our own lives. That realization is the beginning of the discipline.

Tim Ingold has proposed that in order to answer the anthropological question, "how should we live?" we need to take others seriously. In his own discussion of what that means, Tzvetan Todorov writes, "it is only by speaking to the other (not giving orders but engaging in a dialogue) that *I* can acknowledge *him* [or her] as subject, comparable to what I am myself" ([13], p. 132). For many reasons, then, we can start our story of anthropology with somebody who takes others seriously and thereby (or therefore?) ruthlessly critiques everything that exists.

In the current political climate, it might be important to point out that this is not an endorsement of economic or political positions that are currently portrayed as "Marxism." It is an acknowledgment that the act of acknowledging others as persons is political insofar as its consequential pursuit leads to a critique of cultural, economic, political, and social systems and their constructed nature. A critique is not equivalent to a de(con)struction. The result of the process can be something akin to liberation theology or to what Trotzky called a "permanent revolution."

How should anthropology level this ruthless critique? Paul Radin suggests that it needs to be built from the ground up, in small steps, always rooted in experience, exposure, and observation: "The task, let me insist, is always the same: a description of a specific period, and as much of the past and as much of the contacts with other cultures as is necessary for the elucidation of the particular period. No more" ([14], p. 184). The last two words are deceiving, of course, if taken to mean that the task laid out is simple. However, their meaning is different. What Radin is conveying is that the anthropological critique—perhaps paradoxically—does not need to be theoretically abstract, although it has to be intellectual. As bell hooks explains in *Theory as Liberatory Practice*, "Just as some elite academics who construct theories of 'blackness' in ways that make it a critical terrain which only the chosen few can enter ...

threaten collective black liberation struggle, so do those among us who react to this by promoting anti-intellectualism by declaring all theory as worthless" ([15], pp. 68–69). Finding the fine needle to thread between exclusionary theory and anti-intellectualism is difficult for any academic discipline, of course. It is even more difficult for a discipline under pressure to validate itself by producing theory on the one hand and by being applied on the other.

4. Doing anthropology

In *Lila*, Robert Pirsig wrote that "The whole field [of anthropology] seemed like a highway filled with angry drivers cursing each other and telling each other they didn't know how to drive when the real trouble was the highway itself. The highway had been laid down as the scientific objective study of man in a manner that paralleled the physical sciences" ([7], p. 61). It is a slightly unfair and generalized critique, but in times when we are pushed to create the so-called valuable, that is, commodifiable, research outputs or face irrelevancy, we seem to have pushed ourselves ever closer to this description.

In many ways, the founders of the discipline were not professional anthropologists. They were the colonial administrators, the educators, lawyers, geologists, biologists, soldiers, travelers, and missionaries who took a deep interest in the people they worked with. In that process, they developed the methods of ethnography and ethnology—cross-cultural description and analysis—that slowly merged into an academic discipline. However, even the people who built the discipline were not really professional anthropologists. Franz Boas was a physicist. He learned from Adolf Bastian, who also taught Carl Jung (who applied the same principles in his writings). Malinowski became an anthropologist by accident because he was a professional foreigner, both as a Polish subject of the Austrian empire and as a stranded enemy alien in Papua New Guinea. E.E. Evans-Pritchard was an adventurous administrator at heart. People in this era cross-read disciplines and were interested in driving further the critical exploration, not the discipline as such. Arguably, the first professional anthropologists were created after World War II.

Edward Said posited a "professionalization of intellectual life" in the academy, and the resulting jargons and cults as the cause for "a kind of floundering about that is most dispiriting to witness" ([16], p. 303). Terry Eagleton was of the opinion that "There is something mildly unsettling in the spectacle of those trained to spot a pararhyme or a dactyl holding forth on the post-colonial subject, secondary narcissism or the Asiatic mode of production, matters which one might wish to see in rather less finely manicured hands" ([17], p. 39). This is true perhaps because both real life and critique cannot work with categorical definitions. Words like justice, faith, truth, or equality "are significant for the very reason that, and this is foremost among the qualities that give them power, they are vague" ([18], p. 108). In order to understand life, anthropology has to understand their significance without either following cult-like definitions or declaring that because the world is constructed, nothing has significance.

James Agee put it like this: "If I could do it, I'd do no writing hat all here. It would be photographs; the rest would be fragments of cloth, bits of cotton, lumps of earth, records of speech, pieces of wood and iron, phials of odor, plates of food and excrement. … As it is, though, I'll do what little I can in writing. Only it will be be very little. I am not capable of it; and if I were, you would not go near it at all. For if you did, you would hardly bear to live" ([19], p. 13). What comes out of such a ruthless critique of all that exists, carried out in historical specificity, might indeed be Agee's *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* [19] or something akin to Ernesto Cardenal's *In Cuba* [20] or Francesca Borri's *Syrian Dust* [21]—a collection of poignant descriptions of reality, paradoxical, and in their significance both earth-shattering and educational. None of these works is in the anthropological canon, and most of these authors are not considered anthropologists. Yet, I argue, we can learn more about anthropology from the critique found in Robert Pirsig's *Lila* [7], or from the description of Jeanette McVay, the social studies teacher in Susan Power's *Grass Dancer* [4], than from most textbooks.

Anthropology is condemned to put the unspeakable into words, to desecrate the sacred by explaining it, to describe the indescribable. This cannot be done by following a checklist, which deeply frustrates many students. It takes deep experiential knowledge and constant self-reflection. It needs continuous awareness, curiosity, and attention. In addition to that, there is the knowledge of the discipline, and there are methodologies, theories, and epistemologies, of course. Those are absolutely necessary for context and analysis. Yet, they are in many ways secondary if only because they can be conventionally learned. What is also important about them is awareness that they can never be exactly applied without distortion.

I argue that to unlock the true potential, promise, and purpose of anthropology, we need to step back from the absolute professionalization, if by that we mean a scientific classification and definition of everything that is. Professional anthropologists should embrace the playfulness of the world, without losing sight of its ruthless consequences. I am not sure what feeding cocaine to pigeons would teach anybody, but we should not be afraid of experimentation. The world is not, either, after all, and how else can we capture and describe it—how can we learn from a paradoxical and metaphorical world without allowing ourselves to be paradoxical and metaphorical? We have to critique the world, but critique can be playful. We should not lose sight of the "first task of anthropology," which, according to David Schneider is "to understand and formulate the symbols and meanings and their configuration that a particular culture consists of" ([22], p. 196). But we should also not lose sight of the fact that the only way to understand symbols and meanings and their configurations is by being critically playful.

If ruthless critique is the beginning of anthropology, however, Zen is its end. We can try to write everything down, a strategy that so frustrated James Agee. Or we can write a haiku. Ideally, we have nothing to say once we have understood how we should live. Levi-Strauss finds himself speechless in the face of people he cannot understand. Anthropology as the search for the Other thus fails drastically. "I had only to succeed in guessing what they were like for them to be deprived of their strangeness; in which case, I might just as well have stayed in my village. Or if, as was the case here, they retained their strangeness, I could make no use of it, since I was incapable of even grasping what it consisted of" ([10], p. 333). The anthropological critique is exactly that these strange people are not strange at all, and that they are the same as us, just culturally different. And now, there is nothing else to say. Or, with Basho ([23], p. 230), what is left is simple: "From which year was it? I was summoned by the winds of the scattered clouds, with no end to thoughts of wandering."

5. Relevancy

Like Levi-Strauss in the deep hinterlands of Brazil, like many other humanities and social sciences, anthropology finds itself in a crisis of relevance. Increasingly, the use value of education is defined as students being able to directly apply what they have learned to work at hand. The punishments for those who do not deliver such useful skills are budget cuts and the threat of oblivion. The response is often a frantic look to make ourselves useful. We are needed because we can translate engineering or physics to the public, we insist. Because we teach diversity and inclusion. Because we teach critical thinking. As such, we try to convince others that interdisciplinarity is a beautiful thing, and what we mean by that is that others should take us on as their partners in their useful and relevant work.

This is a time of existential triple crisis. We are facing an existential crisis in the climate emergency. We are facing a political crisis that shakes our collective identities to the core. And as humanists and social scientists, we are facing an existential crisis of relevance. Yet, despite Levi-Strauss's critique above, anthropology is needed more than ever. It is simply not needed as yet another discipline doing what all others are doing. It is useful exactly because it can go beyond that, and, I would argue, it is only useful if it does so.

We need to name things as they are. We can no longer afford to treat these issues with finely manicured hands. Things are messy. They are contradictory and paradoxical. Sometimes settler colonialists want to live in harmony with the land and indigenous people want to extract oil. People who call themselves conservatives spin anti-capitalist conspiracy theories, while self-identified progressives exploit workers in factories and universities. In this world, people bake babies in ovens and in return are blown apart as collateral damage. People live, shit, and die on sidewalks in front of the offices of those who live in homes with 64 bedrooms. People die of climate-related disasters because we cannot muster the political will to consume less. That is the reality of this world. However we read these events, in response, as Leif Vaage wrote in the context of liberation theology, "The rigor of properly scientific exegesis [must be] made a function of the rigors of contemporary social struggle" ([24], p. 6).

In times like these, it is worth remembering another one of our ancestors. Gregory Bateson explained that "People can be influenced, of course, by economic theories or economic fallacies – or by hunger – but they cannot possibly be influenced by 'economics.' Economics is a *class* of explanations, not itself an explanation of anything" ([25], p. 281). Anthropology is here to remind us of this, a truth that can only be found by stepping outside of the framework of explanations one is trapped in. This is both the anthropological usefulness and the source of its ruthless critique:

> *Notions such as a "surgical" airstrike in a war euphemisms for actions too general, too ramified in their immediate impact, to be controlled in more than minimal ways. ... [O]ften, so very often, the impact on the less general contexts sets in motion changes that eventually alter the more general context, and in ways unforeseen and undesired by those who initiated the general change. The chickens come home to roost; the road to hell is paved with good intentions; from noble beginnings, their hidden implications obscured by pride, come endings fraught with pathos and tragedy ([18], p. 118).*

The anthropological critique serves to expose the pride that obscures the implications, to expose the reality, to prevent the false explanations. As an example, it is increasingly clear that climate politics will not solve the climate crisis. The reason for this is that climate is not political and can therefore not be solved by political means. It can be made a political problem, of course, but then we are no longer dealing with climate, but with climate politics. Solving climate politics is a political problem, but this political problem has no direct implications for climate itself.

In the same way, we can address climate anthropology, but that will not solve the climate crisis. Anthropology can, however, address the climate crisis directly because it is caused by people, cultures, and lived values. The climate is not an anthropological problem, but the climate crisis is. Climate anthropology as an issue, however, just like climate politics, can provide the context in which anthropologists want to discuss the climate or the crisis. It will not address either one directly. In that sense, if *Cocaine Bear* teaches people that "If you fuck with nature, nature fucks with you," the film is not anthropological, but that in itself is an important realization of the crisis. In the face of a planetary crisis caused by the denial of this reality, it is an anthropologically relevant insight, and (to be a bit polemical in addition to being ruthless) it might be more important to solving the climate crisis than discussions about climate anthropology as a profession.

The acceptance of *Cocaine Bear* as anthropologically relevant might be called "bad anthropology." I was recently harangued by a reviewer of a manuscript because I had mentioned peasants without delving deeply into the literature on peasant societies. However, while I am aware of the literature on peasant societies, I was not interested in peasant societies in the theoretical sense. What I cared about was that there are farmers—today mostly industrial land workers—and there are peasants—people who work with the land. I am aware that not all farmers are industrial workers, and that my usage of the words was not in accordance with disciplinary jargon. Yet, if jargon prevents us from making a point, from playing with ideas, we have arrived at Said's professional floundering about. Just like a language is dead when it is no longer colloquially spoken because it can no longer change, so a discipline is dead when its jargon determines the acceptable ideas.

6. Purpose

In *Does the Earth Care?* Mick Smith and Jason Young ask a question about provisional ecologies. They conclude that the earth "does not care as a whole qua a totality or a unitary entity," but that "as an inescapable involvement" care "certainly is among the earth's worldly provisions" ([26], p. 103). This is a care without teleology, as "it is no longer plausible to think that 'all the things in the world were so made for Man'" ([26], p. 101). Yet here lies an assumption that comes "naturally" to us, from a culture that leads us to think that it is "human" to impose anthropocentric notions onto the earth that have her care for us (the earth is never him, especially when we talk about care). The fact that this imposition is not natural or human, but cultural often does not occur to us.

The plausibility of nature having been made for humans rests on the assumptions that the world is not only teleological, but also determinable. The idea of a teleological history—of progress and civilization—has been much easier to dismiss in light of what Waterston and Corden have called "the dark times" [27], and what we were taught to summarize as "Auschwitz." It is the second assumption, of determinacy, that perhaps more importantly falls to the ruthless anthropological critique, however. Henry Sharp has demonstrated that determinacy—the idea that we know why things happen as they happen, that we understand what the consequences will be, that we can understand the world in real time—is a cultural assumption not shared by all people. Instead, some cultures might see the world through indeterminacy [8].

The notion that care is provided by nature in some form is extremely comforting, and necessary if we see the world from a perspective of determinacy. For example, one of our stories is that humans took care of wolves and in return they took care of us, and here we are, dogs and people. In most versions of this story, people are obviously the agents, because we differentiate ourselves from nature through the supposed power of determinacy. Yet, in the Dene universe as Sharp describes it (and in many other cultures), interactions between humans and other animals, between humans and nature, and between humans are not determined. They are interactions but rest undetermined until we can assess their consequences. Wolves and people are interacting but the purpose of these interactions remains to be discovered in the outcomes and consequences of the interactions themselves.

What is the purpose of anthropology, the purpose of our interactions "in the field," wherever that is? In our world of determinacy, we usually make appeal to a larger purpose, to uncover human realities, to describe the world as it is, to contribute to encyclopedic knowledge of science, and to help those oppressed. I propose that just for a moment, we ask, what if the purpose of our interactions is indeterminate and remains to be discovered in the consequences? If we take Ingold at his word and take those we interact with seriously, we cannot assume that they share with us a whole compendium of anthropological knowledge, history, and theory. In the moment of interaction, we are meeting somebody, a person we need to acknowledge as subject. If we strip away our anthropological purpose (which the other does not share with us) from this interaction, what rests is indeterminacy, the interaction of two people with an uncertain outcome yet to be determined. That is why Levi-Strauss, in the moment of meeting people not yet classified, in the moment of interaction with people not yet determined, is faced with the fundamental insight that he could have stayed home, that these are people as subjects. It is with this insight that real engagement can follow.

The not yet professional anthropologists had a much easier way to understand this because they were not yet burdened by the hubris of a professional anthropology. There were plenty of other burdens—colonialism, eugenics, race theory, and so on—but where anthropology was born as a meaningful contribution to understanding was where it pierced these concepts with a ruthless critique. This critique is of necessity a critique from the margins. It is the margins—of academia, of disciplines, of cultures, of religions, of society, and of life itself—that challenge us to engage critically because they transect the rules and demand that our engagement is indeterminate.

An interpretation of reality "becomes revolutionary reading when the positions taken by the readers vis-a-vis the text stand self-consciously in a different place from the prevailing official or hegemonic interpretations of this reality" ([24], p. 11). If this holds true (and I think it does, broadly speaking), then anthropology is revolutionary or it is nothing: Our interpretation is always guided by taking the Other seriously and therefore is always reading reality different from its official interpretation. The encasement of the discipline, the specialization of jargon that Said critiques as professionalization, is thus in many ways un-anthropological if it leads to the establishment of determinate, hegemonic theories. Good anthropology is always "bad" anthropology.

7. Conclusion

I am not arguing against academic rigor. Seymour's book is highly academic in itself. What we should keep in mind, though, as she reminds us, is "that climate change, much more than a scientific issue, is an emotional, cultural, psychological, religious/spiritual, philosophical, and political one" ([2], p. 67). Any issue is embedded in a variety of different contexts. One way to explore these contexts is to play with them. Shifting the contexts reveals the different meanings attached to the issue at play. Playing reveals the margins from which we can gain different perspectives and find alternatives to hegemonies. Stephen Fry's *Making History* is admittedly bad academic history (as is, by definition, every work that imagines alternative histories) [27]. Playing with the notion of what would have happened if the United States would not have had to confront a racist-genocidal Nazi Germany, however, opens the potential to rethink deep-seated American (and European) values. It also challenges us to rethink our approaches to crises.

In a world that is slipping into deeper and deeper crisis because we do not question hegemonic ideas—ideas of how we should live—we need bad anthropology because it is able to explore and to explode the margins. What we have done and are still doing is obviously not sustainable, yet the straight academic critique is not working because while it addresses the scientific, social, cultural, economic, and political issues, it usually does not address the hunger, the mass extinction, the actual genocides, the shootings, or poverty in their actual realities. Seymour writes that "bad environmentalism" is "premised on a refusal of purity politics – and, subsequently, an embrace of contradiction, imperfection, and ambiguity" ([2], p. 232). Influenced by the people I have mentioned here, and many others, I have argued for years that purity is the opposite of anthropology. If we want to engage, we have to engage the paradoxical reality of the world, the dirt, the mess, the chaos of daily life. We should approach them as what they are and not pretend that we should speak the language of objectivity or purity.

Forget the didactic earnestness. Forget the theoretical differences and jargons that have closed off the field to outsiders and the public. Is it bad to make a movie about a bear that eats cocaine, or to play with the idea that Hitler never existed yet the outcome was, if anything, "worse"? We might think of such scenarios as comedy. Yet, to classify or dismiss these narratives as humor falls far short. They allow us to radically change our perspective and critique the status quo.

"Liberal systems," writes Gagnon in the context of genocide, "require the active construction of a non-existent homogeneity" ([28], p. 22). One of the critiques of anthropology has been that it constructed and reified cultural boundaries—the refutation of ambiguity and contradiction. Yet, the anthropological critique originally challenged such liberal notions, which today see a remarkable revitalization in neoliberal discourses. Enrique Dussel explains this need for purity: capitalism is the "simplification of complexity" to a single, quantitative life-world [29]. It is this total simplification that needs to be critiqued as it stands at the beginning and end of the crises we face today by pretending that economics are more important than hunger.

Engaging reality, though, always taught us that reality is not simple, but ambiguous, paradoxical, contradictory, and beautiful. Our semi-professional ancestors knew that. Here is Alfred Kroeber on cultural boundaries:

> *The weakest feature of any mapping of culture wholes is also the most conspicuous: the boundaries. ... It would be desirable, therefore, to construct cultural maps without boundary lines, on some system of shading or tint variation of color; but the mechanical difficulties are great. For the present, it seems necessary to use the old devices and leave it it to the reader to translate what his eyes see into the dynamic aspects that are intended ([30], pp. 5–6).*

It is necessary, in other words (even today, when we can create maps with color shading), to present reality in some way that uses stable, determined symbols, even though the reality we describe is always indeterminate, dynamic, and paradoxical. This, really, is and has been the anthropological critique.

Anthropological engagement itself, then, needs to consistently bridge this gap and play with it. It needs to critique the stable and determined as well as the vague translucent without losing sight of the purpose: to provide answers on how we should live. Contrary to the pressures exerted on academia that it provide such answers as definitive statements, anthropology's answers lie in its engagement, that is in questioning ruthlessly everything that exists. Irreverence to the established has to be the epistemology applied, together with respect for true curiosity and for the paradoxical. In the age where everything we say can and is interpreted as contrary to our assumed political goals or personal values ([2], p. 89), our internal musings can be serious. A productive way to engage with reality, though, is through irony. Taking deadly serious accumulating crises deadly serious in a context where influential people deny reality exists leads to insanity.

The ruthless critique of existing realities was the beginning of anthropology, and it is also its end. We can do so by writing down everything, or by writing down nothing. In the end, we ask a very simple question, which already contains its answer ([23], p. 278):

autumn deepening
my neighbor
how does he live, I wonder?

Thanks

I need to thank all those people who have engaged with me along the way in indeterminate conversations. They are too many to list. Here, I need to thank especially Joshua Smith and Sarah Moritz, who invited me (knowingly) to present an early version of this text at the CASCA/AAA meetings in Toronto.

Author details

Sebastian Braun
Iowa State University, Ames, IA, USA

*Address all correspondence to: sfbraun@iastate.edu

References

[1] Ingold T. What Is Anthropology? Cambridge: Polity Press; 2018

[2] Seymour N. Bad Environmentalism. Irony and Irreverence in the Ecological Age. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; 2018

[3] Harper TA. The case for cocaine bears. Slate Magazine. 2023. Available from: https://slate.com/culture/2023/02/cocaine-bear-movie-review-elizabeth-banks-climate-change.html [Accessed: June 17, 2025]

[4] Power S. The Grass Dancer. New York: Berkeley Books; 1997

[5] Wright S. Going Native. New York: Vintage Books; 1994

[6] Pirsig RM. Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance. An Inquiry into Values. New York: Bantam Books; 1974

[7] Pirsig RM. Lila. An Inquiry into Morals. New York: Bantam Books; 1991

[8] Sharp HS. Loon. Memory, Meaning, and Reality in a Northern Dene Community. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press; 2001

[9] Levi-Strauss C. Look, Listen, Read. New York: Basic Books; 1997

[10] Levi-Strauss C. Tristes Tropiques. New York: Penguin Books; 1992

[11] Tally RT Jr. For a Ruthless Critique of All that Exists. Literature in the Age of Capitalist Realism. Hampshire: Zero Books; 2022

[12] Wallace AR. The Malay Archipelago. Honk Kong: Periplus; 2000

[13] Todorov T. The Conquest of America. The Question of the Other. New York: Harper and Row; 1984

[14] Radin P. The Method and Theory of Ethnology. South Hadley: Bergin and Garvey; 1987

[15] Hooks B. Teaching to Transgress. Education as the Practice of Freedom. New York: Routledge; 1994

[16] Said EW. Culture and Imperialism. New York: Knopf; 1993

[17] Eagleton T. The Idea of Culture. Oxford: Blackwell; 2000

[18] Allan G. Contexts without absolutes. In: Desmond W, Grange J, editors. Being and Dialectic. Metaphysics as a Cultural Presence. Albany: SUNY Press; 2000. pp. 101-123

[19] Agee J, Evans W. Let Us Now Praise Famous Men. Boston: Houghton Mifflin; 1988

[20] Cardenal E. In Cuba. New York: New Directions; 1974

[21] Borri F. Syrian Dust. Reporting from the Heart of the Battle for Aleppo. New York: Seven Stories Press; 2016

[22] Schneider DM. A Critique of the Study of Kinship. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press; 1984

[23] Shirane H. Traces of Dreams. Landscape, Cultural Memory, and the Poetry of Basho. Stanford: Stanford University Press; 1998

[24] Vaage LE, editor. Subversive Scriptures. Revolutionary Readings of the Christian Bible in Latin America. Valley Forge: Trinity Press; 1997

[25] Bateson G. Naven. Second Edition. Stanford: Stanford University Press; 1958

[26] Waterston A, Corden C. Light in Dark Times. The Human Search for Meaning. Toronto: University of Toronto Press; 2020

[27] Fry S. Making History. London: Arrow; 1997

[28] Gagnon VP Jr. The Myth of Ethnic War. Serbia and Croatia in the 1990s. Ithaca: Cornell University Press; 2004

[29] Dussel E. Beyond eurocentrism: The world-system and the limits of modernity. In: Jameson F, Miyoshi M, editors. The Cultures of Globalization. Durham: Duke University Press; 1998. pp. 3-31

[30] Kroeber AL. Cultural and Natural Areas of Native North America. Berkeley: University of California Press; 1939

Edited by Jack David Eller

Modern anthropology dates its origin to roughly a century ago, in the work of Boas and Malinowski, although its roots are much older. Since its founding as a distinct modern discipline, it has typically been identified as a four-field enterprise (cultural or social anthropology, biological or physical anthropology, linguistic anthropology, and archaeology), with, of course, many local and historical variations. Moreover, it has traditionally been associated with the study of "traditional" or "tribal" societies; however, since the 1960s and 1970s, it has undergone intense self-criticism and reinvention, including an expansion into contemporary subjects and global processes. The chapters in this volume generously reflect the current status of anthropology, featuring contributions on refugees, migration, nationalism, Islam, and the survival of indigenous peoples, as well as the archaeology of pre-modern belief systems. It also confronts many of the field's present-day disciplinary controversies, such as knowledge production in non-Western societies, the nature and future of ethnography and fieldwork, and the challenge and value of doing anthropology in a time of crisis—especially since the modern world seems to be in a constant state of crisis, altering the mission of anthropology but making it intensely more important.

Published in London, UK

IntechOpen

ISBN 978-1-83635-362-1
9 781836 353621