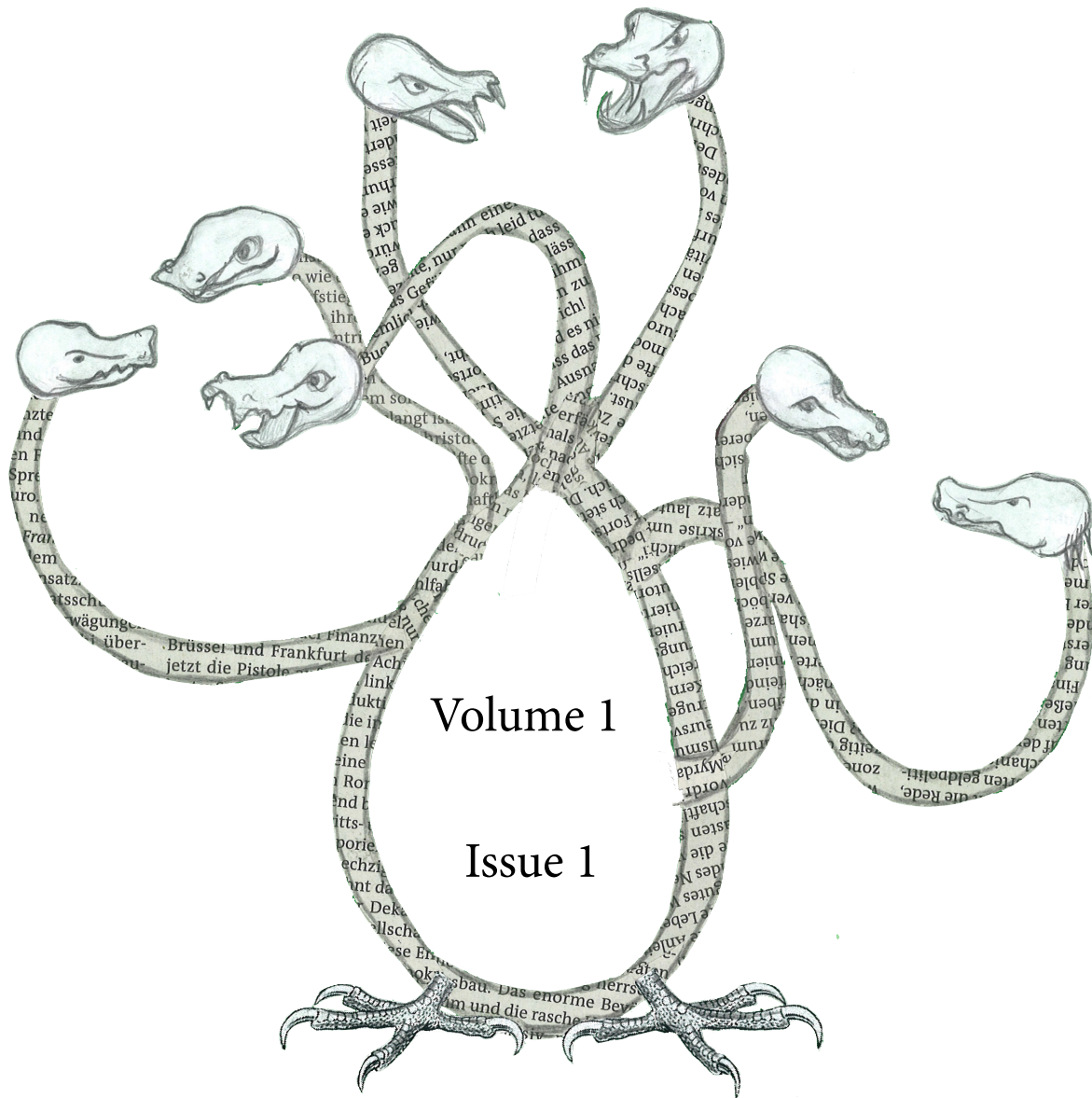




Hydra

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Editorial

Dear Reader,

We are proud to present to you the first issue of the new graduate school journal, *Hydra – Interdisciplinary Journal of Social Sciences*. As postgraduate students of the School of Social and Political Science at the University of Edinburgh, we started this peer-reviewed journal to not only provide students with an opportunity for early-career publications, but also to strengthen the dialogue between the many disciplines and subject areas within our graduate school. Interdisciplinarity is a fashionable term that is often used in academia today, but far less often put into practice. When we are busy with day-to-day tasks – attending courses, tutoring and meeting deadlines – all embedded in the specific discourse and literature of our disciplines – how is it possible to break down the boundaries of our own subject to interact with the world beyond? How can we establish an active and diverse ‘scientific community’ that is more than just a slogan?

A good first step is always to get to know what is going on. The School of Social and Political Science offers 26 different Taught MSc courses, 11 MSc by Research courses and 10 PhD programmes, including disciplines such as political science, anthropology, sociology, international relations, science and technology and public policy. Within these courses, some of us might be working on very similar topics without being aware of it. But apart from the occasional chat in the kitchen or the lift, we do not often get to interact with other discipline’s research. Therefore, *Hydra* wants to open a window to show what students at the SPS are studying and thinking about, and to enable our engagement with each other in ongoing discussions in the graduate school. *Hydra* is interdisciplinary rather than multidisciplinary in that we look for articles and arguments that take a multiplicity of perspectives into account in order to reach a more nuanced and dynamic conclusion than might otherwise be achieved.

You may be wondering: why the name *Hydra*? This mystical creature resided in the lake of Lerna in ancient Greece, and it is famously known for possessing many heads on one body. We found this image quite fitting for the graduate school. Surely our many heads are stretching out in different directions, but our common body sits, well, not in a lake, it sits in the Chrystal Macmillan Building. Cutting off each other’s heads in order to silence the multiplicity of voices is clearly not a good idea when dealing with Hydra. They just grow back, more divided than before. Therefore, we chose this name to stress our journal’s role as a base for dialogue and exchange.

Hydra is also the name of a small multi-cellular organism found in freshwater lakes and streams. It has an adhesive foot on the bottom of its body, and a number of tentacles on its top. The hydra’s cells are not coordinated by a central brain, but instead they are connected by a non-hierarchical nerve net. The reason why this hydra has received so much attention is that it

seems to be biologically immortal: it can be cut up into little pieces, each of which after a short time reorganises itself to form a coherent, functioning one. That is what Hydra aims to achieve – taking all of the great streams of knowledge present throughout the Graduate School, and making them more than the sum of their parts.

The journal grew as an idea between a small group of postgraduate students within the Graduate School of Social and Political Sciences during the summer of 2012. By the end of January we had received over 30 excellent submissions from Public Policy, Social Anthropology, Africa and International Studies, Social Work, Sociology, International Relations, Science and Technology Studies, Childhood Studies, Global Social Change and South Asian Studies. Sixteen peer-reviewers volunteered to be involved in the difficult task of choosing and preparing ten articles for the inaugural issue. Articles went back and forth between the editorial team, the reviewers, and the authors over several months, culminating in publication on the new *Hydra* website.

As a result, you will find in this issue articles that address diverse topics and events of international political importance, such as fear of crime in the US (Roisin Timmins), piracy in Somalia (Toke Wolff), social movements in Bolivia (Modestos Siotos), subalternity in the Kashmir conflict (Dustie Spencer) and slum upgrading in African cities (Laura MacPherson). Other more conceptual articles discuss the ontological challenges of the history of ideas (Matthijs Maas), knowledge production in interviews (Peter M. Yates), the anti-social character of business corporations (Helene Ryding), ethnographies of the body (Agathe Faure) and the role of ritual in politics (Joso Skarica).

We thank Angela Laurins from the Library and University Collection for her immense assistance in designing and setting up the *Hydra* Journal website. Thank you to Richard Freeman, Head of the Graduate School, for providing invaluable guidance from start to finish. And, of course, we would only have been able to present empty pages without the many hours of work that our authors and peer-reviewers invested in the papers.

Thank you all!

With our best wishes,
The Hydra Editorial Team

Fear of Crime, Fear of Control: How Structuring Freedoms Can Increase Happiness

Roisin Timmins

Introduction

The balance between control and freewill is a deciding factor in the happiness of an individual, and by extension, of a state. It has been the subject of philosophical discourse for thousands of years, from Plato's *The Republic* and the reduction of freedom to choose for achieving 'justice', to the long-held western democracies that proclaim that freedom of choice is the pillar of society. "Happiness is a social phenomenon" and therefore to understand individual happiness, the social and public contexts must be included in the subjective experience (Selymes, 2011). Le Breton (2004) and Gruber & Mullainathan (2006) point to the possibility that exerting greater control at both an individual and state level can increase both safety and happiness. On the other hand, Jankowiak argues that "living in a totalitarian social organisation will undermine [the citizen's] sense of 'being in control' over their immediate environment" which in turn hinders happiness (2009: 148). Similarly, Inglehart and Klingemann argue that "virtually all societies that experienced communist rule show relatively low levels of subjective well-being, even when compared with societies at a much lower economic level" (2000: 171), thus supporting the idea that more choice means more happiness. However, this could possibly be more powerfully affected by the upheaval associated with dramatic regime change as opposed to the ideologies attached. Verme differs slightly in his argument, suggesting that the relationship between happiness and freedom to choose has a spurious element accounted for at least in part by "the locus of control" (2009: 149) and so educational policy can affect how happy citizens are made by greater freedom.

This idea can be built on by looking at Simpson's (1996) explanation of cautious/confident frameworks and the application of this moving from individual decision-making to the attitudes and reactions of whole societies. Further to this, Garland (2001), suggests that in the UK and the US, increasing market freedoms, and therefore individual choice in the current globalised environment, "has come to depend on the close control of excluded groups", which can clearly be seen in the residents of gated communities in Low's *Behind the Gates* (2004). In looking at small scale attempts of groups of people to exert or give up control, it is possible to see the underlying fears and social phobias that affect the individual decision-making process. The study of individual reactions and reasons for said fears can then go a long way to explain the success or failure of the related policies implemented by the particular government, from the *woonerf* concept in urban-planning, to tobacco taxation, and controlling the flow of information. Taking the Dutch *woonerf* (plural *woonerven*) as an example, this essay aims to argue for greater freedom in a state-controlled structure to alleviate public anxieties and strengthen a sense of community.

The Woonerf

A radical idea at its heart, the *woonerven* are urban planning systems that remove traditional road markings and signs in an attempt to make drivers more alert to other road-users. This includes the use of 'street furniture' in the form of trees and flower boxes to de-linearise the road and the

removal of pavements. Essentially, “cars are welcome if they travel at walking speed” (Hart, 2008: 70), and this has been proven to greatly reduce the risk of traffic incidents and increase children’s play as well as enhancing the social capital of the area (Hart, 2008). The logic behind this works in two ways. Firstly, in removing cues that could reduce drivers’ attentiveness, the public roadways become a communal area where all are responsible for their own and each other’s safety. Secondly, it gives right of way more definitely to pedestrians and so encourages residents to treat the public roadways as a part of the general usable space instead of being a division that is designated only to motorised vehicles. This idea has been diluted and translated to ‘Home Zones’ in the UK and US, but governments are reluctant due to “fear of local government liability as a result of departing from commonly accepted street standards” (Hart, 2008: 71). Across Europe, however, residents would much prefer the *woonerf* structure with reduced traffic capacity for the benefits that it confers to the community (Hart, 2008).

Gated Communities in the US

In the US, there is a sense of intensified social injustice and inequality that is embodied by the growth of gated communities that physically fracture urban communities (Atkinson & Smith, 2012). The racial segregation engendered by such gating is indeed significant and relates strongly to “fuelled public debates about the supposed links between race and crime” (Garland, 2001: 136). Ironically, Low’s ethnography of gated communities in the US (2004) shows attempts made by people to gain control of their lives in a world where “globalization and economic restructuring weaken existing social relations and contributed to the breakdown of traditional ways of maintaining social order” (2004: 17). Although she says that “gated communities serve different purposes and express distinct cultural meanings” (ibid.: 16), the numerous motives she describes for moving ‘behind the gates’ seem only to vary insofar as which social group is segregated as a result. For example, expats in Saudi Arabia are separate from the local population, and exclusive class division in Bulgaria and China makes wealth and status highly visible (Low, 2004: 16). Perhaps there is a place for the opening of spaces to encourage integration in residential areas and by extension opening society to more cohesion and producing happier communication between social groups.

So what is it that the residents of the US neighbourhoods expect to take from building high walls, employing security staff and installing surveillance? Low reflects on the desire for ‘the old days’ of the small American “two-movie theatre town”, and points out that “developers, public officials and residents all raise the ideal of community when talking about gating”. She also comments that “larger numbers of people feel increasingly insecure” (Low, 2004: 231), and discusses globalisation, the breakdown of “traditional institutions of social control”, but also the threat of terrorism as being both symptomatic and causal in the modern US. Garland (2001) builds on this by looking at ‘otherness’ in more detail: in both the UK and the US “the public’s fears and insecurities, its heightened awareness of the problem, its scepticism about liberal policies, its lack of concern for the offenders themselves” are all issues that have led to a “social and cultural divide between ‘us’ and ‘them’” (Garland, 2001: 181). That is to say, the “dangerous undeserving poor” are perceived as social ills that are preventing the well-being of the “innocent, long-suffering middle-class victims” (Garland, 2001: 182). The division of spaces that comes from this conflict only serves to perpetuate these negative perceptions.

An interesting example is Carol, a young mother in the US who tells Low that she moved from a community where she had strong social ties and felt safe to a different neighbourhood in order

to remove her children from a school where “ethnic changes” in the area meant they would be exposed to students from various socio-economic backgrounds (2004: 137-8). She believes that the happiness and well-being of her children, both present and future, depends on them interacting exclusively with other children of the same social status. Similarly, Karen worries about traffic and her children being able to play in the streets, but soon her thoughts turn to new constructions that would attract “illegal aliens” for work (ibid.: 101). Whilst the gated communities make parents feel more comfortable with allowing their children to play outside, “freedom to play should be a right regardless of [what] your family can afford” (ibid.: 110). What is most concerning about this fear is that it is being transferred to the children of the communities from a very early age. In Chapter 5, Low talks to the children in her niece’s neighbourhood and is shocked to discover that “the fears of children under ten in San Antonio resemble those of older children documented in earlier eras” (ibid.: 97). For example, one boy says “I’m afraid people can get in, a gate isn’t enough to stop them” (ibid.: 96). Does this imply that these children’s fears are exaggerated by the extra security? Indeed, in increasing the awareness of risks and dangers in an environment, additional security measures tend “to increase subjective insecurity” (Zedner, 2003: 163).

At this point, it is important to note that the crime rate in the United States is, and has been, decreasing rapidly, and in suburban areas the rates were already low in comparison with inner-city areas (Low, 2004: 130). The fear that is experienced by both adults and children in these communities is largely a social construction, and subjective security can be affected by many “factors apart from actual crime including individual temperament, environmental signals, political assurances and, not least, media representation” (Zedner, 2003: 164). The freedoms experienced within the gated communities come about by safeguarding against risk perceived as a result of these factors, but it “comes at a high social and psychological cost” (Low, 2004: 109). The atmosphere of “moral panic” within these communities could even go as far as to make the young inhabitants “more vulnerable to drug problems suicide or violence” (ibid.), as the social and racial segregation can further reduce the information with which these young adults can make decisions and assess risk.

Certainly the trend amongst contemporary suburban adolescents to adopt “stereotyped elements of urban black popular culture” (Low, 2004: 106) as a kind of rebellion against the control of their parents is very telling of how the segregation affects their choices as they become more independent. Often, this can escalate into actively seeking risks, especially when the youth finds it difficult to “see themselves in a positive perspective in their future history” (Le Breton, 2004: 1). It is when adolescents feel they have no control over their lives that they are most likely to endanger themselves in a “tension-releasing act” (Le Breton, 2004: 4), which can become increasingly likely in an environment with such literal, physical boundaries like a gated community. The combination of segregation from real inter-racial community and the interpretation of media and pop culture means that the information that children have to make assessments of risk are wildly misinformed and can lead to very real consequences, such as the eighteen deaths from heroin in one area described by Low (2004: 106). Since these sorts of social problems should not happen in the safe affluent suburbs, there is a displacement of blame onto black drug dealers and “predatory Mexican nationals” (Low, 2004: 106) in the media, which can only serve to further exacerbate the problem.

Social Phobias and the Fear of Other-ness

Simpson’s notion of ‘social phobia’ as a cultural phenomenon (1996: 560) could go some way to illuminate the attitudes in this fearful culture. In her paper, Simpson (1996) explains the cautious,

confident and neutral frameworks used by all human beings to assess danger and safety. The cautious framework assumes that the environment is dangerous until proven safe; the confident framework assumes the opposite; finally, the neutral framework represents the most common assumption: it “marks people as dangerous or explicitly safe, but assumes nothing about the unmarked” (Simpson, 1996: 557). In relation to the gated communities of Low’s observations, one can assume that the residents are working within a cautious framework more often than usual, especially when venturing beyond their walls into “other-ness”. It may also be argued that the residents are “[deviating] from the appropriate framework” (ibid.) and therefore their behaviours can be described as symptomatic of phobia. Indeed, Simpson does suggest that “Americans could legitimately be considered crime phobic” (ibid.: 560). It seems that with an ever-increasing, diversifying population, many families want to escape the rapid changes that make them feel unsafe and return to an idealised time where everybody knows their neighbours (and their neighbours are ‘like them’).

Taking other individual characteristics to a cultural level, the idea of introversion as a part or type of personality can translate appropriately to the behaviours displayed across the various gated communities observed by Low (2004). Kearny describes a type of introversion that is characterised by “a pattern of fearfulness, timidity, avoidance and guardedness surrounding new stimuli such as strangers or novel objects” (2004: 6). This personality is prone to social phobia (though not all those who experience social phobias are of this type), and yet usually these characteristics are present in people who “still function adequately in their daily life” (ibid.: 10). However, when applied (loosely) to a whole community, this can have profound consequences for the well-being of the society as a whole, manifesting in the phobias described that motivate exclusionary actions.

Throughout her observations and interviews with her American subjects specifically, there is an underlying fear of ‘otherness’, and a need to control their environments in order to keep themselves and their families safe. This is not an isolated example either; Zedner sums up the feeling of these residents in the simple logic: “if security is a good thing, why not have more of it?” (2003: 156). Yet there is a deeper problem not addressed by this logic, in that “the very fact that the private security sector now outstrips the public poses a significant challenge to existing regulatory systems” (ibid.: 156-7). This creates a huge inequality of security services provided to those within and outwith the gates, but also even from one community to another, since these private services are regulated internally and to varying standards (Low, 2004: 50). Gated communities do not solve the problems behind the fears of their residents (many refer to ‘a false sense of security’), in fact it only “reinforces perceptions that those who are not in the community are ‘outsiders’” (ibid.: 65). So this inequality cannot possibly contribute to happiness and well-being in a society; those inside the walls become excessively fearful, whereas those outside the walls are aware of their exclusion from the protection, and therefore their unworthiness in the eyes of those insiders, as well as being forced to “[inhabit] dangerous places” (Zedner, 2003: 166) that are defined by the absence of such private security.

So what is the solution to this social phobia of crime and otherness? The commonly encouraged solution for individual phobias is direct-exposure therapy, though this would, of course, be inappropriate when applied to a whole society, and “removing all locks and seeking out high-crime areas seem foolhardy actions, rather than therapeutic ones” (Simpson, 1996: 560). However, the socialisation theory that inspires direct-exposure therapy is most certainly relevant. Shi et al. state that it is the government’s responsibility to use policy to “strengthen the resilience of

individual, family, community and society” (2006: 170) which contributes to the needs that are “crucial to happiness” (ibid.: 169). In other words, the ability to resist, and even thrive in, adverse or dangerous conditions is a highly desirable quality in individuals of a happy, successful society. Moreover, the *belief in one’s resilience* is at least equally important. Surely removing the walls and allowing a flow of people throughout the community would aid their fears: if one fears what one doesn’t know or understand, the easiest route to alleviating these fears is by learning more about the *real* risk and understanding the true roots of the anxiety that drew the residents behind their gates in the first place. Much like the *woonerven*, allowing for greater interaction between all forms of transportation through removing the signals and rigid signage, removing the gates and allowing for an interaction between different areas of the community can increase the feeling of safety for all.

Risk Perception in China

In studying the psychology of risk perception and the Chinese public’s reaction to the government handling of the SARS epidemic in 2002/3, Shi et al. offer “the multi-level resilience system” (2006: 188) as a key factor in cultivating long-term happiness. The relevant conclusions of the study are as follows:

[...]to control the irrational psychological and behavioural reactions of the public, government should pay more attention to the appropriate ways of releasing crisis relevant information, especially the negative and self-related information [...] which could alleviate the irrational risk perception and panic. (Shi et al., 2006: 187)

Information, or lack thereof, is the power that can create or dissipate a society’s fears. During the SARS epidemic, the government’s handling of information concerning infection/recovery rates, the active preventative measures being taken and other crisis relevant material decided the objectivity of the public’s risk assessment capacity (Shi et al., 2006: 186). Essentially, the government manipulated the information given to the public in order to create the appropriate reaction and level of risk perception that would both keep the maximum number of people protected but also the minimum number of people unnecessarily panicked.

When taking this beyond times of crisis, a government’s use of the education system and the media as means for developing the public’s resilience and risk assessment capacity are interesting avenues of thought. An example of ‘bad’ governance in creating public trust and improving risk perception can be seen in nearby Taiwan, where there is an “authoritarian style regulatory culture [...] where hiding and holding back information is a norm” (Chou & Liou, 2009: 45). This in turn means that when the public need to assess risk, they have inadequate information and cannot “find real answers through the official channels of the system” (ibid.). In terms of public perception relating to food safety specifically, Taiwanese respondents displayed both “a lower awareness of food safety and consumers’ rights” and a much higher “dissatisfaction with the governments’ risk governance” (ibid.: 54).

In essence, public trust in the government’s ability to assess and then communicate risk to the public has a huge effect on an individual’s ability to make decisions that best improve their welfare, but also their confidence in their own *and* the governments’ ability to do so. Shifting this back to the US, it seems that the public have a distrust of the public security systems available and so

choose to protect themselves. Yet, in taking this decision (which would more commonly be made by a government who had more appropriate information and decision-making skills), the residents either chose the wrong security or have far less confidence in their choice. These residents do not have the information they need to confidently assess risk and must think instead within a cautious framework. This can then lead to both irrational behaviour and apparently higher anxieties for the individuals brought up and socialised by such environments.

The Locus of Control

Verme looks at the relationship between control and freedom of choice in the introduction to his paper (2009). That freedom of choice correlates strongly with happiness and is asserted by Verme within the constraints of the individual's ability to confidently choose. This is what is known as the "locus of control" (Verme, 2009: 146-7). So if an individual feels capable of making the choice that will bring the most benefit to themselves and their loved ones, they are happy for more choices to be available. However, if the individual does not feel confident in making the correct decision, increasing choice will begin to make them unhappy (Verme, 2009). This largely depends on the personality type of the individual in question; for example, an internal type who believes outcomes depend on internal factors will appreciate freedom more so than the external type who believes that external factors have greater influence on outcomes. Verme states that his empirical, quantitative data shows a stronger association with life satisfaction and freedom of choice/locus of control than any other variable. Again applying this to the concept of structured freedom, a government can increase the confidence of the public in their own ability to make the correct decision by simultaneously providing correct and sufficient evidence and also condensing information so as not to drown the public in statistics that would create further anxiety surrounding their decisions. However, he also mentions the influence of the educational system, "if countries are authoritarian and encourage obedience [...] they tend to reward and prefer externals" and vice versa for democracies who "try to empower their people" (ibid.: 150). These ideas imply a potential weakness in Verme's findings, and similarly in Inglehart and Klingemann (2000), as most developed countries are established democracies and therefore encourage autonomy in their citizens. The public are socialised into taking responsibility for their decisions and are therefore expected to have rational risk-perception. This could explain the anomaly in China, as a communist country, having similar happiness reports as democracies of the same income per capita. That is to say, while other communist states failed to support their citizens in coping with their choice or lack thereof, the Chinese government has successfully exercised control over the public through education and media as well as through political force. In short, the evidence so far suggests the locus of control does not demand greater freedoms, rather it demands close integration and development of the appropriate level of autonomy with the level of freedom or control available in any given society/community.

Finding Balance in Hohhot

Jankowiak's ethnography of the citizens of Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, provides some useful insight. In relation specifically to control, Jankowiak notes that "self-sufficiency is an important aspect in Chinese spiritual and health practices" (2009: 150). Further to this, in the foundations of Chinese cultural history, there is great importance attached to "responsibility, choice, and self-growth via achieving mastery of one's body" (ibid.: 151). This attitude boils down to one's own responsibility for one's well-being, and a proactive approach to pursuing happiness (ibid.). When the communist

party first came to power in China, Jankowiack states that the public belief that “most leaders were dedicated to the public good” (ibid.: 153) and improving standards of living meant that the society functioned healthily. However, by the time Jankowiack began his observations in the 1980s, the cultural revolution – amongst other possible factors – had “fostered a fortress mentality that de-emphasized the importance of choice, innovation and change” (ibid.: 154). During this time, he noted that the lack of control over the direction of their lives had caused undue psychological harm. Much like increasing freedom for all had caused phobic reactions to otherness in the US gated communities, the monotonous institutionalised insularity of Chinese society was born from a culture of fear (ibid.: 155).

Unsurprisingly, after the opening of more choices with the emerging market economy by 1987, Jankowiack’s observations describe “an immediate positive impact on Hohhotians’ life satisfaction” (2009: 157). This increase of choice did not negatively affect the community’s strong inter-social bonding, which is commonly accepted as an important influence on subjective happiness and well-being. Importantly, despite Jankowiack’s assertion that democracy provides control for its citizens and therefore a better environment for citizens to realise their own happiness, it is not necessarily political freedom that provides that control, as his own observations can confirm. Looking back to the Chinese government’s handling of the SARS epidemic, it becomes clear that (regardless of political ideology), all states must balance on a fine line between controlling and freeing their citizens.

While political choice may not be necessary to an individual’s happiness, the need to feel in control of one’s own destiny is most certainly of great importance. By structuring the freedoms that a society can experience, a government can create higher social capital and increase the chances of individuals creating their own happiness by controlling their own future with appropriate levels of information. Too much information released, for example the crime statistics that fuel the media in the US, can create undue levels of anxiety which segregate communities, cities and even whole countries. In the same moment, however, too little, or incorrect information can greatly harm the public’s trust in their policy-makers which can equally affect an individual’s ability to make choices that enhance their and their families well-being.

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The Machiavelli Code:

J.H. Hexter's Analysis of 'Lo Stato' in Relation to Problems of Meaning in the History of Ideas

Matthijs Maas

Overview

“Writing intellectual history is like trying to nail jelly to the wall.”

~William Hesselntine

When we deal with the past there are, it seems, always two sides to consider: one is that of factual ‘history’, the study of which concerns itself solely with the truthful recording of the physical events of the past. As a result, its methods draw on evaluating a host of material sources ranging from archaeological excavations to personal diaries and more, as it seeks to provide an objective, thorough report on the lives and actions of generations and civilizations gone by. *The History of Ideas*, conversely, is a [sub]field which focuses rather on the non-material, but no less influential ideas—religious, political, philosophical—produced by these people and often directly fuelling the course of history. Inasmuch as this project wishes to construct a comprehensive anthology of human thought throughout the ages, it, like the study of history itself, has nowhere to turn but the primary sources; the words of the ‘Great’ philosophers and visionaries that speckle all eras.

This paper will be one in this latter tradition; seeking to comment on the historical development and influence of philosophical and political thought. Yet within this tradition it will be unorthodox through the limited and highly particular choice of the academic groundwork; an analysis of- and commentary upon J.H. Hexter’s 1957 paper *‘Il Principe and Lo Stato’*¹. At this point it must be stressed, however, that this paper is not so much about the particular characteristics, merits, flaws or even specific conclusions of Hexter’s analysis; rather, Hexter’s paper becomes a means to an end as the ultimate goal of this essay will be to understand and further explore what his conclusions and observations reveal about the shifting nature and role of concepts and context within the philosophy of history at large.

In his work Hexter challenges the notion, prevalent within the academic community at the time and still widespread these days, that—notwithstanding some inevitable but minor semantic shifts inherent to translation—interpretation and understanding of primary texts remains rather straightforward. In effect, this theory holds that we should be capable of understanding precisely what a philosopher *means* in writing this or that no matter what era he is from. In this view, one can interpret key terms and concepts within a philosopher’s text simply by consistently resorting

¹ Hexter, J.H. *Il Principe and Lo Stato*. Studies in the Renaissance. Vol. 4 [1957]. Pp. 113-138. What makes this a startling selection is that not only is it exclusively secondary literature, with all reference and meaning imbued in the primary sources which are its object of enquiry; but moreover Hexter’s formalistic, empirical approach and statistical methodology seem a long shot—stylistically if not in substance—from the kind of political, philosophical or historical treatises we might have come to expect to encounter in studying the history of ideas. Still, as will be argued, this project will be a worthwhile one insofar as Hexter’s observations, which in the first instance are solely made in reference to Machiavelli, can be interpreted to have far more far-reaching implications for the study of the history of thought itself. More on this shortly.

to and wielding their modern-day meanings and connotations. Putting this orthodoxy to the test, Hexter applies it to *Il Principe* ('The Prince'), the controversial political treatise by the infamous Renaissance writer Nicolò Machiavelli. In doing so, Hexter shows how this conventional approach will clearly falter when applied to Machiavelli's notoriously flexible and inconsistent use of vocabulary. Choosing to focus on Machiavelli's concept of *Lo Stato*, which is commonly presumed to be close to [or indeed the foundation of] our modern, liberal notion of the organized 'state', Hexter indexes all the various occurrences of this term within *The Prince*. Consequently, using a highly statistical analysis and comparison of the various contexts wherein it appeared, Hexter argued convincingly that one can simply not capture all the wildly distinct ways Machiavelli used *Lo Stato* under any one umbrella term. Moreover, he showed that even the most common use of that term within *The Prince* is still at great variance with the modern meaning of the concept of 'State'.

Hexter's analysis here is very potent, but even more significant to the present paper is his underlying objection against the way contemporary historians and philosophers of his time systematically misread, and thus, unwittingly 'hijacked'² famous writings of the past by interpreting these texts without being fully aware of the historical and personal context in which they were written. As such, he warns us to consider context as well as content. To understand the scope and impact of this argument we should start by clarifying the origin of the very notion of 'key concepts' in the history of ideas.

A Concept of History, and a History of Concepts

History, in its prime instance, seems plain and simple enough to grasp; we all can summon it in a myriad of timeless scenes grafted into our collective memory; a Greek philosopher is charged by his city-state to ingest poison for his views; a master strategist and aspiring politician is stabbed to death before the Roman Senate; an upstart priest sparks a religious schism by hammering his theological Protests onto a German Church's doors; an Austrian colonel watches his chanting, uniformed followers pile Jewish books onto a pyre.

The rich—and bloody—tapestry of history time and time again affirms the paramount presence and power of something peculiarly human: ideas. For while material circumstances—geography and resources—are undeniably at the very base of human existence, it took substantial abstract thought to 'ascend' to ever higher levels of social, technological or political development. Whether it was the practical ingenuity that produced the phalanx, the crossbow and the cannon, or the political and religious doctrines that determined against whom these would be used, it would seem that political or philosophical ideas and systems should be considered among the most powerful forces that define human nature, the meaning and structure of his world, and ultimately the course of his history.

It is not so surprising, then, that history becomes its own mirror, producing ideas about itself—and, again, producing ideas about its own ideas. As such, scholars of history and philosophy must not merely take stock of 'first-stage' views—those historic treatises directly dealing with and responding to the prevalent political and moral problems of their time—but crucially also of the 'second-stage' theories which, while often closely intertwined with the initial social recipes, rather

² Note though that these methodological notions—that completely ignore 'context' and only focus on 'content'—prevail and prosper within academia even today.

reflect on the more universal nature of these practical precepts, their reason for existing and their role in the grand currents of history³. We therefore continue to study the great moral, political and philosophical giants of the past, not necessarily because we believe their ideas constitute flawless, full-fledged or [to us] desirable blueprints for *Utopia*, but because we view a certain understanding of them as indispensable to a proper analysis and appreciation of the political possibilities—and perils—of our own world.

Consider, for instance, how within the modern-day physical sciences, Galileo and Newton, whose ideas are in a strict sense incorrect or incomplete, are still commonly taught insofar as their models sufficiently approximate the reality of utility—quantum mechanics, though ‘true’ [or ‘true-er’ than classical mechanics] is of little use to the engineer designing a bridge. In much the same way, academics within the social sciences and humanities continuously seek and are given opportunities to distil, revive, or repurpose past ideas—whole doctrines or specific tenets—with the aim to create new, intelligible and successful ground rules. Echoing the age-old metaphor, uttered most famously by Newton⁴, of the dwarf seeing further because he is standing on the shoulder of giants, many contemporary thinkers conceive of the numerous branches of political thought as exactly that—the widespread branches of an ultimately singular Tree of Knowledge which, though some branches snap or wither, on the whole reaches ever higher; a globally ascending structure, transcending human generations and continuously improving as its various discourses compete and complement each other in a dialectic manner.⁵ Hence the unspoken but pervading dream driving the study of history, one that has fuelled historians and philosophers since ancient times, seems to be the prospect, no matter how far hence, of a unified and conclusive understanding of the motives, processes and forces that drive history, as well as of the role, if any, of human nature and free agency therein, so that we can, as it were, derive from this eternally valid model a greater control over our own destiny and now-mature experience. Of course, assuming that such a project is even at all possible and not simply a philosophical red herring, one may well question if [re] turning to the ‘tried-and-terrible’⁶ remedies of the past is indeed the key.

Regardless, there are quite naturally a great many views of- and on history; from it being an objective and unified record of past human affairs; a pre-destined unfolding of a transcendent design⁷, to a tragic and ultimately cyclic⁸ ‘progression of victors [and victims] throughout time’. Particularly prevalent in many writings of the modern period, however, is a fascination with what are perceived as ‘recurring’ ideas; in drawing upon such categories as ‘metaphysics’, ‘theology’, and ‘epistemology’, for instance, and appending these names to wildly different texts from distinct historical backgrounds, modern [Western] academic philosophy has come to assume—and rely upon—a range of ‘conceptual currents’ throughout history which center themselves around a number of ‘universal human themes’. These ‘mono-themes’ are seminal topics that most, if not all philosophers of note, will come to or perhaps even need to deal with. These include such questions

3 Notice that the second-stage view might easily deem primary ideas as having a negative historical role—i.e. being corrosive to a [desirable] society. Consider for instance Burke’s *Reflections on the Revolution in France*

4 “If I have seen a little further it is by standing on the shoulders of Giants.” Letter to Robert Hooke (Feb. 5 1676)

5 Cf. Hegel, G.W.F. *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*. 1837.

6 Inasmuch as all moral codes and systems of government so far have fallen short of the ideal society in unfailingly resulting in greater or lesser degrees of injustice, unhappiness or unfreedom. To retain flawed materials in the construction of a flawless product appears, at least to me, a *contradictio in terminis*.

7 Both in a theological, spiritual or metaphysical—as per St. Augustine and Hegel—but also a structural, materialist sense [as per Marx].

8 “History does not repeat itself. The Historians repeat one another” ~Max Beerbohm

of virtue, justice, liberty, peace and social stability. Therefore, even if the answers we find differ throughout different times, cultures or circumstances, the history of ideas, it is supposed, is unified in the self same perennial questions that are raised everywhere and every time.

Echoes of Babel

It is interesting to observe how the aforementioned ‘scientific’ project of systematic and objective exploration and discourse on the one hand, and this pre-eminent notion of universal and timeless precepts on the other, together come remarkably close to the central tenets of the liberal doctrine as it arose during the Enlightenment. Inasmuch as our modern society is very much based on that period, it is only to be expected that we reason within the same paradigm and raise the same questions. Perhaps it is from here, then, that the aforementioned concept of universal human ‘mono-themes’ in philosophical thought arises. This premise, it seems at first, we might yet grant without much ado; while an argument could ostensibly be made demonstrating that this or that unique philosophic theme has been historically or culturally exclusive to a single people, the principal body majority of moral problems, broadly conceived, seems to remain universal even if different personal experiences manifest themselves in wildly diverging questions⁹. However, it must subsequently be conceded that these political mono-themes require little beyond a shared global interest. Hence, the concept ‘human nature’ can be said to be such a mono-theme insofar as virtually every philosopher must make assertions about it if he is to write of human politics at all. However, this then leaves free different thinkers to assert a range of philosophical positions on the matter that vary tremendously from one another. For instance, Machiavelli and Hobbes, in their own ways, both cast human nature as innately selfish, whereas Hume allows for at least a measure of honour. Rousseau, in turn, rejects the very concept of a ‘fixed’ human nature.

It can therefore be argued, that this premise of universal human themes itself is in fact largely meaningless since it makes no profound analytic claim, rather depending on a circular argument along the lines of *‘this topic X is indispensable if you want to talk about human social problems at all. All human societies deal with human social problems. Therefore all human societies deal with topic X’*. In other words, it seems a tautology to argue that all human beings deal with the problems that all human beings encounter. At this point, the various categories have to be so loosely defined to be almost void of reference. Regardless, this argument will not be pursued further, since, either way, the crucial point is that, insofar as we do grant that these are key concepts which many if not all thinkers use, have used, and seemingly must use, the question remains if they are still linked; if there is an underlying structure. The answer to this question is crucial for the liberal Enlightenment project represented in our modern academia, for if these philosophical themes are indeed universal—if humans everywhere, at every time, share certain similar questions, then this means that any valid answers or solutions we find to these questions will also be universal: in the same way that [in physics] deducing a natural law allows us to advance technology for all humanity, we hope it becomes possible to decisively ‘solve’ social problems not just for one particular event, but for all time. The established school of analysis holds that we can discover many implicit links from one philosopher to another and can hence, fit them into ‘strands’ of meaning wherein concepts build and improve upon another. Hence, texts and concepts from profoundly different thinkers and backgrounds are lumped together into one integrated tradition

⁹ Quentin Skinner would disagree, however, arguing rather that all intellectual expressions in history—indeed verbal expressions as a rule—are *a priori* individual and in- or only imperfectly accessible. See for instance Skinner, Q. (2002) *Visions of Politics: Volume 1: Regarding Method*, [Cambridge].

of philosophical thought, as specific terms used by one thinker are conceptually equated with their translated or grammatical equivalents as used by another—so when a writer, whether Marx or Machiavelli, speaks of ‘states’, we think we can in both situations wield our [modern] notion of the state in understanding them. It is this exact oversimplification of ideas which Hexter seeks to challenge in his exposition of Machiavelli.

Machiavelli: The End Justifies the Meanness

It must by now be somewhat clear why there is such an interest in Machiavelli, and why concepts are of such fundamental importance to the examination of history. It is quite self-evident that our modern Western society, with all its values and self-evident assumptions, was forged in the revolutionary fires of the 18th century; the Enlightenment saw, for the first time perhaps in over a millennia, a widespread, almost virulent intellectual fermentation on the European continent. Amongst its many fruits was a highly optimistic faith in human progress as moderated by the scientific venture. Simultaneously, the French and American Revolutions, with their “*Liberty, Equality, Fraternity*”, and “...*the pursuit of happiness*” respectively, laid the groundwork for a *Weltanschauung* wherein moral precepts and considerations held value not for one specific class of people at one time, but became universal: for all people, for all time.

As argued, we can find these twin Enlightenment legacies kept alive in our modern academia in both its scientific positivism and its desire to provide timeless, objective and clear definitions not just of scientific phenomena, but also—crucially—of social ones. This itself, amplified by the classical liberal devotion to unchanging, absolute Reason—a Reason that, it demands, must have been as accessible and unchanging for Machiavelli and Locke as for us—is instrumental in accounting for the pervading wish to impose our value systems and our individual sets of meaning upon readings centuries removed from us.

When examining such a profound thinker as Machiavelli, then, one should firstly keep in mind that he himself was not, at least in the historical sense, a philosopher of the Enlightenment; he never saw that era come to fruition. Far from it; his time was the Renaissance, which, nevertheless, is a close second where it comes to intellectual fervour. Yet the question asserts itself; why read him as a champion and case example for a study of Enlightenment political thought? For one, Machiavelli fulfilled the role of the first real *enfant terrible* of moral philosophy by challenging the orthodox Christian unity of politics and morality, and by introducing and redefining the terms and units of political discourse—for whether or not his works and concepts are ultimately as accessible and intelligible to us as we formerly believed, it seems at least certain that he broke ever more profoundly with the prevailing and dominant narratives of his time. As such, he is often considered the vanguard of modern political philosophy, laying the groundwork, whether or not knowingly, for many of the theories and worldviews that his ‘successors’ would come to properly and fully flesh out in the Liberal Enlightenment¹⁰

The question remains, however, if this account can be at all justified by an appeal to Machiavelli’s own

10 One problem remains however; while it might be accepted that he influenced later writers to a degree, his profoundly realist *Weltanschauung*, so inimical to classical liberal optimism and faith in progress, would seem to countermand the claim that Machiavelli was in any meaningful sense a real ‘progenitor’ of liberalism. This does not on itself exclude the claim that he was pivotal in shaping *modern* thought, however; many in the 20th century who involved themselves with politics—both scholars and policymakers—expressed great admiration for the Italian. The question remains, however, whether or not they were all misreading him.

writings. This is the precise project Hexter undertakes when he tries to interpret the Italian's use of 'Lo Stato', which, as mentioned, has been considered by many to be the first broad formulation of the territorial authoritative state which in modern times was most famously formulated by scholars like Weber. Note, incidentally, that this is not questioning whether Machiavelli—or in general terms, any traditionally 'influential' philosopher—had and continues to have an impact on people's ideas. This itself cannot be denied. What is being questioned, however, is whether Machiavelli—and others—would recognize 'their' ideas in the way they are nowadays attributed to them as profoundly theirs at all.

For, in the case of 'Lo Stato', Hexter convincingly argues that, by use of the aforementioned rigid yet comprehensive statistical methods, 'the state' as denoted by 'Lo Stato' is much closer to a personal possession, a tool for the sake of the prince and one inexorably tied to its singular ruler's personality traits¹¹. Yet even this definition, patently at odds with our modern 'state', can only be distilled through great trouble and speculation, as Machiavelli routinely switches and intermingles his terms, at times giving other meanings to 'lo Stato', at times giving said 'majority meaning' to other words. One can also observe this in the case of *virtù*, the elusive 'prime trait' of the Prince, which yet cannot and should not be identified with our modern concept of *Virtue*, but rather, possesses a variety of connotations [note again Machiavelli's plastic and versatile use of concepts] from 'skill' to 'strength' to 'manliness' and more, not just on the field of battle but also—perhaps more so—in the corridors of power. The same holds for his *Stato*, which is clearly far more different and flexible in meaning than scholars have given it credit for.

Prospect, Practice and Programme

So how then, should we go about reading the texts of the past? Are they wholly inaccessible to us, we who can neither possess nor understand the intrinsic personal experiences of their authors? Not so, certainly; but Hexter's findings do urge for a renewed sense of caution and academic humility. Within the example of Machiavelli, for instance, one has to consider, not just the context of specific concepts or words, but, on a grander scale, also the context of the man himself; his world of experience. Machiavelli's time, at least as much as ours, was one of conflict and political manoeuvring between city-states, weaving in and about an expansionist Papal States that was increasingly asserting the primacy of the spiritual over material power and wealth. Being at the center of a world in conflict—arguably more directly and fully than we today can understand—thoroughly shaped not simply his practical conclusions and imperatives, but also, and this we often overlook, his most basic moral premises.

Secondly, we have to keep into account that even the best translations of ancient works are always inherently subject to at least a degree of interpretation and re-definition. As words are the primary, indeed the only conveyors of ideas, we cannot but use them if we don't want to get lost utterly, but throughout this, we must always remember that translations remain innately imperfect substitutes. Especially as political language inherently is more fluid and inclusive than the terminology of mathematical or scientific discourses, we should take the utmost care to define, and agree upon, stable definitions if we are not to misrepresent and misunderstand each other—and the past.

Thirdly, we have to remember that texts written centuries ago did not—could not—have taken stock of all the historical, intellectual and philosophical developments since, which do however,

¹¹ Bringing—or rather keeping—the concept much more closer to medieval, feudal notions of *Dominium*.

perhaps inadvertently, influence our experience and understanding. In other words, the people of the past could only look at *their own* past, whereas we can also look at their future; so we can see, for instance, that ideas that seemed very sensible and good to them in their time would later turn out flawed or even dangerous. As a result, however, it would be an error to judge and denounce the people of the past by modern paradigms of [moral] thinking, if they themselves never even had access to these, for we will do nothing but play a smug, senseless joke on the dead.¹²

Fourthly, we have to consider the author's own intentions and accept a degree of uncertainty; most of all we must prevent from projecting and the sort of 'reverse linking' which retroactively derives a text's goals based upon the influence or social impact it would come to have. Generally, we have to understand that many authors at their times, publishing also for popular audiences, did not seek to trumpet some abstract, remote universal idea, but rather first and foremost sought to respond to immediate political exigencies, and only secondarily, as a result thereof, seek to embed these in more general historic trends. In the case of Machiavelli, it has to be kept in mind that he wrote his *Prince* with the implicit, if not the primary intent, to get back into Lorenzo de Medici's favour. And since other writings of him suggest a preference for a stable republican system of governance, it might be argued that *The Prince* was little more than a sycophant's Machiavellian bid for political amnesty.

Again, all this is not to say that any given thinker is *a priori* inaccessible or entirely isolated from his predecessors. It merely cautions the student of history against taking it from its own inalienable context; certainly this is making the task of interpretation all the harder, but simultaneously it holds promise of yet greater understanding. Thus, whether or not we may ever truly discover the dream of the liberal-scientific project, this small piece of advice will help us not to wander astray on the road there. And that is as much as we can ask of it.

In the end, maybe Hexter's greatest achievement lies in bringing us to a pause, making us look up from our keyboards, and wondering how the future will judge and read our own words.

¹² Note how this also seems to suggest a more *historical* approach for academic discourse, as opposed to the presently dominant scientific one.

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In a State of Exception: National and International Perceptions of Piracy in Somalia

Toke Andreas Wolff

Introduction

Piracy in Somalia is gaining considerable attention in the international political community. There are obvious reasons for this attentiveness as the strategic geographical area of Somali piracy disrupts international trading patterns. The international community has a grand interest in preventing the continuation of piracy. However, little attention has been paid to the question of *why* some Somalis turn to piracy as a means of income. The lack of importance given to local political grievances suggests that the international response to piracy is first and foremost embedded in vested economic interests, with little or no interest in addressing the root causes of piracy on the ground. Piracy in Somalia is framed in a political discourse that portrays Somali pirates as being directly linked to terrorism. This allows international actors to respond to the 'problem' of piracy within a political framework shaped by the discourse of the global 'war on terror'. The forceful response to piracy is thus legitimized by a discourse that portrays military responses as *commonsensical*. Within this framework it has officially been announced that "all necessary means" (UNSC, 2008) are appropriate in the fight against piracy, even though none of the means seem to confront the root cause of piracy in Somalia.

This essay seeks to investigate the root cause of piracy through the implementation of a criminological theoretical framework. This is followed by an analysis of how the international community responds to the reality on the ground. This analysis will especially draw on Agamben's theory of *the state of exception* (2005) as well as the Foucauldian *regime of truth* (1980) and in particular its relation to Abrahamsen's theories of *securitization* (2005). However, a brief contextual overview is presented first in order to shape the argument that piracy is rooted in socio-political grievances which are largely ignored by the global political community.

Contextual overview

Somalia has for decades been facing a humanitarian crisis, highlighted most recently by the UN declaring a state of famine in the country in July 2011. The consequences of such crises are devastating for any country and often cause people to seek refuge in neighboring countries or to turn towards illicit methods for gaining capital. In Somalia, the genesis of piracy must be considered within a context directly related to the current political situation triggered by historical and political elements (Beri, 2011: 452). The current political condition has especially been shaped by Siad Barre who took control of the country in a coup d'état in 1969. The coup was welcomed locally as Somalis hoped "a central leader would save the nation from political unrest" (Rothe & Collins, 2011: 330). The hopes vanished as Barre's vision of scientific socialism and a 'greater Somalia' triggered a war with Ethiopia in an attempt to gain control over the Ogaden province (Beri, 2011: 453). This coincided with the banning of political parties and extensive corruption as well as internal violence. The general political dissatisfaction led to civil war from 1988 to 1991, causing Barre to flee his position in January 1991. The following years saw continuous violent uprisings

concurring with a famine in 1991-1992. Since then, peace-talks and international interventions have tried to stabilize the country with the most recent attempt being the introduction of another transitional government, which regrettably mainly consists of politicians not troubling themselves with “the vexing task of actually governing and without having to subject themselves to...elections” (Menkhaus, 2011: 2).

Currently, nearly two million Somalis are displaced and four million people are in desperate need of food aid (Rothe & Collins, 2011: 331). The insurgent situation in Somalia is an example of how the distinction between war and crime has become increasingly blurred (Kaplan, 1994; Kaldor, 2006) and the loss of *Gewaltmonopol* has caused the distinction between legality and illegality to break down (van Creveld, 1991). Keen argues, “conflict can create war economies ... linked to international trading networks [where] members of armed gangs can benefit from looting” (1998: 11). Under such circumstances it becomes a complicated task to end the humanitarian crisis as its *raison d'être* “may be precisely the legitimacy which it confers on actions that in peacetime would be punishable as crimes” (ibid: 12). Considering that Somalia is in what is generally considered as the world’s “worst humanitarian crisis” (Kennedy, 2011: 7), the desperate need for obtaining basic goods through unorthodox and illegal methods must be considered as the root cause of piracy today (Rothe & Collins, 2011: 331).

Roots of Somali piracy

After the collapse of the Somali state the fishing grounds outside the coast of Somalia remained unprotected (Murphy, 2011: 12). Within the same month that Barre’s regime collapsed, foreign illegal fishing activity alongside the dumping of toxic waste escalated outside the Somali coast (ibid), and environmental movements raised concern of the consequences of the bi-catch of turtles, dolphins and dugongs, as well as the destruction of reef habitat (ibid: 18). Participating were fishing vessels from Japan, China, South Korea and certain European countries that flew under flags of convenience in order to circumvent EU restrictions (ibid). Their actions depleted the fishing stocks, and local Somalis began to impose a ‘tax’ (Hari, 2009) on these fishing vessels demanding not money, but diesel fuel, fishing materials, and fish (Murphy, 2011: 19). As these ‘taxes’ escalated so did the confrontations between Somalis and foreign fishermen, with the Somali fishermen beginning to use weapons as well as to take hostages in the aim of implementing what can be referred to as illicit taxing systems shaped by the lack of access to basic needs. We can say, therefore, that the collapse of the state clearly triggered an escalation of illegal foreign activities outside the coast of Somalia. This escalation in turn generated a local initiative shaped by the strategic geographical location of Somalia as a means of gaining access to basic resources.

The criminological framework

Piracy cannot be seen exclusively as a logical consequence of geographical location combined with specific political grievances. These desperate responses are also outcomes of an individual cost-benefit analysis. Rothe & Mullins argue, “the more individuals have at stake to lose, the greater the likelihood they would desist and/or reject additional criminal activity as the absolute cost is higher” (2010: 100). Additionally, the outcome of this cost/benefit analysis is determined by *social location*. If the outcome is favoring a criminal act, the deterrent function of the rule of law has failed to demotivate criminal acts, as the potential *cost* is low and the potential *benefit* is high. This could be seen in the 2010 trials in the Netherlands where one pirate claimed, “I have

no country, no family, nothing, I got into this situation because I am prepared to do anything” (O’Cinneide, 2010). Here, the deterrent value of the rule of law becomes impotent and perfunctory as the result of the cost-benefit analysis was favoring the *opportunistic criminal activity*.

Within the field of criminology it is attested that “large-scale organized violence directed towards strategic goals commonly co-exists with opportunistic criminal violence” (Green & Ward, 2009: 611). Opportunistic criminal activities can be perceived as criminal acts mainly motivated by economic interests. Such opportunistic criminal activities are relatively normal in states without a monopoly over organized violence (van Creveld 1991: 204). This results in a dispersal of violence where the new internal power actors seek patent on the *Gewaltmonopol* and in the process they blur the boundary between opportunistic violence and politically motivated violence. Green & Ward refer to this as ‘dual-purpose violence’ as it may serve private and political goals correspondingly. This can be considered a “common feature of conflict zones where the state monopoly of violence has collapsed” (Green & Ward, 2009: 609).

The collapse of the *Gewaltmonopol* and the relevant governmental institutions capable of intervening in cases of emergency has caused “desperation to obtain basic needs” amongst the local populations in Somalia (Rothe & Collins, 2011: 334). This desperation turns opportunistic criminality into a matter of survival as the individuals who “look at the occupational options available, see no conventional choices” (ibid) causing them to turn towards opportunistic criminal enterprises “to provide what is not available through ‘legitimate’ means” (ibid). These activities must be considered as one side of the dual-purpose criminality.

The opportunistic criminal response can thus be considered a local response to the transnational criminal activities that have increasingly appeared outside the coast of Somalia since the collapse of the Barre regime. According to Mullins & Rothe it can even be considered an entrepreneurial activity that helps provide the basic needs that the “satellite government” (Harper, 2012: 177) fails to deliver. Such ‘entrepreneurial’ response adds a certain degree of political and innovative elements to the discussion. Even though it is argued that piracy is driven by opportunistic criminalities, there is a political element that legitimizes piracy constituting the second part of the dual-purpose criminality. This political purpose is mainly local. It is described as “defensive piracy” (Murphy, 2011: 17) where local fishermen are portrayed as defending their fishing grounds from “*illegal, uncontrolled and unregulated* (IUU) activity of foreign fishing vessels” (ibid). Marchal (2011) refers to this as the ‘moral economy of piracy’, as the feeling of injustice constitutes a local acceptance of acts related to piracy. Therefore, local acceptance of piracy is constituted mainly by two reasons: Firstly, the profits; these profits are increasingly causing a trickle-down effect as pirates spend money on “houses, SUVs, laptops, alcohol, prostitutes and multiple wives” (Murphy, 2011: 111) and their earnings increasingly spread out to the community in terms of new businesses to provide “pirates with the goods and services their new-found wealth demanded” (ibid: 112). Secondly, the political motivations; Pirates are often perceived as “heroes, not criminals” (ibid) as defensive piracy protects “our resources from those looting them” (ibid: 113). Therefore, even though piracy is not universally condoned in Somalia, it is considered a logical reaction to “foreign pillages trying to put their fishermen out of business” (Rothe & Collins, 2011: 334). Hence, as overfishing as well as dumping of toxic waste has destroyed Somalia’s resources, Jaspardo argues that piracy can mainly be considered a resource swap: “with Somalis taking \$100 million annually in ransoms while Europeans and Asians poach \$300 million in fish”

(2009: 2). This 'tax' has for a long time been accepted locally, which stretches the importance for considering piracy as being both politically motivated and rooted in desperation. Green & Ward argue looting provides "opportunities for private enrichment. This can encourage participation in armed conflict but also sidetrack fighters from the pursuit of strategic political goals" (2009: 611).

There is no clear line between the defensive and the private motives. It is therefore relevant to investigate whether the argument that pirates are defending their fishing grounds is true, or if it has become an excuse so it might give them victim status among Western audiences? Such a crucial question must for now be left unanswered due to the notorious difficulty of conducting fieldwork in the area. What is important is *not* to deprive the pirates of their political agenda as the political motive is generally accepted at the local level. However, neither must they be considered exclusively as political actors. Piracy can be considered a local response triggered by international, illegal acts as well as local political grievances rooted in the lack of any control of the waters combined with desperate situations on the ground.

The criminological framework has provided an analysis of piracy as being linked to socio-political issues. It has been argued that it is a blurred motive between opportunistic crimes and political motives that stimulate piracy in Somalia, constituting a kind of dual-purpose criminal activity. The political aspect is important as it may have a legitimizing effect at the local level.

Global political response

Just as piracy in Somalia cannot be considered to be detached from political agendas, neither can the international response. This chapter argues that there is a persistent gap between the root causes of piracy on the ground and the international response, which is attempting to frame piracy as anti-political and exclusively in a discourse related to the global war on terrorism.

The international policies towards Somalia have been dictated "for years by post-9/11 U.S. counterterrorism policy" (Marchal, 2011: 31). The U.S. dominated fight against piracy is one that displays no will to address the root causes of piracy on the ground nor to showing interest in why piracy is enjoying increasing support locally. Instead, the U.S. approach to terrorism is dominated first of all by a concept based on the assumption that "contacts and mediations with groups or leaders considered as terrorists were unacceptable and prohibited" (ibid: 33). Piracy is thus playing a paradoxical role as terrorism only can be considered a marginal aspect of today's humanitarian crisis in Somalia. Still, it managed to trigger a "genuine process of international cooperation and policy emulation" (ibid) as the international community quickly gathered and planned policies from the assumption that piracy was directly linked to terrorism. Piracy is thus forced into a discourse directly related to the global war on terror, which shapes the policy response to it and also actively depoliticizes piracy through the use of what Abrahamsen refers to as "speech acts" (2005: 58) where pirates are actively labeled as security threats, making their connection to terrorism an objective condition. The humanitarian issues are thus re-shaped into security issues. Such discourse "brings in its own dangers" (Abrahamsen, 2005: 57) and allows methods as the one recently formulated by the UNSC (2008) of the acceptance of "all necessary means to fight piracy off Somalia coast".

The global 'security threat' Somali pirates are posing cannot be considered *the* objective condition; it is an outcome of the discourse that has allowed the issue to be treated in the context of terrorism.

This is what Wæver refers to as an active labeling of certain issues as security threats through speech acts: “By uttering ‘security’ a state representative moves a particular development into a specific area, and thereby claims a special right to use whatever means are necessary to block it” (Wæver, 1995: 57). Hence, it is the active utterance that perpetuates the objective condition into being a security issue.

Here, the Foucauldian framework of ‘truth’ becomes relevant as truth is “whatever Power says it is, and as such is constantly changing radically” (Prado, 1992: 164). The discursive regime of securitization can thus be considered as being the core of what Foucault refers to as ‘regime of truth’ (1980: 131) that serves vested political and economic interests while commanding the majority of power. In order for the discourse to sustain itself, in this context, it depends on what Abrahamsen refers to as the ‘securitization’ of a subject. The discursive regime is depending on a diametrical opposition of which it itself diverges from. In the case of the pirates, the discursive regime can thus guide the ways in which piracy is discussed and thus responded towards by corresponding political means.

The success of the regime of truth is visible when the real-political response becomes *commonsensical*. According to Vico, “Common sense is judgment without reflection, shared by an entire class, an entire people, an entire nation or the entire human race” (1984: 63). The consequence of this dominating discourse is that the “genuine debate” (Rosenfeld, 2002) is replaced by this “judgment without reflection”, allowing for the continuation of a supposedly objective response to the condition. The victory of the discursive “regime of truth” can then be visible as it has shaped both “what is to be known but also what should and is to be done in the political sphere” (Rothe & Collins, 2011: 336) while at the same time not allowing additional truths to vocalise.

In March 2012 the EU expanded its anti-piracy mission to coastal territory and internal waters, which could include the use of warships or helicopters to target pirates connected to the shore (EUNAVFOR, 2012). Such interventions clarify how policies have responded directly to the dominating discourse proving its success – especially when “all necessary means to repress acts of piracy and armed robbery within the territorial waters of Somalia” are legitimized. These exceptional means are allowed because the commonsensical approach has become widely accepted and thus created a consensus that Somalia is a *state of exception* that must be met with exceptional means. As these exceptional measures are “the result of periods of political crisis [they] must be understood on political and not juridico-constitutional grounds” (Agamben, 2005: 1). Hence, the political means are found in a “paradoxical position of being juridical measures that cannot be understood in legal terms and the state of exception appears as the legal form of what cannot have legal form” (ibid). In other words, the exceptional interventions consist of law that employs the suspension of law itself. The discourse has framed Somalia as being exceptional, or in contrast to ‘normal’ Weberian conditions. The global response can be considered as ‘modern totalitarianism’, which Agamben sees as “the establishment, by means of the state of exception, of a legal civil war that allows for the physical elimination not only of political adversaries but of entire categories of citizens who for some reason cannot be integrated into the political system” (ibid: 2). As these individuals are framed as apolitical and thus outside any political system, they must be confronted using exceptional extra-judicial means that erases the legal status of the individual, reducing their status to “legally unnamable and unclassifiable” and hence putting them beyond any juridical oversight.

At the same time there are no institutional authorities insuring that the implementation of such 'commonsensical' responses are used for the purpose of actually upholding global security. Hence, this modern totalitarianism is liable to itself pose a security threat by its use of totalitarian means. It seems as a direct example of Rossiter's argument that governments "will have more power and the people fewer rights" (Rossiter, 1948: 5). This has established the *state of exception*, with a constant extension of the exception, as seen in the very recent EU decision in March 2012 as previously described. The *state of exception* is increasingly engaging in a contradictory relationship where "the use of constitutional emergency powers may well become the rule and not the exception" (ibid: 297). In other words, the exception becomes the law, and the example of Somalia seems to portray that these permanent states of exception are prolonged as the political responses to the humanitarian crisis may eventually "become lasting peacetime institutions" (ibid: 313).

On the ground, and in the waters for that matter, Somalis face no possibility of resistance towards the modern totalitarianism, as the state of exception has suspended the law. As fighting Somali pirates came to be synonyms of the global war on terror, the discourse has legitimized the suspension of law in the name of necessity, and thus necessity created its own law. Therefore, "if something is done out of necessity, it is done licitly, since what is not licit in law necessity makes licit" (Agamben, 2005: 24). Necessity hence has its own legitimacy for creating laws justified by the discourses that actively securitize objects away from their objective condition and into a convenient condition measured by political interests instead of juridico-constitutional interests. In the name of necessity, Somalia has thus become an uncertain zone – a state of exception - where the "antijudicial pass over into law" (ibid: 29) and the very norms by which international crises are managed are altered to reflect. In this way, the root causes of piracy in Somalia are systematically ignored, and perhaps even aggravated, by global political attitudes.

The regime of truth has allowed a framing of pirates as global security threats. This framing has shaped a commonsensical approach that the matters can be solved through military means. This indicates the presence of a gap between claiming to solve the actual problem of piracy – by responding to the humanitarian crisis – and only fighting the symptoms of the same. Yet, this must not be subscribed to political failure. It has been argued that the international community is involved in the fundamental causes of the desperate situation through toxic waste dumping as well as illegal fishing. By the introduction of Somalia as a state of exception, the commonsensical military approach serves the purpose of protecting European economic interests without having to face their own responsibility in this matter. In that case, the foreign policy towards Somalia has proven successful, as the number of piracy incidents has decreased in 2012 (Hopkins, 2012), and at the same time they do not have to face judgment on their role in the case. This proves the strength of what Agamben refers to as *law* (2005: 32) where law serves the purpose of suspending itself through juridical means. The implementation of this *law* is crucial in order to guarantee that piracy is fought on the sea. If the underlying problems were confronted, "the international community would then have to consider the violations of international law perpetrated by some of its [own] major members" (Marchal, 2011: 31).

Conclusion

While this essay has not sought to applaud nor condone specific actions, the goal was to offer a nuanced debate on some of the variables in the debate of piracy, which often seem to go unnoticed.

This in itself proves the dominance of the current discourse in which piracy is framed. The motivation was to investigate the dismissed investigations concerning why some Somalis turn to piracy. Through the application of a criminological framework it was argued that the reason could be traced back to a logical and geographically contextualized cost-benefit analysis rooted in the local historicity as well as political grievances. It was argued that piracy thus is driven by a *dual purpose*, where opportunistic criminality and political motivations are intertwined. It was shown that piracy is a major concern for the international political community. The concern has triggered several international responses in order to protect the important trade route connecting the transnational business networks. These responses have been highly successful, as they both have managed to decrease incidents of piracy, and at the same time managed to prevent important members of the global political economies to face judgment on their responsibility of the depletion of resources outside the coast of Somalia. This has been managed by framing piracy as an issue exclusively related to *the global war on terror*, which legitimized military responses to an issue rooted in socio-political issues, with little relation to terrorism. The success of the discourse was explained through a theoretical framework especially consisting of Abrahamsen's theory of securitization, which proved to shape the premise of *necessity*, which was explained using Agamben's theoretical framework of *the state of exception*. It was then shown how discourse is solidified as it manages to establish a commonsensical approach to dealing with piracy by military means. However, this success is not mirrored locally as the elimination of piracy does not mean deterrence of the humanitarian crisis in which Somalia finds itself. Nor does it provide alternative means of income for those who have turned to piracy when no conventional choices were available.

In conclusion, the war on piracy has depoliticized Somali pirates and legitimized global acceptance of the establishment of an international arena where it has become legitimate to suspend the rule of law and use all means necessary in the name of security.

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Before, During, and After: Identity and the Social Construction of Knowledge in Qualitative Research Interviews

Peter Michael Yates

Introduction

This article is adapted from an essay written for the Conducting Research Interviews course, an advanced skills course undertaken as part of research training. Throughout the course participants were required to work in small groups in order to practise their interviewing skills. These interviews were recorded and used as the basis for the final assignment. I found that I was repeatedly confronted by the subject of identity. Issues of identity seemed to me to be highly influential in the interview process and in the material that these interviews produced. This article therefore focuses on the theme of identity and the social construction of knowledge.

After outlining briefly some of the key ideas in symbolic interactionist theories of self, I will reflect on my experiences of interviews during the course and the impact of identity before, during and after the interview. I will argue that a symbolic interactionist view of self and identity is useful for understanding the nature of knowledge produced in research interviews, complemented by a Foucauldian understanding of power. I will conclude that combining these two perspectives allows us to see that simplistic notions of reflexivity, which consider only the impact of the researcher's identity on the research process, are inadequate. Instead we need to understand that the identities of the researcher and the respondents, and the research process itself, are all in a dynamic and mutually influencing relationship with each other.

Symbolic Interactionist Theories of Self

Theories of self and identity have a long history. David Hume (1985 [1739]) disagreed with Descartes' belief in an innate self which can be reasoned and experienced in isolation, arguing instead that the self is experienced only through perceptions and is derived principally through one's interactions with others: "Where am I, or what? ... I dine, I play backgammon, I converse, and am merry with my friends." (Hume, 1985 [1739], p316) The idea that the self is neither singular nor innate, but rather socially constructed, has been taken up more recently in symbolic interactionism, a body of social theory which focuses upon the process of interpersonal interaction by the use of symbols of meaning (Bilton et al., 1996; Giddens, 2006). George Herbert Mead (2002 [1912]), for example, argues that our sense of self is created through repeated interactions with others and our ability to put ourselves in others' shoes: to see ourselves as others see us, or as Cooley (2002 [1922]) suggested, to see ourselves as we perceive others to see us. Mead (2002 [1912]) departs from Hume by making a distinction between the 'I' and the 'Me'. The 'Mes' are those perceptions of ourselves which we derive from others' responses to us, and the 'I' is the organizing force of all the various 'Mes'. Like Hume, Mead concluded that the 'I' cannot be experienced directly. Hewitt (2007) talks in similar terms of a personal or autobiographical self (Mead's 'Me'); situated identities (particular 'Mes' created in particular situations); and a more enduring sense of social identities (those identities we inhabit through our identification with social categories to which we see ourselves as belonging). In any given social situation, therefore, the symbolic interactionist perspective would

suggest that we bring a self composed of situated, social and personal identities (Hewitt, 2007).

Research interviews are a form of social relationship (Dexter, 2006) and as such they can be understood in symbolic interactionist terms. Both interviewers and respondents bring personal and social identities to the situation as well as actively constructing identities through the course of the interview itself (Elliott, 2005). These identities will all have a bearing on the style, tone and content of the interviews, therefore contributing to the construction of the knowledge produced. The symbolic interactionist view of self and identity therefore dovetails with the assumptions of a social constructionist epistemology (Charmaz, 2006). Our understanding of the world is not only contingent upon our own beliefs, values and past experiences (our identities), but also upon the identities of those with whom we interact. Knowledge is created and constructed through interactions between people, between selves and between identities. In Holstein and Gubrium's (2004, p144) terms, respondents are not 'vessels of answers' which the interviewer needs to elicit through skilful questioning; rather, knowledge is "actively and communicatively assembled" through the interview process (Holstein and Gubrium, 2004, p141). The knowledge gained through interviews is therefore knowledge that is constructed in that particular time and place between those particular identities interacting, identities which are themselves in part created through that interaction (Dexter, 2006).

My Self

Having outlined a theory of self and identity and argued for its significance in influencing research interviews, I should say something about my self and the identities that I bring to the research process. Gough (2003) warns the researcher against becoming overly self-indulgent and narcissistic, and Gouldner (1973) argues that it would be naïve to assume that we can know ourselves so well as to be able to offer a comprehensive and wholly accurate account of our selves and our values. It would perhaps therefore be appropriate to comment only on those aspects of myself which I think are most relevant for the purposes of understanding the points that I make in this article.

In terms of social identity I am a white, male PhD student in my early forties with English as my first language. I have extensive experience of conducting assessment interviews as a social worker, where my primary experience has been in working in the field of child sexual abuse. However, I have no experience of conducting research interviews. More personally I tend to be very introverted and have to work hard to contribute to large group discussions, usually feeling the need to think carefully about what I say. I am told that this can sometimes create the impression of appearing very serious and perhaps a little aloof and intimidating. However, my confidence can be easily undermined and I am usually very uncomfortable with receiving compliments and being the centre of attention (although inwardly I can enjoy both). The relevance of these reflections will become clearer as I make reference to some of the interviews conducted as part of the course. Where excerpts are given by way of illustration, I will represent myself throughout as 'M' and otherwise the interviewer as 'I' and the respondent as 'R'.

Issues of Identity Before the Interview

Roesch-Marsh et al. (2011) argue that issues of identity influence the development of the research process right from the very outset, long before any actual interviews take place. In particular they reflect from their own experiences on the impact of social identity in negotiating research access,

finding that the categories in which gatekeepers placed them in terms of professional background and status, nationality and ethnicity, age, gender and so on, had implications for the ease of access granted and the level of cooperation and assistance that followed. The authors were therefore aware of actively constructing identities in order to facilitate this process, at times presenting themselves as practitioners, and at other times as students or researchers (Roesch-Marsh et al., 2011). Similarly, on the research interviews course, prior to any interviews, the identities of the participants began to be established during the larger group discussions and choices were made accordingly about whom to join in a smaller group for interview practice. I was aware of making choices based on my perceptions of people's age and experience, insight into the topics, ethnicity and professional background, as well as whom I happened to be standing next to and with whom I had previously worked. I will also have been on the receiving end of others' choices, and all of these choices will have had a direct impact on the relationships and the knowledge which were subsequently produced in the interviews.

Platt (1981) reflects that most research literature assumes that interviewers and respondents are unknown to each other prior to the interviews. This is not always so, and it was clearly not the case with the course participants. In Platt's (1981) sense of sharing group membership and roles the course participants could be seen as peers. We therefore had investments in the relationship both prior and subsequent to the interviews and we also knew that as respondents we would soon become interviewers. The following extract shows that these peer identities had the effect at times of the respondent being helpful to the interviewer, not wanting to leave them struggling when their questions were unclear, and anticipating what we knew were going to be the research questions. Identities and relationships established outside of the interview therefore had a bearing on the content of the interview. Without this relationship I would have continued to seek clarity about the interviewer's question:

Excerpt 1

I: That really doesn't make sense does it! Umm, that because you're working with, you're interviewing a group of professionals who are dealing with a specific issue in their work, um, have you got any concerns about the professional perspective? That still doesn't make sense does it? I'm sorry, move on from that!

M: I mean the concern I do have, I think is... Well there's a number but in terms of looking at how social workers make decisions what I will be getting from those interviews with social workers is their retrospective account ...

Coar and Sim (2006) found that peer status on the one hand allowed the researcher to gain the confidence of their respondents, the passions of the researcher having the potential to sensitize them to their social world (Gouldner, 1973); on the other hand, respondents saw the interview as a test of their knowledge, with their professional identity at stake (Coar and Sim, 2006). Interviewees will respond according to their own experiences and socio-cultural imperatives (Gadd, 2004), and with peer interviews it is possible that the knowledge of the researcher might produce a defensive respondent.

Clearly then, identities constructed prior to the interview have a bearing on whether and with

whom interviews take place, and mutual perceptions of identity will also influence the content of interviews as they unfold. These identities continue to be constructed between interviewer and respondent during the interview.

Issues of Identity During the Interview

In her account of interviewing friends, Avis (2002) described her struggle to find her authentic voice, finally choosing to enter into quite a reciprocal exchange of ideas much more like a regular conversation. This enabled her to elicit much richer material than her earlier attempts to maintain a formal interviewer role. Similarly, having initially attempted to adopt a relaxed and friendly style, I was struck when listening back to the recordings that I actually then worked hard to construct my identity as interviewer and to establish quite a formal relationship of interviewer and respondent. I set out a clear agenda of what I wanted the interview to cover and firmly established the nature of the interaction. This is illustrated in the excerpt below:

Excerpt 2

M: What I'm hoping that we could do in the next few minutes is to speak about what your research is and to hear a bit more about what you're intending to research, what your research is about.

R: Uh hmm.

M: Um, and then maybe get into thinking about, are you going to be using interviews and if you are going to be using interviews what has led you in that direction.

R: Yeah.

M: And then whether you've got any concerns about, about conducting those kind of interviews, so that's what I'm hoping we can kind of sketch out in the next wee while.

R: Ok.

M: Is it alright to start by asking you just to tell me a wee bit about your research, though, and your work?

Whilst the clarity of this agenda might be very helpful in other contexts, the formality of this role construction seemed to have the effect of inhibiting the respondent, who was in any case hesitant and reflected later that they were uncomfortable about being the focus of attention. I then attempted to encourage and reassure the respondent, but what was created was a rather awkward exchange in which my interventions only served to interrupt and punctuate their responses with continual "Uh huh's" and "OK's", betraying my own anxiety and exacerbating theirs.

Platt (1981) argues that a social norm is violated if, in a relationship of equals, one person tries to define the situation for the other. In another of my interviews there was an interesting example of a respondent resisting my attempts to define the situation by referring to the identities we had formed outside of the interview and in the large group sessions, serving both to disrupt the

construction of our situated identities of interviewer and respondent and flattering my identity as course participant. Initially unable to manage this disruption I ignored it altogether and ploughed on with asking more interviewer questions:

Excerpt 3

M: What is it about the course that has helped you to learn those things?

R: Um, I guess it's the um, the interview group, and the interview practice, and the discussion in the whole class, yeh.

M: OK.

R: Yeah, like, it's like some of them, some of them are quite professional, yeh.

M: Uh huh.

R: Yeah, like you [indicates me], and you [indicates observer], and when you say something I feel like, Oh yeah, it's like that, yeah. When you share experiences I've found that's really useful. Uh hmm.

M: Ok, so something about the whole class, and listening to some of the...

R: It's not just about the listening part, but some part like er, just discussion and sharing your experiences when you are doing your own research. Yep.

This was a very clear example of the possible complications of the peer interview and the way in which our (group) identities and my discomfort (my self being uncomfortable with compliments) evidently influenced the information produced in the interview. Another interviewer would have had an entirely different conversation, and in this example we can also see the influence of the observer upon the interaction. As Dexter (2006) observes, respondents speak specifically for their audience.

Power

The above excerpt shows not only how the identities of the interview participants continue to be constructed through their interaction in relation to each other, it also suggests dynamics of power being played out between the respondent casting themselves as a novice student, and the interviewer being cast as an experienced professional.

For Foucault (1976), power is almost synonymous with knowledge, with each producing the other. The power dynamics within the interview process are therefore the site of knowledge production. Being aware of the relationships of power within the interview is therefore essential in order to understand the knowledge produced, failing to do so having the potential to impair the credibility of the research.

The concept of the peer interview would suggest being socially equal, but this would be to ignore the dynamics of power and vulnerability that run throughout all interviews and social exchanges. Power relationships will play out according to what Bondi (2003) calls the power-laden differences, the social identities, of age, gender, ethnicity, language ability, professional background, and degrees of experience. Simply ignoring these differences, or assuming commonality in spite of these differences, is liable to reproduce oppression and to be exploitative. The boundaries between selves are permeable and Bondi (2003) therefore argues that interviewers need to remain highly aware of their own beliefs, values and emotional responses in order to be able to empathise with their respondents: to make available the emotional and intellectual material of the respondent whilst at the same time allowing a space in which the similarities and differences between interviewer and respondent can be understood and maintained.

However, rather than necessarily balancing the power between interviewer and respondent and creating a warm and caring dialogue, Kvale (2006) argues that clinical listening methods deployed by modern styles of interviewing have the potential to be manipulative. Using emotional rapport instrumentally, “faking friendship” (Kvale, 2006, p482) in order to penetrate the defences of the respondent (Fog, 2004) and to facilitate deep disclosure might be highly exploitative. Interviewers therefore need to be acutely aware of the power of their role and the purpose of empathy within interviews.

Foucault (1976) discusses how the power relationship of the confessional has transformed into the power relationships of clinical listening methods deployed by the likes of counsellors, psychiatrists and social workers. We could now add qualitative research interviewers to this list. Like the confessor, clinical listeners have the power to judge, punish, console, forgive or reconcile (Foucault, 1976). Sinding and Aronson (2003) seemed to be painfully aware of this in their interviews with relatives and friends providing end-of-life care and with elderly women in receipt of care. They described how the interviews had the potential to ‘expose the failures’ of the respondents and ‘unsettle the accommodations’ that they had made, thereby dismantling the identities that they had maintained of being a ‘good carer’ or highlighting their isolated situation.

A similar issue arose earlier in the interview from which excerpt 3 was taken, whereby the respondent spoke of their intention to carry out some highly sensitive research. I was surprised by this, as my sense was that the respondent had previously portrayed themselves in group discussions as being inexperienced, lacking in confidence, and unsure of their abilities to engage in spontaneous and free-flowing styles of interviewing. I was therefore interested to learn what kind of experience the respondent did in fact have of interviewing. As Platt (1981) points out, prior knowledge can direct the interview towards some areas and away from others. The exchange was laden with power differences (Bondi, 2003) in terms of age, gender, command of the English language, and especially in terms of the respondent’s explicit perceptions of my experience and professionalism. As a result of the way the respondent had presented herself in the larger group, and perhaps as a result of some judgments I had made about the respondent’s age and command of English, I was doubtful that they had a great deal of experience in conducting sensitive interviews. My scepticism betrayed itself in my questions, which could have been phrased in a much more open way. Perhaps my scepticism would have been conveyed however I phrased the questions. The response from the interviewee seemed to confirm that they had little experience, but this may have been because they had picked up on my judgements and did not want to claim a wealth of experience only to be put

down by someone to whom they ascribed some power and authority. I was therefore particularly concerned that I might undermine their confidence, their sense of self, by pursuing this line of questioning further. After trying (probably unsuccessfully) to reassure the respondent that they did have some experience, I backed away from and changed the subject:

Excerpt 4

M: So it's quite, potentially quite sensitive.

R: Yeah. Uh hmm.

M: And have you had any experience of doing interviews before?

R: Hmmm.

M: Or is this new?

R: I have done some journalism interview but not really the research interview, yeh.

M: Ok. So some experience.

R: Um...

M: Some journalistic experience.

R: Yes.

M: OK, alright. So what was it you were hoping, then, to learn from this course, that we've just been doing?

This excerpt highlights the potential to undermine the sense of identity of the respondent, the power of the interviewer-confessor, and the difficult spontaneous decisions which interviewers need to make accordingly. Once again this exemplifies the construction of identity within the interview, and how the dynamic relationship between identities influences the knowledge produced.

Kvale (2006) argues that the power relationship between interviewer and respondent is always asymmetrical: The interviewer defines the interview situation, asks the questions, directs the conversation and seeks information according to their agenda and research interests. This was exemplified in excerpt 2. This imbalance of power does not mean that the interview is necessarily exploitative or manipulative, but certainly it has the potential to be so. From a Foucauldian perspective, however, power is not something that simply one person holds or exercises, but operates within all relationships and always produces resistance, as we saw in excerpt 3. This is not likely to be as simple as the respondent discontinuing the interview, which Sinding and Aronson (2003) argue might be very challenging to their valued identity of being helpful and making a social contribution. Respondents are more likely to engage in more subtle counter-measures, such as opting not to answer, deflecting questions, going off topic or questioning the interviewer. One

needs to allow “the objects to object” (Kvale, 2006, 489). Interviewers need to be aware of the power of their position within the relationship as well as the power-laden differences of social identities, and they need to do their best to ensure the informed and freely consenting participation of the respondents.

Issues of Identity After the Interview

Given the power dynamics in interviews and the performance of both interviewer and respondent, like any performance there are likely to be anxieties and insecurities on both sides about how well the interview has gone, and for the respondent how good a respondent they have been. Have they spoken too much or too little? Have they been helpful and insightful in their answers? Have they said what is actually true for them? The respondent identity is potentially fragile and may need some reassurance after the interview. Sinding and Aronson (2003) made a point at the end of each interview to affirm the valued identities of the respondents. During the de-brief after one of my interviews I expressed some concerns that I had not asked the right sorts of questions and had therefore caused the respondent to be short and restrained in their responses. The respondent was apologetic that they perhaps had not managed to talk more freely. My doubts about my own interviewing ability served to raise doubts for the respondent.

Even further after the event, Lapadat and Lindsay (1999) argue that researchers make choices about whether, what and how to transcribe, the process of transcription itself involving some level of analysis. Richardson (1990) describes how researchers make choices about what to include in their analysis of interviews, and what they regard as important or trivial (Elliott, 2005). Reflections upon and analysis of interview transcripts will be informed by the identity of the researcher and will also serve to shape the knowledge that is finally produced. These reflections will continue to inform the growth of the identity of the researcher, as Mead (2002 [1913], p130) states:

The growth of the self arises out of partial disintegration – the appearance of the different interests in the form of reflection, the reconstruction of the social world, and the consequent appearance of the new self that answers the new object.

Even after the interview, then, the research process continues to influence the identity of the researcher, which in turn will influence the analysis and interpretation of the research data.

Conclusion

I have argued that symbolic interactionist conceptions of identity and Foucault’s concept of power provide useful insights for understanding the interview process. In qualitative interviews knowledge is actively produced in the interaction between the multiple power identities of interviewer and respondent. These identities continue to grow and change throughout their involvement in the research process, from the moment the research project begins to the final draft of the report, and through any subsequent reflections. The concept of ‘reflexivity’ is often used in a rather limited way to describe the importance of maintaining an awareness of how the researcher’s identity has been influential throughout the research process. For example, Robson (2002, 172) defines reflexivity as “an awareness of the ways in which the researcher as an individual with a particular social identity and background has an impact on the research process”. Such static and simplistic definitions ignore the situated nature of identities and the “intersubjective dynamics between

researcher and researched” (Finlay & Gough, 2003, pix). They disregard the evolving nature of identities and the impact of the research process on the identity of the researcher. By combining a symbolic interactionist view of self and a Foucauldian understanding of power we can see that a more complex conception of reflexivity is required to understand the place of identity within the research process, one which recognises the dynamic and mutually influencing relationship between the interviewer, respondents, and the research process itself.

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The Corporation - Unbounded and Unhinged

Helene Ryding

“Did you ever expect a corporation to have a conscience, when it has no soul to be damned, and no body to be kicked?” (Robertson 2001: 216, attributed to an 18th century Lord Chancellor Edward, Baron Thurlow).

Introduction

A corporation¹ is formed by a group of people to conduct business for profit. It is a separate legal entity that has been incorporated through a legislative or registration process established through legislation. Incorporated entities have legal rights and liabilities that are distinct from its shareholders who supply the capital. Early corporations were established by charter (an *ad hoc* act granted by a monarch or passed by a parliament). The corporation as a legal person is contrasted with a physical person in legal terms, yet they possess many of the same rights and duties. Much of recent public discussion about the corporation has used personality as a metaphor, claiming corporations are greedy, devious or arrogant. In this essay, I will consider some of the largest corporations, usually US owned, which have come in for considerable public criticism over the last two decades.

People have long fought to control the power of large institutions by limiting the power of the Monarchy, the Church and (eventually) the Soviet Communist Party, so that it is not surprising that there is a move currently to bring the corporation under control. The role of the state in regulating the market depends on the moral economy in which it operates, which can be defined differently by both the state and its citizens. If we expect a corporation to be like a person with a soul, we expect it to operate morally within the appropriate moral economy of a state's citizens. As the corporation grows, it becomes more able to challenge the state. As corporations become transnational, individual states no longer have the power to regulate them across all their activities.

I will argue that corporations that behave ‘badly’ abroad (i.e. immorally, or without a conscience) should be regulated by the state at home. The problem is that in times of transnational corporations, local states are not strong enough to regulate them, or are already in collusion with them. The US has a policy of extraterritoriality, in which companies are bound only by local laws, not US laws, but the moral behaviour of US companies is judged by US citizens on the standards which apply in the US.

Since the question refers to the very early corporations, I will first discuss the role of the East India Company, a British company set up by Queen Elizabeth I of England in 1600, showing that even before the rise of proper capitalism in the 18th and 19th century there were battles between the Crown (or Parliament) and the Company. The Company was eventually disciplined for causing political and diplomatic difficulties for the Crown through military adventurism, and was taken

¹ The British equivalent is a company. In the essay, corporation or company is capitalised when it refers to a specific company (e.g. The East India Company, often the Company for short; or for a generic use of the legal structure).

over by the Crown after its adventurism abroad. This case study will then be compared with the position of US transnational corporations operating with the benefit of US 'invisible' imperialism (Ho 2004).

A body without a soul is a person without a conscience. A moral economy determines the type of morality society applies to those operating in it. I will discuss the moral economy operating in the West in order to establish what standards for morality we expect from corporations. Using an ethnography of several large corporations and rating agencies I show that the apparent redefinition of the relationship between risk and capitalism by rating agencies is responsible for a form of schizophrenia in the corporations. Because there are rather few ethnographies of corporations, using material from the Canadian documentary film, *The Corporation* (2003), I will show that the modern transnational corporation, as a legal person, can be diagnosed in its worst examples as a psychopath. The film calls for more business regulation and consumer activism to control the corporations and proposes ways to do this, which can be seen as aligned with the moral economy of citizens.

It Was Ever Thus: The Successful Corporation Grown Arrogant Abroad

The East India Company

The East India Company was formed by Royal Charter in 1600, as a last ditch attempt for England to compete for trade in the East against the Netherlands, Spain and Portugal. It was an early form of joint stock company which allowed it to raise capital from many shareholders, without needing Crown funds. Using its monopoly of trade in the Far East and other special privileges granted by the Charter, it quickly became successful, bringing a wide range of goods back to England and re-exporting them to Europe. Its modern bureaucratic practices of record keeping and statistics allowed it to produce evidence to justify maintaining its monopoly of trade for almost a century, through several changes of monarch. The success of its trade brought customs revenues to the government, and the Company was able to advance loans to the Crown when needed for wars. But at the end of the 17th century, the Company began extending its reach by using military force to take territory in India, rather than just to protect its trade. The first attempt was a disastrous failure, since the Company's military power was similar to that of local rulers. However, later in the 18th century when large-scale military conquests by the Company began, its forces were far superior technologically, and the conquests were significant, with the Company's forces gaining more and more territory. Unfortunately, this was very expensive, and the Company was neither equipped to govern the territory nor to control its own army. So the Company was much less successful financially in this period, even through trade, and its reputation was damaged by its unscrupulous and corrupt employees. The Parliaments of the times became increasingly reluctant to renew the Charter, gradually removing all the privileges and taking back to the Crown the power to own and govern territory. The final straw was the Great Rebellion in 1857, after which the Company was quickly nationalised (Lawson 1993). The consequent history of Anglo-Indian trade is that of British colonialism, not of the East India Company.

From this early example of a transnational company we can see that its early success was dependent on its dynamic and aggressive character, but when aggression was turned onto people and not just business, and infringed on the rights of the Sovereign and Parliament, it needed to be constrained. So certainly, the Corporation has a body to be kicked.

'Invisible' Imperialism

Ho (2004) has distinguished between imperialism and colonialism. Imperialism refers to foreign domination, without the necessity of presence or possession, over transnational spaces. Colonialism refers to foreign presence in, possession of and dominations over bounded local space. Ho argues that while the US is anti-colonial, it nonetheless projects imperial power through mercenaries, gunboats, missiles, client states and multilateral institutions. He characterises this imperialism as 'invisible' since power is projected through the market and contracts, and through organisations which manage investment, rather than through property, as with colonies. This invisibility also extends via the Constitution which applies only on US territory, so that US servicemen serving abroad do not answer to local laws, and the government can act unconstitutionally abroad, against any threat by aliens. We can therefore suppose that American corporations operating abroad are not necessarily constrained by US laws and morals, and may be too big to be restrained locally by the states where they operate. However, their transnational activities are certainly not 'invisible', as widespread publicity about sweatshops abroad has shown.

The Moral Economy

For a corporation to have a soul, it must have a conscience and be able to distinguish between right and wrong. But what is right and wrong in economics? Some doubt that there is any morality in the realm of economics. Others believe that capitalism enshrines the morality of individual choice. But a growing minority, including Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen, argue that moral principles will remain absent from neo-liberalism unless we deliberately shift the focus from measures of income growth to measures of human capabilities and different kinds of freedom. This means that anthropologists must engage with capitalist societies whether amoral or immoral, and move away from their romantic attachment to gift-based societies where reciprocity is seen as a more humane basis for society (Browne 2009:1-4).

Although the model for classical economics is based on personal self-interest combined with the invisible hand of the market, *The Wealth of Nations* (Smith 1776 [1776]) was written in the context of European political economies of the time, which were strongly interventionist. Liberation from governments thus has a different meaning from today. Moral economics can be presented in both negative and positive aspects: the right to be free of interference or the moral duty to consider others (Browne and Milgram 2009:9-11). In the transition to capitalism, land, labour, resources and machinery became commodities (Marx 1867) and with them, the need to protect one's property emerged. The moral concerns of the economy became located in the state and legislation which was designed to enforce new property rights. Browne proposes to consider the moral sphere of capitalism as internal to and smaller than the larger social sphere, as compared to reciprocity-based societies, where a breach of morality tends to breach the expectations of the whole society (Browne and Milgram 2009:17).

In capitalist societies, market economies make fewer moral demands on economic actors. Moral behaviour results from voluntary free will of individuals and firms, and so the morality of a capitalist economy cannot be automatically presumed. Nor can the moral sphere be seen as stable or rigid, but it responds to pressure from society. Thus, when public pressure to clean up pollution results in legislative proposals to regulate polluting industries, those industries will complain and attempt

to leverage the moral centre of capitalism that controls the free market and reduces their ability to compete and thus survive. But if public pressure is great enough, the legislation will be adopted, expanding the moral sphere to accommodate a larger set of concerns than before (Browne and Milgram 2009:18).

The moral sphere has shrunk in the US since the adoption of neo-liberalism, by removing the post World War II Keynesian-influenced economy. In welfare state economies in Europe, however, the moral sphere organised by states occupies a more dominant space in society. The size of moral spheres is reduced through the leverage of global institutions such as the World Bank and IMF, which are empowered to withhold foreign aid unless a country agrees to neoliberal reforms. As for the EU, it must balance the views of its member states, including states with neo-liberalism, state dirigisme², welfare capitalism and crony capitalism³. The EU competition authorities have, however, been much tougher on abuse of dominant power, e.g. by Microsoft, than the equivalent regulator in the US, but have been less successful in making states deregulate. In the Asian Tiger economies of Singapore and South Korea, there is a strong interventionist feature in the role of the state. In the Malaysian case (Browne 2009) the state has initiated top-down incentives for businesses to act ethically according to Islamic laws of finance in a way that might not be acceptable in other countries.

There is mounting pressure on capitalist enterprises to be seen as moral economic actors, partly by a continual story of moral breaches in recent years. "Cases end up in ugly courtroom dramas where astonishing greed and corruption are exposed to a shocked public. Alongside these criminal violations of public trust stand the morally questionable tactics employed by many corporations that prey on society's vulnerability, in the interests of profit at any cost" (Browne 2009:25). As a consequence, the metaphors of personality used for the Corporation have become increasingly ugly.

Corporate Ethnographies

There is a general lack of ethnography about corporations. This partly reflects anthropology's own past interests in the exotic 'Other', whereas corporations are part of everyday Western life. In the 1980s, when anthropologists became more interested in Western societies, ethnographies of organisations were often related to the role of gender in the workplace and public sector organisations or empowerment issues (Wright 1994). Studies of work are generally related to the shop floor and workers, not management. Even recent anthropological studies of the financial sector (e.g. Zaloom 2004) do not concern large companies and their management, but rather individuals and their sense of self.

There are also difficulties of access to corporations. Any method that insists it lacks a cut-and-dried technique, any discipline that grants a central position to the voices of individuals and refuses to prejudge what they might say, will always be suspect to powerful organisations (Gellner and Hirsch 2001:p2). Ourousoff (2010:22) finds that her entry to these powerful corporations is determined by her willingness to listen to problems of senior individuals and the opportunity for the managers

² Dirigisme is a term for a capitalist economy where the state has a strong influence on the operation of the market.

³ Crony capitalism refers to a capitalist economy where there are close relationships between owners and leaders of industry and government officials. This may lead to favouritism for government contracts (for example) which can corrupt the ideal of the government serving the people.

to find their own voice; in fact this can be seen as a form of psychotherapy. The opportunity to talk to an interested outsider, under terms of confidentiality, even with a tape recorder and the intention of publication, appears to have been gratefully received. Both Gellner and Ouroussoff stress that the refusal to use questionnaires (with the possibility of quantification) differentiates them from management consultants, and gets them through individual managers' doors. As to the lack of suitable ethnographies I will discuss only one recent corporate and consider material from a recent film.

'Wall Street at War'

In this recent book (Ouroussoff 2010), the author describes her multi-sited fieldwork in two sets of surprisingly opposed sets of organisations: top corporations and credit rating agencies, both essential components of capitalism. The fieldwork began in corporations in 1999, moving to rating agencies, ending in 2005, before the start of the current financial crisis. Surprisingly, she does not cover the third component in the triangle: investors. She argues that rating agencies act as gatekeepers for corporations in terms of access to investment funds, and that this intermediation by agencies monitoring the execution of corporations' corporate plans significantly affects the company's operation. This monitoring is aimed to reassure shareholders that corporations are actually carrying out their published corporate strategies and that investors will receive a predictable return on their investment. This is claimed by the credit analysts to be acting in a moral way to discipline companies according to their understanding of the rules of capitalism.

However, Ouroussoff has found that the objectives of corporations and those of the rating agencies are formulated on quite different understandings of how capital works in capitalism. Corporations assume that risk is necessary (and even good) to bring reward. Their success is based on their ability to innovate and to overcome the risks involved. But rating agencies view risk as bad, so it should be minimised to ensure a reliable return to investors. One of the main explanations of the 2008 financial crisis was that risk was being underpriced, so that attempting to control risk in a better way should be a good thing (Ouroussoff 2010:10-11). However, rating agencies operate with complex mathematical models, which they claim are able to calculate *real* uncertainties, rather than just model them. There has been widespread publicity given recently to the lack of rationality in real life decisions, through the work of behavioural economists like Kahneman (2012). Taleb (2008) rejects a general ability to predict the future from past market dynamics, especially with regard to rare (and possibly unknown) events, and proposes strategies to minimise risk without relying on complex mathematical models containing dubious assumptions. According to Ouroussoff, "the problem is that the analysts literally do not know what they are doing. Too young to have knowledge of the real world – the stereotypical analyst is in their early to mid-twenties – snow-blinded by their numerate ability and with a faith in human capacity to differentiate between chance and human failure that is naïve beyond comprehension, their demands, if met, would play havoc with capital's productive structures" (2010:23-4).

One could redirect them to Donald Rumsfeld in his remark about 'unknown unknowns' to the press in 2002:

"[T]here are known knowns; there are things we know that we know. There are known unknowns; ... there are things that we now know we don't know. But there are also unknown unknowns – ... things we do not know we don't know."

Because of blind faith in their models and belief in the universality of the rationalist principle, “[a]nalysts (themselves) are completely unable to perceive how their rationalist moral economy works or even that it exists” (Ouroussoff 2010:p75). This is a completely different view of risk from that which has underpinned 200 years of capitalism, where “unpredictable contingency is held to be a condition of profit, and investors’ assessment of risk, however comprehensive: an estimate of the chance of something happening is held to be speculative. [As a consequence,] the concept of ‘capital’ has become completely political” (Ouroussoff 2010:4-5). The corporations’ managers are forced to go along with the credit analysts’ view of risk and produce data that is acceptable to the rating agencies, otherwise they will lose their good rating and investment capital will be harder to obtain. At the same time, they have to produce a parallel set of data to run the business. “We used to lie 20% of the time. Now it’s 80%” (Ouroussoff 2010: 24).

This set of emotionally distressing and conflicting instructions (‘make a profit’ and ‘reduce the risk’) from which it is impossible for corporations to escape and which are mutually incompatible, is the classic case of the ‘double bind’, first described by anthropologist Bateson (1972). It is an example of a putative cause of schizophrenia caused by the family or societal environment, rather than by brain chemistry. The analysts themselves could be classified as ‘blind fools’.

The Film The Corporation

This film is a two-hour long Canadian documentary produced in 2003 by Mark Achbar, Jennifer Abbott and Joel Bakan based on the book *The Corporation: The Pathological Pursuit of Profit and Power* by Joel Bakan. The film features many of the US’s biggest corporations and their role in neo-liberalism and globalisation. While the film is undoubtedly polemical, the *Economist* (2004) reviewed it as: “a surprisingly rational and coherent attack on capitalism’s most important institution.”

The film provides case studies of named firms’ activities in a range of industries and locations and shows that American corporations cause harm to the public, both at home and abroad where the corporations operate. The biggest ‘crime’ is that the corporation does not take responsibility for its problems and makes other people pay for the harmful effects it causes. As the film states: “let someone else pay for the US military protection of our oil fields abroad; let someone else build the roads we need for transport.” In economic terms, the corporation is a powerful externalising machine. In anthropological terms, this is the familiar boundary problem between the firm, the market and the state. Examples of the harm the film documents are: harm to workers (sweatshops, child labour); harm to human health (dangerous products, lying about adverse data); harm to animals (factory farming, artificial hormones); and harm to the biosphere (CO2 emissions, pollution). Fines and penalties for breaching legislation are seen as ‘just the cost of doing business’ and not as a deterrent. Extracting concessions from despotic rulers to make business even more profitable are also ‘just normal business’.

The film provides a list of standard medical symptoms of the personality disorder ‘psychopathy’ and claims to have provided evidence of all of them. Examples of the symptoms are: callous unconcern for feelings of others; reckless disregard for the safety of others; incapacity to experience guilt; failure to conform to social norms with respect to lawful behaviour. In conclusion it pronounces a diagnosis that the (modern, biggest, US) corporations are psychopaths.

Body and soul

The Body of a Corporation: Conceived in sSn, but Immortal

We could consider that the body of the corporation is born with the original sin of capitalism, since the legal person has an obligation to make a financial return to its shareholders. Corporations increasingly seek to control perceptions of how they are seen by the public and their consumers, through advertising, branding, and control of information about them. Their public face is manipulated, and this is often the cynical aim of corporate social responsibility. Many firms now have 'mission statements' which remind their workers of their corporate values, e.g. Google's 'do no evil', but generally these are seen as window dressing. It is noticeable that when a corporation fails, it becomes immediately identified with its leaders, the visible faces of the corporation. During successful times, very few corporations are identified with their leaders, but by their brands and logos. Steve Jobs was a rare 'personal face' of a successful company .

As a legal person the corporation enjoys immortality, since its life is not limited by the human life span of its shareholders. According to research by Professor R. Foster (Yale University), quoted by Gittleman (2012), the average lifespan of a company listed in the S&P 500 index of leading US companies has decreased by more than 50 years in the last century, from 67 years in the 1920s to just 15 years today. Foster estimates that by 2020, more than three-quarters of the S&P 500 will be companies that we have not heard of yet. According to the film *The Corporation* this is clearly another way of externalising the costs of remedying today's harm onto future generations, a form of taxation without representation.

The mind of a corporation: mentally ill but at large in the community?

There are two different diagnoses for the corporation in two different behavioural environments, one vis-à-vis the public and one vis-à-vis the investor and rating agencies. Both can be valid. What is disturbing is that both involve lying: the first claimed out of the necessity for survival, and the second deliberately intending to deceive. The film makes the point that the individuals managing firms may be quite nice private persons (though some shown are not), but it argues that corporations make good people act badly. To understand this, perhaps we need the fourth component of the quartet: the 'unknown known' which Zizek attributes to the Freudian unconscious, "the unknown knows' – the disavowed beliefs, suppositions and obscene practices we pretend not to know about, even though they form the background of our public values" (Zizek 2004).

Repression of events and harmful actions into the unconscious can cause mental illness. But can confronting the offenders with their misdeeds make them change their ways, or is it necessary to constrain them further?

Conclusion

In this essay I have considered how the corporation can be considered to have a body and a soul, both by the use of metaphor, and in the sense in which it is a legal 'person' responsible to society through some sort of soul or conscience.

From the example of the East India Company we can see that a corporation can achieve success by

being innovative, vigorous, even adventurous, but when this becomes aggression and turns against local people, without any sense of restraint, it needs to be controlled. When a corporation becomes arrogant and usurps the place of other institutions in society, it can be more than just kicked, it can be killed, but only by its founding state. In the days of the internet with all the publicity it can bring, the corporation is not 'out of sight, out of mind' or 'invisible' when it does harm in another country.

If the corporation has a body, then its body has been conceived with the 'original sin' of capitalism and though it has a theoretical immortality, in practice it is dying younger and younger, consumed by its own vanity. Some corporations can clearly be diagnosed with a form of mental illness, acting as psychopaths in their social relations, or trapped in a double bind set up by investors and rating agencies. Therefore it is unreasonable to expect its moral conscience to be effective, and citizens and states must move to exert more control over corporations. As for credit agencies, they consider themselves guardians, while others consider them blind fools.

The moral economy defines how society expects a corporation to behave. But who has the power to control transnational corporations and whose moral economy should be considered? How do moralities become transnational and shared, in a world of many different moralities? And which organisation has the right to represent the moral conscience in the global economy? Without the answer to this, 'all is vanity' indeed.

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Social Movements and Development in Bolivia

Modesto Siotos

In December 2005, leftist former cocaine farmer, Evo Morales, and his party MAS (Movement Toward Socialism) won the presidential elections in Bolivia. His victory came after twenty years of neoliberal measures that increased poverty and fostered social unrest in the country. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, social movements evolved as an important political actor in the country and their anti-neoliberal struggles led to the resignation of two presidents and a crack in the existing political system. Since Morales' victory, Bolivia has promoted an alternative development model that is moving away from the basic principles of neoliberalism. This paper investigates the nature of this model; it aims to explain the conditions that led to the emergence of the social movements and to comprehend the articulation between movements and development. It will look into the economic principles of this model and will examine the State's transformation under the country's new Constitution.

Neoliberalism and the Emergence of Social Movements

The first wave of neoliberal adjustments hit Bolivia in 1985 under the 'New Economic Policy' (NEP) adjustment program, which was promoted by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and Harvard educated economists such as Jeffrey Sachs (Webber, 2011:15). Foreign capital and transnational corporations infiltrated the country's economy in the following years as trade barriers were removed in order to make the country friendly to foreign investments. Changes included the privatization of natural resources, state-owned companies — including the mines, which were the most dynamic sector of the economy — and public services. Labor organizations were weakened and the social costs were immense for the poorest parts of the population, especially the indigenous peasants. Poverty rose more than twenty percent in the first ten years and large parts of the working class (ex miners, peasants, the unemployed) found occupation in the informal sector or in small-scale agricultural production (Webber, 2011:22).

The IMF and the World Bank focused on political stabilization and prioritized the institutionalization of Bolivian politics. The goal for successive governments throughout the 1980s, 1990s and early 2000s was to create an investment-friendly environment and the macroeconomic stability needed in order to attract foreign investments. This goal was shared by the majority of political parties. For almost two decades, parties across the political chart promoted privatizations of public assets, neoliberal structural adjustments and austerity measures. During pre-election campaigns, most of these parties advocated an electoral program that moved away from neoliberal policies; however, these policies were never implemented. Neoliberal measures were their true hidden agenda. In addition, no serious discourse ever took place between government parties and labor unions, civic groups or indigenous communities. As poverty and unemployment rose, popular discontent towards 'all parties' within the political system grew. The idea that 'all parties' were responsible for Bolivia's underdevelopment was found mostly among the indigenous peasant population in rural areas and the workers and small-scale businessmen in urban areas (Salman, 2007).

According to Haard and Anderson (2009), neoliberalism created the political space for the emergence of dynamic social movements. As a second wave of structural reforms was put in effect in the mid-1990s, social unrest forced the government and the IMF to address rising poverty and peasant marginalization. Under these conditions, in 1994, President Lozada introduced the 'Popular Participation' program that designed the decentralization of the State, providing local communities with a say in the planning of resource management. On behalf of Lozada's government, this was a 'neoliberal' local participation approach that aimed to create the conditions for individuals to 'adjust' to the free market spirit. But in effect, it was a big step forward for the empowerment of social movements as they obtained the political space to participate actively at the local level (Anderson and Haard, 2009:8). As traditional forms of representation, including the majority of the political parties, became less popular, participation in peasant and labour trade unions, indigenous organizations and local community committees increased. Already by the 1980s, peasant unions and local communities throughout the Andean region had realized that they needed mechanisms to obtain political power. The idea of "Sovereignty of the People" was becoming more and more popular (Vanden, 2007:24).

The strengthening of social movements: 2000-2005

In the mid-1990s, social movements started to evolve as an important political actor in Bolivian politics. Between 2000 and 2005, Bolivia experienced what Jeffery Webber calls 'The Revolutionary Epoch' (Webber, 2011:48). This was a period of mass mobilization and collective struggles against neoliberal policies such as the privatizations of natural resources. This period was also characterized by a resurrection of indigenous mobilization against the white/mestizo (mixed) elite that had maintained economic and political control of the country since the Spanish colonial times.

The Water War in 2000 and the Gas Wars in 2003 illustrate the spirit of this tensed period. During the Water War in Cochabamba, the third biggest city in Bolivia, indigenous communities, traditional and peasant trade unions, political organizations and common citizens battled against the privatization of the local water company while demanding greater respect for indigenous *usos y costumbres* (customary uses) in water management (Barrett, Chavez and Rodriguez-Garavito, 2008:223). Grassroots democratic mechanisms helped protesters organize in a different manner than the way trade-unions or conventional political organizations operated. As different forms of political organizations came together they needed a single political body to organize them; the Coordinadora de Defensa del Agua y de la Vida (Coordinator for the Defense of Water and Life or just the Coordinator) was founded and it became the ultimate organizational body responsible for any decision-making for all organizations and unions that participated in the struggle (Barrett, Chavez and Rodriguez-Garavito, 2008:225). After months of violent mass mobilization, the government concurred with the 'Coordinadora' and the water company came under municipal control.

The Gas Wars are described as the events that took place between 2003 and 2005 and led to the resignation of President Lozada and President Mesa and the election of Morales as president. In 2003, Lozada's government proposed a law that would sell a part of the country's natural gas to the United States by exporting it through Chile. The government's plans caused social unrest across the country. Bolivians hoped that the country's natural gas (Bolivia holds the second-largest gas reserves in Latin America after Venezuela) would be utilized for national development (Domingo, 2005:1729). Various groups and organizations that had little connection with each other in the

previous decades sided against the government. Indigenous peasants, workers, miners, and students blockaded roads in El Alto, La Paz, Chapare and the routes leading to Chile. Protesters called for an end to Lozada's plans, the confiscation of foreign companies that controlled natural gas and the nationalization of all natural gas and oil resources. In October 2003, President Lozada was forced to resign. The new President, Carlos Mesa, promised to increase taxes in hydrocarbon industries (gas and oil) but due to massive, daily protests in La Paz and other parts of Bolivia he was also forced to resign in June 2005 (Bueno and Datta, 2011). Benjamin Dangl, author of the book *The Price of Fire*, elaborates:

gas had become a magic word in 2003-05, a symbol of all past resources lost and all possible wealth for the future. Like coca and water, gas was viewed as a natural resource for survival. Not only was it needed for heating and cooking, many wanted it to open doors to development (Dangl, 2007:123).

MAS, the State and Social movements

The tumultuous five year period between 2000 and 2005 was fostered by mass mobilization which created a crisis in the state structures and the existing political system. The circumstances created a window of opportunity for the social movements to become the most powerful political actor in the development discourse. Evo Morales and his party, MAS (Movement Toward Socialism), built electorally on the social movements' struggles and gained victory at the December 2005 presidential elections (Salman, 2007). Morales and MAS have their roots in the department of Cochabamba where in the mid-1990s MAS emerged as the anti-neoliberal, anti-systemic party branch of the coca leaf farmers (*cocaleros*) movement that fought against the government's plan to ban coca production. In its first steps the party took an activist stance and used anti-imperialist language to address the *cocaleros* who saw a US intervention behind the governmental prohibition of coca growing. MAS activism, according to its critics from the left, abandoned radical activism sometime in 2002 and made a turn into electoral politics (Barrett, Chavez and Rodriguez-Garavito, 2008:165). But in the eyes of their electorate, MAS' turn was not considered a move of betrayal but a change in political tactic.

The articulation between the social movements and MAS was the key factor in their ascendance in governmental power. This articulation was also the basis for the creation of a new, anti-neoliberal development model. The dialectical relation between MAS and the social movements is based in another nexus: the relationship between social movements and the State. The left intelligentsia in the MAS party promotes the idea that the State has the capacity to intervene in society and can provide the social movements with the tools to achieve their fullest potential. The State is seen as the most powerful political prize, equipped with the tools to re-orientate its modes of intervention to lessen inequalities while deepening democracy via structural changes (Barrett, Chavez and Rodriguez-Garavito, 2008:5). But because the struggle to control the State is a political one, social movements need a political party as the vehicle to obtain political power. This party would serve social movements as their political vehicle.

MAS adopted that role. It was the only party capable of the task as it was seen as the only anti-systemic party that would not continue the disastrous neoliberal policies. Exactly because MAS was active in the social movements throughout the unstable years, the overwhelming majority of the peasants, workers in the formal and informal sector and a part of the urban middle-class (i.e. the majority of the participants in social movements) supported MAS with the hope that it would

reverse the neoliberal status quo (Webber, 2011:61).

Two factors have shaped the development model that has been adopted since 2005. Firstly, the economic policies that the MAS government advanced; and secondly, the efforts that have been made to transform the correlation of power between social movements, elites and the State. In order to comprehend Bolivia's development model, it is first necessary to investigate the political economy promoted by MAS and the nature of the implemented economic policies. This will be followed by an analysis of the correlations of power in the writing of the new Constitution that reflects the balance of forces in the development discourse.

Political Economy of MAS government

Since its first days in power, the MAS government has advanced more State-involvement policies in the economy and greater public spending in welfare, education, health and infrastructure. In May 2006, Evo Morales realized his electoral promise to nationalize the country's natural gas industries. The nationalizations resulted in (US)\$1.57 billion in public revenues in 2007 from hydrocarbon industries, a dramatic increase compared to the \$173 million revenues in 2002 (Seelke, 2008). In its first year as government, MAS also launched its agrarian reform program that provided 60 indigenous communities with land titles of 7.5 million acres and announced future programs of cheap access to credit, technical training and an additional 50 million acres of land distribution of state and privately-owned lands. In 2008, the government nationalized a number of mine companies that had been privatized during the neoliberal era and also promoted mine co-operatives (Ibid, 2008).

In June 2006, the government presented a five-year National Development Plan [2006-2010] (NDP) which according to a research paper by the UN department in Bolivia, seeks to change the development model that concentrated wealth in the hands of the few (UNODC, 2010:6). According to the National Development Plan, public investment for housing, infrastructure and small businesses was \$6.9 billion annually while private investment was \$6 billion (Seelke, 2008). The GDP was expected to grow by 7.6 percent in 2010 while 90,000 jobs would be created every year and poverty would reduce by 50 percent. Public revenues from hydrocarbon industries were earmarked for social protection programs including allowances for poor families, unemployed workers, landless peasants, and tax decreases for the poorest (UNODC, 2010:7).

The second national program that illustrates MAS' vision for development is the five-year 'National Alternative Development with Coca Plan' (PNDIC). The general framework of this plan is to "develop the capacity for participative, communitarian and institutional self-management, including supportive private inversion, in order to eliminate the driving factors of poverty, social exclusion and environmental deterioration, for an alternative and sustainable development" (UNODC, 2010:8). This Alternative Development Plan aims at reducing poverty and unemployment while promoting sustainable uses of natural resources. It recognizes the positive attributes of the coca leaf and promotes its industrialization and commercialization for the production of goods such as coca tea.

Webber suggests that MAS' political economy is nothing more than the promotion of a neostructural economic development model. Neostructuralism became mainstream in the academic and policy-making circles in the mid-1990s. It moves away from the neoliberal orthodoxies that had created

social unrest, political destabilization and increased poverty in many Latin American countries in the 1980s and 1990s. Although it accepts the fundamental free-market principles, neostructuralism favors more state intervention in the fields of economy and society. Neostructuralists believe that although the market is the most powerful force that drives the economy, other key factors such as infrastructure, education, finance, labour relations and social integration play an equally important role in the wider process of development. The role of the State and its institutions is to intervene in the economy when needed by increasing taxes, nationalizing industries and resources, and implementing temporarily measures against the capital in order to maintain social cohesion and protect the existing social structures (Webber, 2011:177).

The basic principles of neostructuralism have undoubtedly affected the economic policies of many Latin American countries that tried to implement anti-neoliberal policies: Lula's Brazil, Kirchner's Argentina, Vasquez's Uruguay and even Chavez's Venezuela serve as examples. In the search for a counter-neoliberal model, these countries have used some of the theoretical tools of neostructuralism for the advancement of a development model that moves away from neoliberal orthodoxies. However, we point out that neostructuralists give particular attention to the need of a consensus between the social actors that shape an economy. That means that the State is intended to create the conditions for mutual compromises between the important social actors whose interests might be in conflict. The State, according to neostructuralists, needs to condense the interests of all social actors and advance the general interest (Webber, 2011:187).

This paper suggests that this has not entirely been the case for Morales' Bolivia. Because of the articulation between MAS and the social movements, Morales' administration has been eager to satisfy the demands of a population that was thirsty for social justice. For one thing, the government is not hostile to foreign capital and is trying, to some extent, to attract Foreign Direct Investments. However, the MAS government has implemented policies that are directly in conflict with the interests of the national elites and has destabilized the country's social cohesion. This was apparent during the efforts to write the country's new Constitution when the right-wing opposition did everything it could to cancel the Constitutional Assembly, resulting in a divided country. This is also apparent in the current struggle for independence in the elite-controlled region in Santa Cruz. This region is the wealthiest in the country as it is the home of the large agricultural businesses that belong to the traditional national elites who strongly oppose MAS' policies and question Morales' authority.

The Social Movement's Struggles for State Transformation

The convention of a Constitutional Assembly was a persistent demand by the participants in social movements from 2000-2005. On March 6, 2006, four months after MAS was elected to power the MAS government responded to these demands and announced elections in June for the convention of a Constitutional Assembly (Postero, 2010). The right-wing opposition delayed the convention from August to December and protests in the elite-controlled region of Media Luna erupted. Morales went on a hunger strike and called upon social movements to support him and defend the Constitutional Assembly. After numerous clashes between the social movements and MAS on one hand, and the right-wing opposition and their supporters on the other, a draft Constitution was voted with a 2/3 majority in mid-2008. In 2009 the Constitution passed with a 60 percent majority in a national referendum (Bueno and Datta, 2011). The new Constitution was the result of a compromise between the two sides but was still a great step forward in the effort to

transform the State from an indigenusness point of view.

The delegates of MAS, reflecting the interests of the social movements, especially that of the indigenous peasants who were the most powerful force of the movements, prioritized the indigenous concept of 'living well' in the new Constitution. This is a concept that has deep roots in the indigenous culture and is promoted in the new Constitution by the establishment of State policies that guarantee that all people should have access to the basic means to life (Chaplin, 2010:73). 'Quality of life' in the indigenous culture means covering material needs but also having the tools for personal development and empowerment. This position builds on the indigenous-peasant concept of living that promotes solidarity as a social value and forwards a harmonious relationship and respect towards nature (Chaplin, 2010:74).

The Preamble of the New Constitution illustrates the general spirit of the structural changes that the Constitution wants to facilitate:

The Bolivian public, which is plural in composition [...] From the depths of history, inspired by the struggles of the past: the anti-colonial indigenous uprisings, independence, the popular liberation struggles, the indigenous, social, and syndical marches, the water war and the October war, the struggles for land and territory, and in the memory of our martyrs, constructs a new State. A State based in respect and equality among all, with the principles of sovereignty, dignity, complementarily, solidarity, harmony, and equality in the distribution and redistribution of social product, where the search for a good life [vivir bien] predominates, with respect for the economic, social, juridical, and cultural plurality of the inhabitants of this land, living together collectively with access to water, work, education, health, and housing for all (Postero, 2010:72).

The new Constitution shows that the orientation of the country's development model depends greatly on the position of the social movements. Social movements are participants in the development discourse as solid and powerful political actors. Their articulation with MAS as the political instrument that can give them access to governmental power and thus promote their interests, was apparent in the writing of the Constitution. The new Constitution creates structural ties between the State, MAS and the social movements. It puts forward indigenous rights and constitutes the Bolivian Republic as a 'plurinational entity' that represents the ethnic diversity of the country and establishes thirty-six indigenous languages as official languages. It grants autonomy to numerous indigenous communities, providing them with new land and the institutional tools for self-government while it increases and reserves seats in the Senate for these communities (Postero, 2010).

The writing of the new Constitution was the social movements' effort — championed by the poor indigenous peasants—to impose their interests and their positions on the national development discourse. The battle over the writing of the Constitution was a political struggle that took many forms from massive violent protests to high-political debates. In reference to the social movements, the struggles surrounding the writing of the Constitution reveal that social movements were not only an active participant in the national political discourse, they were the decisive one. Their persistent demands over the years for a Constitutional Assembly, their continuous struggles throughout the whole process of its writing and the pressure and force they 'injected' in MAS, were the factors that rendered them victorious in this crucial political battle that aimed to transform the State. National elites and the parties that represented their interests in the Constitutional Assembly

suffered a political defeat that followed the 2005 presidential elections. This election was of great importance as it focused on the writing of a Constitution that redesigned the State and its means to achieve development.

An Alternative Development Model

MAS provided a great part of the Bolivian population with a vision for an alternative, anti-neoliberal development plan that prioritizes the interests of the poor, and not that of the elites that were, up to that point, ruling the country. Morales describes his long-term vision for Bolivia as 'communitarian socialism'. He has named capitalism as the number one enemy of nature (Webber, 2011:156). In his speeches in various international fora he often describes how "capitalism is killing Pachamama (Mother Earth)" and that in the future 'either capitalism dies or Mother Earth dies'. MAS' political thought is embedded with the concept of indigenusness and the principles of the Marxist tradition.

Although socialism is the long-term goal for MAS, the development model that has been implemented since 2005 has in no way abolished capitalist forms of production. Garcia Linera, Morales' Vice-President and a former journalist and intellectual, in an essay published in 2008, describes how the MAS government envisions a gradual building of socialism in stages (Webber, 2011:174). Linera suggests that the country has experienced a transition from a stage where the State is in crisis and the former elites are losing control of the political system to a stage where intense social conflicts have brought new social forces (i.e. the social movements) into power. Bolivia has now moved into a stage of "ascendant hegemonic construction", entailing a process of social transformation and re-arrangements in the existing social order (Webber, 2011:174).

Bolivia's current development model is original for two fundamental reasons: firstly, because it designs a development plan that is moving away from the neoliberal principles, but is not confined to the implementation of pro-poor policies as it aims to redefine the structural relations between the State, national elites (capital) and the working population (labour), in favor of the latter. A state-directed development process, influenced by neostructural theory, is considered essential in that procedure. Secondly, the development model is original because it seeks to transform the State by putting forward indigenous populations and their views on how development should be. This transformation is the social movement's effort to battle the politico-economic hegemony of the elites. It is in an ongoing process of decolonization by Bolivia's poor population, the population that has been active in the social movements for many years. The fact that the official name of the country has changed to 'Plurinational State of Bolivia' with thirty six official languages, underlines this transformation.

The important role of the social movements in this process is what makes this model purely unique. The State might be the political space where all interests are condensed (Poulantzas, 1978) but it is the social movements, and to a great extent the indigenous peasant part of these movements, that direct the orientation of the development process. President Morales and the MAS intelligentsia have the final word as the ultimate administrative power in this discourse, but their power is based on the support of the social movements. National elites of white/mestizo origin who had been ruling the country since the Spanish colonial era, still have economic control of the country. But in the political and the social arena, a great shift has taken place as social movements now determine the country's national agenda.

Conclusion

Over the last decade, Bolivia has undergone a process of political and social transformation. The social movements that emerged due to a crisis in the traditional political system opened a new chapter in Bolivian politics; neoliberal development has been abandoned, replaced by a neostructuralist approach that includes more state involvement and nationalization of natural resources. In this context, the country's Constitution has been re-written in order to reflect the social movement's demands and views on development, especially the views of the marginalized indigenous peasant populations, which are the ethnographic majority of Bolivia. The transformation of State is the ultimate goal for the social movements and the governing MAS party. This process is shaped by the articulation between the MAS party and the social movements that constitute the most dynamic political subjects in the development national discourse.

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Beyond the Unquestioned Body: Some New Corporeal Nuances

A Comparative Review of Two Ethnographies of the Body

Agathe Faure

At first, the body can appear relatively unproblematic. “No one ever says, Here I am, and I have brought my body with me” (Whitehead, 1938: 156). This ‘unquestionability’ of the body (Wittengstein, 1969) is particularly effective in the Cartesian logic in which Western academia is embedded. Considered as the basis of all Western dichotomies, ‘Cogito ergo sum’ (‘I think therefore I am’) develops the existence of two distinct and opposite classes of substance which together constitute the human: the palpable body and the intangible mind (Lock and Scheper-Hughes, 1987: 9). The body is reduced to this “most common thing (...), the body we touch and we see” (Descartes, 2005: 31), which can gain true understanding and reality only through our conception (Descartes, 2005). The body tends to be erased: “I am therefore (...) *only* a thing which thinks; that is to say a mind, understanding, or reason” (Descartes, 2005: 29, my emphasis).

However, this conception of the body is being denigrated by most anthropological schools. A quest for ethnographies that question its founding principles has begun, asking about the intrinsic nature of the distinction between the body and the mind to human experience. In this existential search, the form of ethnography chosen often reveals (or betrays?) a particular anthropological project. This essay will compare and contrast two ethnographies of the body. *The Body of One Color: Indian Wrestling, the Indian State, and Utopian Somatics* by Alter (1993) is, following a Foucauldian tradition, mainly an ethnography of the body that regards the body as a medium of expression for society. *Words from the Holy People: a case study in cultural phenomenology* by Thomas Csordas (1994) is a more phenomenological ethnography, i.e. it follows a methodology that emphasises the immediate lived experience of how phenomena appear and are constituted by consciousness prior to all scientific abstraction. It departs *from* the body and treats it as a positive subject in society. My argument will be based on these detailed ethnographies in order to explore broader theoretical thoughts and influences.

‘The body of one colour’ as active site of resistance

In the social field, the particular dualist conception of the human is divided between behaviour, based on material bodies that can be coerced and on which an external power can be inscribed; and consciousness, relating to the private mind that can be persuaded (Mitchell, 1990). The first section – constructed on the ethnography of Alter (1993) – starts with this dual image: it presents authority as able to control the docile body quite easily, conceiving the latter as an inanimate and politically benign object inhabited by the intellect, which decides whether or not to subdue (Alter, 1993).

This section will examine the subjective experience of power, tracing its effects on bodies, in the particular context of resistance from *pahalwan*, wrestlers in the northern Indian city of Banaras who, by their specific psychosomatic identity, form a veritable ‘somatic protest’ in a context of a mind-body synthesis based on precise ‘discipline mechanisms’. The regulations over the wrestler’s body are fundamentally political since their aim is to create a new “moral, ethical and partisan”

citizen within the Indian state (Alter, 1993: 51). Indeed, wrestling in India is more than a sport: it is a way of life that takes place through a regimen of mind-body discipline in the *akhara* (gymnasium) – a veritable world in itself (Alter, 1993). There, the body gets in touch with a particular matrix of natural elements that serve to orient the body properly to the world (Alter, 1993: 53).

The “body of one colour” is regulated in terms of micro-physical control: not only are the features of training specific, but every aspect of biological life is regulated in an elaborated set of rules. For instance, the dietetics follow a very detailed programme. In addition to their normal diet, the wrestlers have to consume significant quantities of milk (at least two liters per day), *ghi*, a clarified butter commonly used in South Asia (half a liter per day), and almonds (at least one kilogramme per day). Diet rich in fat is seen as essential for physical and mental development, and also as entailing a cooling *sattva* function, which helps to “render peaceful a body that has been heated and agitated through exercise” (Alter, 1993: 56). Furthermore, these elements tend to be associated with semen. Here, the semen is seen as the core of the wrestler’s strength and character: to consume these particular elements prevents him from losing semen and becoming weak and immoral since they help “to protect one’s store of semen by cooling the heat of passion” (Alter, 1993: 56). Indeed, in wrestling thought, “moral failings are (...) visibly embodied” (Alter, 1993: 56). Conversely, “the physique of the wrestler is taken as a prototype for embodied virtue” if the wrestler manages to combine these primary physical dimensions with a particular moral lifestyle in order to create “a body of one colour” (Alter, 1993: 56).

Many wrestlers accuse the Indian government’s public welfare policy of failing to protect the moral values of the body from modern public life. The state-mandated way of life delivered by a corrupted Indian government, especially generating the “tacit erosion of public health” (Alter, 1993: 57), is perceived as penetrating and dominating the citizen’s body, thus undermining its integrity. Alter (1993: 58) provides the example of the particular suspicion towards government-licensed liquor stores since the use of alcohol is not only considered immoral by the wrestlers but also as a danger to the very core of the male body, burning up semen and placing men in a situation of emotional vulnerability to sensual passion. Although the complaints are not limited to the wrestlers’ community, the latter takes particularly seriously the government’s intentions to transform the citizen’s (male) body into a purely self-referential, individuated object (Alter, 1993). Consequently, wrestlers seem to understand “the micro-physics of power” wherein a novel domination is experienced, on the level of semen loss for instance (Alter, 1993: 59). As Foucault (cited in Alter, 1993: 56) claims: “an awareness of one’s own body can be acquired only through the effect of an investment of power in the body”. Indeed, power is tolerable only on the condition that it masks a substantial part of itself (Foucault, 1978). The wrestler here experiences this new power as a visible and harmful force imposed on his body. Resisting the various apparatuses of power that attempt to separate the body and the mind and trying to defend a unitary mind/body synthesis, Indian wrestlers construct a political discourse and political regimen within the *akhara* against the modern state.

Indeed, nowadays, many contemporary wrestlers are nostalgic for a golden age when royal patrons recruited and took care of them. Before Indian independence, there was a “political symmetry” between wealthy landlords and famous wrestlers: “the patron *raja* as a powerful ruler and the wrestler as a physically fit icon of the princely state” (Alter, 1993: 60). The wrestler was created as a ‘muscular metaphor’ of the royal authority (Alter, 1993: 60). The disciplinary mechanism attributed

to the wrestler's way of life found its legitimacy in this particular power relation. "Among other things, this helped to establish, in the minds of the wrestlers at least, an unambiguous connection between state power, public health, and the integrity of those who were subject to princely rule" (Alter, 1993: 60).

Through the medium of his body, the wrestler now protests and resists, trying to preserve the health values he embodies facing this elusive force, the impersonal authority that is the New Indian Republic. The meaning of the wrestler's body, dependent on a very specific form of power, is now threatened: "In this climate, with no central, absolute power remaining to hold it in place, the wrestler's body succumbed to a similar fate and began to disintegrate" (Alter, 1993: 62).

The Indian wrestler experiences a new context of power relations inscribed on his body. Here, we have to clarify with Foucault (1982) that far from being reducible to any concentrated institution or a supplementary structure above society, power relations are deeply rooted in the social nexus. Power is the name of the multiplicity of force relations, the complex strategic situation, immanent in the particular social sphere in which they operate and which constitute their organisation (Foucault, 1978). Power becomes "a social subject in everyday life" Aretaxaga (2003: 393). Power is not exercised merely as an obligation on those who "do not have it" but rather invests them, and is transmitted by them and through them (Foucault, 1979). Power over bodies is established in the depth of society, following a specific mechanism and modality (Foucault, 1979). The 'body politic' is a set of material elements and techniques that serve as defence and communication tools, and support the power that invests human bodies and subjugates them (Foucault, 1979: 28).

This 'political anatomy' takes different forms in different historical contexts. Therefore, techniques of punishment have undergone many changes in the history of this 'body politic' (Foucault, 1979: 28-29). For instance, while under the *raja* the wrestler was 'energetically emblematic' of the royal power, he becomes relatively vulnerable under democracy which creates a new situation of power and control (Alter, 1993: 63).

Power has then a specific contextualised relationship with the body. The body is figured as an instrument on which specific cultural meanings of power are inscribed (Butler, 1990: 6). Different mechanisms of discipline will be chosen to affect it. Butler (1990) proposes that in patriarchal society the body is a platform onto which gender stereotypes are superimposed. For instance, concerning strip searches of female detainees in Northern Irish prisons, Artexaga (2001) argues that the penetration of these detainees' bodies is an obvious attempt to penetrate their political identities, to reconfigure their subjectivity transforming them from political and rebellious to conforming, subordinate women fixed by their sex (Artexaga, 2001).

Power is then the way in which certain actions modify other actions: power actions force the body to act, bend, or break (Foucault, 1982: 220). It is more a question of "government" than of direct confrontation: to govern is to structure the possible field of action of others (Foucault, 1982: 221). However, power is exercised only over free subjects and only insofar as they are free. In this way, the individual or collective subject faces a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving are made available, and several reactions and diverse comportments may be realised (Foucault, 1982). Freedom and the possibility of insubordination, the availability of the means to escape appear as the condition for the exercise of power (Foucault, 1982). If the mechanisms of power allow one to

direct the conduct of others, they ask for a frontier, a line of strategic reaction or struggle. There is a “reciprocal appeal...a perpetual linking and perpetual reversal” between power and resistance (Foucault, 1982: 226). The antagonism of strategies is indeed a chemical catalyst that can be used to shed light on power relations, locate their position, their point of application and the methods used. If the form of power applies itself to immediate everyday life, categorising and marking the individual, attaching him or her to the own identity, imposing on him or her a law of truth that has to be recognised by him/herself and others, the subject becomes the one that is subjugated and the one that is conscious of the possibilities of insubordination (Foucault, 1982: 211). There are irreducible opposites: “Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power” (Foucault, 1978: 95).

Demello (1993) illustrates Foucault’s view on the resistant body through his study of prison tattoos, crucial in creating the convict’s sense of identity. Indeed, here, the tattoo makes the body culturally and politically visible: the convict, locked, stripped of everything he used to own, sees the tattoo as a sign of self-respect--he plays by his own rules (Demello, 1993). The process of tattooing creates the ‘convict body’ (Demello, 1993). Then, the prison tattoo is a ‘subversive bodily act’ since it re-establishes the convict’s authority over his own body and challenges the political system which attempts to control it (Demello, 1993). “The convict body is itself counter-hegemonic in that it incorporates both the system (prison) and the challenge (tattoos)” (Demello, 1993: 13). Seemingly, as a consciously oppositional project, wrestling seeks to reanimate and invigorate the docile, subject citizen, trying to stop the state’s penetration and control by making physical fitness a form of political protest and civic form (Alter, 1993: 65).

However, both the convict and the wrestler seem to go beyond the Foucauldian image of the body. Power in bodies appears to become embodied powers, the linchpin for creative struggle, political projects and identity. We touch here on the question of re-appropriation of the body, going beyond the question asked by Foucault of “what kind of bodies does society want and need?” to invert it: “What kind of society does the body need, wish and dream?” (Scheper-Hughes, 1994: 232). In Foucault’s theory, the body is still ‘devoid of subjectivity’, of “the existential experience of the practical and practicing human subject” (Scheper-Hughes, 1994: 231). All projects considered are self-defeating without the “lived experience of the body-self” (Scheper-Hughes, 1994: 232). According to Ortner (1995), the adequate representation of subjects in power relations is not the result of providing better fixed portraits of them in and of themselves, but of drawing the projects they construct and enact since it is through these projects that they become and transform who they are and sustain or transform their social and cultural universe.

Here, Alter (1993: 66-67) himself in his conclusion goes beyond Foucault’s framework, arguing that the wrestler does not protest rationally but fundamentally embodies his opposition to the state domination: “Through the disciplined construction of iconic individuality, the state is resisted and reformed by systematically conflating reason and biology to develop an integrated political identity”.

The case study of Dan: a phenomenological ethnography of embodiment

In his ethnographic account *Words from the Holy People: a case study in cultural phenomenology*, Thomas Csordas attempts to re-empower the body, defending the concept of embodiment. Embodiment implies that the body is something else other than, or added to, the physical body

itself. It is concerned with the ways in which people “inhabit” their bodies so that these become ‘habitated’ (Scheper-Hughes, 1994). It is partly based on Mauss’ notion of ‘habitus’, i.e. “all the acquired habits and somatic tactics that represent the cultural arts of using and being in the body (and in the world)” (Scheper-Hughes, 1994: 232).

Csordas (1994) applies this theoretical concept to the study of Dan, a thirty-year-old Navajo cancer patient, from the year after the onset of his illness to about a year before he died. Dan, an English-speaking former welder, comes from an acculturated bicultural family; his mother is a schoolteacher and his father a ceremonial leader (or ‘road man’) in the Native American Church (Csordas, 1994: 270-271). Divorced since the onset of his illness, Dan was cared for by his own family (Csordas, 1994: 271). Dan was diagnosed with Grade II astrocytoma, a brain tumour (Csordas, 1994). After his tumour was removed, he received chemotherapy and radiation therapy and was maintained on medications. He had to deal with many post-operation effects, both physical (such as chronic headache) and psychiatric (such as “difficulty in expressing his thoughts”, “rambling speech”, “preoccupation with mixed strategies for a plan of life”) (Csordas, 1994: 271). While Dan’s status was dominated by the impairment of his linguistic ability and the frustration that “I can’t say my thoughts”, he gradually recovered English spoken language (Csordas, 1994: 271). Written language was recovered more slowly and the moderate Navajo he knew was completely lost (Csordas, 1994: 271).

He declined recommended psychotherapy and vocational rehabilitation, preferring his own rehabilitative strategies such as relearning vocabulary with puzzle books, veritable “self-motivated form of linguistic therapy and cognitive rehabilitation” (Csordas, 1994: 272). His own, preferred solution for reconstructing his life, focused on his existential struggle for language, was globally to “follow the Navajo way” and learn to be “the kind of person that helps people”, i.e. ‘a medicine man’ (Csordas, 1994: 272). Dan chose this strategy when the Navajo deities or ‘Holy People’ inspired him with words of prayer (Csordas, 1994: 272). After this long auditory experience, Dan had the compulsion to talk and to pray, actions that relieved his recurrent headache pain, leaving him with a “happy and good feeling” (Csordas, 1994: 272).

Destined for a successful career as a ‘medicine man’ by his relatives, he gave utterance to the elders during a *peyote* meeting in order to get their confirmation. These long meetings, during which participants ingest *peyote* (a substance made from a cactus of the same name, known for its psychoactive effects), sing and take turns uttering spontaneous and inspired prayers, include intervals of quiet conversation which incite encouragement and exhortation of patients (Csordas, 1994: 274). Dan’s speech provoked criticism: not only did his severe linguistic impairment affect the understanding of his utterance but he defended an innovative message made of “brand new” words for the elders, “a new, contemporary synthesis of traditional Navajo philosophy in a young person” (Csordas, 1994: 273). However, he managed to convince them eventually arguing that the specificity of his speech was to be credited to spiritual help from earlier *peyote* meetings. His healing and his resistance to severe vomiting characteristic of the consumption of *peyote* suggested divine approval (Csordas, 1994: 275). Moreover, he was not deterred by his inability to speak the Navajo language since he had been requested by the ‘Holy People’ to translate ceremonial proceedings in English to the young people who wanted help from Navajo tradition but couldn’t understand the Navajo language (Csordas, 1994: 276).

For Dan, the actuality of language becomes a mode of engagement in the world since “having the project of becoming a medicine man was the rationale that grounded the return of language, and peyotist spirituality defined the moral horizon of his discourse as a global horizon” (Csordas, 1994: 278). Consequently, Dan schematised and objectified his embodied experience of language, “his inability to find the right word”, his recurrent headache pain if he refused to listen to his internal drives and give inspired speeches, into a life plan in conformity with cultural and religious meaning (Csordas, 1994). This is not because religious experience is reducible to neurological explanations “but because it is a strategy of the self in need of a powerful idiom for orientation in the world” (Csordas, 1994: 280-287).

Csordas (1994: 287) suggests that Dan’s struggle for correct utterance is, far from being only an answer to his neuroanatomical handicap and his cultural influences, “an adaptive strategy that spontaneously emerges from a pre-objective bodily synthesis”. Following Haraway’s words, Csordas (1994: 288) argues that bodies are not objective canvases but active agents with their “own global and corporal existential significance”.

To properly understand Csordas’ embodiment concept, it is worthwhile to consider another writing of the same author, *Embodiment as a Paradigm for Anthropology* (1990). In this article, Csordas (1990: 5) announces that “the body is not an object that takes on cultural form but is, in fact, the subject of culture, its ‘existential ground.’” Being here constructed as a unitary concept, the body collapses the usual dualities of subject/object (Strathern, 1996). Here indeed, “the body is the mindful body”, a veritable mind-body totality (Strathern, 1996).

Csordas bases his theory mainly on two authors. The first one is Merleau-Ponty who claims that objects do not have any sense *a priori* since they are the end products of our perception (Strathern, 1996). He captures the beginning of perception as ‘pre-objective’, referring to pre-abstract everyday modes of behaviour which can be specified in bodily terms (Strathern, 1996: 179). Additionally, Csordas adds Bourdieu’s concept of *habitus*, which he explains as a mediator that reveals how practices come about. The example of Pentecostalism in North America (Csordas, 1990) illustrates his approach. Csordas (1990) studies the evil spirits or demons which transgress the body’s boundaries and cause possession. In the pre-objective world, persons feel that their bodily behaviour is out of their control (Csordas, 1990). This pre-objective perception is objectified by the healer as a case of demonic intrusion, just like Western biomedicine diagnoses illness or disease (Csordas, 1990). The process of healing depends on the habitus since it is based on the particular cultural bodily image of expelling the evil spirit (Strathern, 1996: 179). The participants accept these diagnoses because of their specific habitus that sees the physical self as the creation of God rather than a socially informed body (Csordas, 1990: 23). Consequently, the lived body is the existential ground of a particular culture and era; the body is the existential substrate of culture.

Csordas is also inspired by the work of Hallowell in *The Self in Its Behavioral Environment*, where the latter claims that the auto-objectivation process is based on a prior pre-objective state, which enables the individual to become aware of himself as a socialised object (1955, cited in Csordas 1990: 6). For instance, demons are the precise cultural objects that correspond to an abstract conception: what is revealed through the experience of possession is based on the transgression of an emotional, intellectual or behavioural order, pre-determined by culture and orchestrated through habitus (Csordas, 1990). The conscious and pre-objective experience of possession will take

place through somatic effects, bodily expressions, integrated as bodily techniques, as unconscious structure, characteristic of religious images and rules (Csordas, 1990). This experience can even take unstructured form. Csordas (1990) gives the example of *glossolalia* - a series of syllables devoid of sense, used in prayer. *Glossolalia* forms utterances that create the space for the intercession of the divine. The existential reality of the body through this gestural sense of the language is obvious here.

Conclusion

This paper has studied two ethnographies and has used them as a linchpin for the theoretical exploration of two different anthropological visions of the body. Alter (1993) follows Foucault's vision of the body as inscribed with social and cultural disciplinary rules and value. Although he expands his argument in his conclusion, this ethnography remains an 'ethnography of the body' where the body is still object. Csordas (1994) follows a more phenomenological approach to the body that takes root in the body itself and makes the body subject. The concept of embodiment infuses mind and body with the idea of a 'pre-objective' world, i.e. the pre-abstraction of bodily sensations in the environment.

I would like to conclude this essay with the idea of Lambek (1998: 425) that body/mind or body/person are distinctions widespread and universal. According to him, people need more than one term to talk about the domains covered by their referents (Lambek, 1998). These domains take on different culture-dependent forms, as for instance the Cartesian dualism (Lambek, 1998). What we call the 'mind/body problem' can be seen as one particular historical expression of the universal existential debate of the human capacity of self-reflection. Within this debate ethnographies are used to argue for and reinforce concepts that do not hold true outside of their socio-historical context.

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Ritual Labour and Contemporary Politics

Joso Skarica

Introduction

Rituals have had an important role in maintaining socio-political equilibrium ever since the time of hunting and gathering bands. Therefore, it can be safely deduced that the notions of “Divine Kingship” and “The King’s Two Bodies” were deeply rooted in the collective unconscious of different societies well before they were articulated by Feeley-Harnik (1985) and Kantorowicz (1957) respectively. If one wants to really grasp how modern political leaders create and utilise their charisma to elevate themselves in the eyes of the public, historical ideas that connect kings with gods have to be properly understood. Whether we take a closer look at the ancient Sumerian civilisation and its progeny Babylon, Egypt and Hebrew kingdoms, one striking fact is essentially unchanged – the line between kings and gods is blurred and it is never distinguished at all who came first; the king or the god? As Collingwood wrote so elaborately: “Whether the king and the god are sharply distinguished...or somehow identified...is a question into which we need not enter because, however we answer it, the result will be that government is conceived theocratically” (1946: 14). Some of Hocart’s writings from the first half of the 20th century draw a strong parallel between polytheism and the notion of divine kingship, arguing that religion and kingship have never been divorced from each other. He wrote at the beginning of his seminal book on kingship: “...perhaps there were never any gods without kings or kings without gods” (1927: 7).

This great uncertainty of the real nature of the king is something that has been used as a means to control the masses since the dawn of humanity. I would argue that it is by this same token that contemporary politicians project their power, by behaving as if they derive it from a source much higher than their own mortal bodies. There is an important connection between this notion of god-king and the use of ritual in modern politics. Therefore, this essay will examine and analyse how monarchs and modern day political figures have used and still continue to use ritual as a way of legitimising their roles and projecting the invincibility thereof onto the minds of the *hoi polloi*. Furthermore, the following paragraphs will examine effective symbolism of funeral rites, rituals of continuity and installation rites and their utilisation by powers for various reasons, such as maintaining the status quo to preserve the dominant regime in turbulent times.

Besides trying to find historical parallels between ritual behavior of modern day politics and historical and contemporary kingship, this essay will examine in depth Durkheim’s theory of solidarity from his 1915 masterpiece “The Elementary Forms of Religious Life”. Durkheim’s work offers one of the best explanations why people have always had the need to relate to certain symbols and artifacts. Elaboration of this idea of “social communion” will be used to try to rationalise the behavior of the public in relation to political ritual.

Installation Rites, Charisma, and Modern Political Ritual

It can be argued that installation rites are one of the most potent tools by which a certain entity,

be it a king, a religious figure, or a politician, establishes his/ her legitimacy from day one. This essential practice has been observed in practically every culture and society and at all times throughout human history, albeit in modified and varying forms, but with the core objective remaining one and the same: to elevate an individual up to a particular vantage point where he/ she remains distinct from the others as well as his/ her previous identity. This new identity has been labelled differently by historians and social scientists, however, the particular phenomenon is best described and analysed in Kantorowicz' seminal work *The King's Two Bodies* (1957). By examining the Plowden court reports from the Queen Elizabeth's reign, Kantorowicz discovered that in 16th century England the law differentiated between the king's Body politic and Body natural. He argues: "The body politic of kingship appears as a likeness of the holy sprites and angels, because it represents, like the angels, the Immutable within Time." (1957:8). Therefore Kantorowicz's main thesis is that the king's Body natural, that is his mortal body, is divorced from the Body politic, which he assumes only for a certain period of time, that is to speak, he borrows his legitimacy from a source much higher than that of his own mortal human nature. This very notion of the king borrowing his legitimacy from other 'higher' realms has been the main driving force behind "the divine right to rule", which has been invoked by monarchs relentlessly. In her paper *Issues in Divine Kingship* (1985), Feeley-Harnik goes back to some important arguments made by political theologians Hocart and Fortes. She examines Hocart's *Kingship* (1927) and *Kings and Councillors* (1936) in which Hocart analyses how ritual has the power to transform a person into a thing or, in more abstract terms, an idea: "Man is not a microcosm; he has to be made one in order that he may control the universe for prosperity" (1936: 69).

This awkward idiom of "inherent sacredness of central authority" (Geertz 2000: 146) comes back to haunt us in contemporary political discourse and there are numerous examples from which one can deduct that modern political leaders use this notion to very subtly elevate their individual selves (Body natural) to semi-divine figures (Body politic). Geertz (2000) emphasizes the role of charisma in modern political discourse and labels it as an essential element by which politicians try to emulate the way of the ancient kings, albeit modified and adjusted to the contemporary political fashion and current state of affairs. His striking analysis of the mobility of Moroccan kings and how they use this element of 'mobility' to "demonstrate sovereignty to the sceptics" (1977: 162) draws a clear parallel to modern political ritual. For instance, during the American presidential elections, both major candidates traverse thousands of miles, visiting remote places and towns to hold speeches, shake hands or eat hot dogs in front of a handful of individuals. Not because those people are particularly important to their election campaign but they simply turn their mobility into a vehicle for demonstrating sovereignty to the uninitiated, and thus, using their charisma as a tool of political legitimacy. Parading across different and remote parts of the country serves the monarch (or any political figure) with a clear purpose – it allows the people to identify with the power of the ruler, while at the same time signifying the subservient nature of local authorities (Kertzer 1988: 22). The Moroccan example is not the only instance where rulers have used mobility as a tool to spread their authority and legitimacy. This practice is also found in South East Asia, for example in 14th century Java, where Geertz outlines how the royal caravan of the Javanese king passed through hundreds of communities over a period of several months. The procession was very elaborate with elephants, camels, ox-drawn carts and full royal regalia in order to emphasise the grandeur of the king to the peasants and villagers (1977: 159). The practice of 'royal entry' was not only confined to North Africa and the Far East but it was practised in 16th century Europe as well. In 1563, Charles IX was throned at the tender age of 13,

and to emphasise the new king's authority and counter the rising rebellion, his mother decided that he should embark on a two-year procession across France (Graham and Johnson 1979: 3).

Based on examples such as these, it can be proposed that "the most important ritual of legitimation in modern nations is the election" (Kertzer 1988: 49). Modern day elections have assumed the idiom of ancient rites of authority and 'royal entry'. And even though politicians try hard to impose onto the public the transparent and uninhibited nature of the roles which they assume, when examined at a deeper level and with a curious eye, one can conclude that modern day political rituals, particularly the elections, share essential features with ancient rituals of installations and successions.

Funeral Rites and Rites of Successions as Vehicles for Maintaining Continuity

Royal funeral rites have had major significance throughout human history and their utilisation to enhance the strength of powers can be observed in a vast number of spatially and temporally unrelated societies. There is a particular problem that concerns succession and installation of new kings: considering the king's divine nature, how is it possible to replace a God or some other sort of a divine creature? The Shilluk people of East Africa have a very elaborate way of dealing with this seemingly paradoxical situation. In their cosmology, a divine spirit resides in the king which is called Nyikang and looks after the people. Even though the king is mortal, Nyikang is eternal, and thus, when a king dies, the spirit of Nyikang needs to be transferred to another individual who will become the new king. This is a task that cannot be completed without the use of an elaborate ritual. The Shilluk use an effigy to represent the immortal spirit Nyikang, and when the king dies, the effigy is taken from the royal shrine in the north to meet the army of the king elect in the south. When the two armies meet, the king's elect army is allegorically defeated by Nyikang, and subsequently, both the new king and Nyikang return together to the shrine. Once in the shrine, the spirit that resides in Nyikang leaves it and enters the new king (Evans-Pritchard 1964: 205-06). One could be tempted to disregard the Shilluk example as an exotic practice of faraway peoples, but the use of effigy in funeral procession and rites of succession can be observed in Renaissance Europe, most notably in 15th and 16th century France. The French used the effigy in rituals of succession between the old and new king to represent the eternal power and the divine nature of the king. During the funeral procession, the effigy would accompany the corpse of the old king and the participants of the procession would regard the effigy as the king himself since it was made to look like the king, with waxed face and complete royal regalia (Giesey 1960: 177).

This emphasis on the symbolism of continuity during rites of succession is still alive and practised in the modern day Western political sphere, and in fact, the use of funeral rites as a political tool has a long history in the Western world. One of the most striking modern examples of such utilisation of these symbolisms in order to generate public support and validate the new leader's legitimacy occurred after the assassination of John F. Kennedy in November of 1963:

Lyndon Johnson felt compelled to ritualize his transition to the presidency without delay. Although in legal terms he automatically became president upon Kennedy's death, this was not enough. For Americans to think of him as their president, he felt, they must see him go through the inauguration rites. Aboard the plane that would take them back to Washington, Johnson entreated Jacqueline Kennedy, who had just watched her husband die, to stand by his side for the ceremony. (Kertzer 1988: 57-58)

Why did Lyndon Johnson feel compelled to take the oath of office when he was well aware that he became president the moment Kennedy drew his last breath? The answer is very obvious: he had to legitimise his new role in the eyes of the American public, and by having Kennedy's widow with her late husband's blood still on her clothes by his side, Lyndon Johnson relayed an extremely powerful symbolism not just to Americans but to the whole world. It is reasonable to believe that this was performed in a premeditated manner, but even if not, it is without doubt that Lyndon Johnson used the shock and distress that the American public was going through at that time to his advantage.

David Kertzer (1988) believes that it is possible to draw parallels between Kennedy's assassination and subsequent events, and Indira Gandhi's assassination in 1984 and the funeral rites performed by her son Ravi. After Indira Gandhi was assassinated by her Sikh guards, India was boiling with turmoil and riots - the country was on the verge of total collapse. In this situation, her inexperienced son Ravi used funeral rites as a way to gain approval from the masses and to legitimise his position as the true successor to his mother's political platform. It can be argued that the main reasons why Ravi Gandhi succeeded in the twofold task of calming the country-wide rebellion and at the same time establishing himself as a truly legitimate successor of his mother, lies in the fact that he had made use of elaborate rituals to accomplish these goals. Ravi Gandhi employed powerful Hindu funeral rites that involved a four-hour-long procession, not that much different from John Kennedy's two decades earlier. But this was just the first step of a series of complex rites Ravi Gandhi used to seal his new position as the country's leader. Indira Gandhi's funeral pyre took place in a location that was suspiciously proximate to the locations where her late father, Jawaharal Nehru, and Mahatma Gandhi were cremated. Through this particular symbolism, Ravi conveyed the message to the public that his mother was the person of the same gravitas as her father and Mahatma Gandhi, and thus, effectively cementing her position as a martyr. It is also important to note that Ravi himself set the funeral pyre alight – a classic example of continuation rites and a powerful symbolism in itself. Afterwards, Indira Gandhi's ashes were placed in more than thirty urns and sent to all Indian states and territories – effectively ushering Ravi's succession and sending the message of continuation of the agenda to the whole country. After a period of time, during which the urns were displayed to the public, the ashes were collected and Ravi himself scattered his mother's ashes over the Himalayas, supposedly over a cave where the Hindu god Shiva is believed to be dwelling (Kertzer 1988: 140-144). This powerful use of succession rites coupled with Hindu symbolism secured Ravi's elections victory and earned him a place as a legitimate successor of his mother Indira, now practically elevated to a status of a martyr and saint.

What do these two major political events of the 20th century have in common? There is ample evidence which shows that both Lyndon Johnson and Ravi Gandhi borrowed legitimacy from their respective predecessors. This goal was achieved through slightly different means; Ravi Gandhi employed complex Hindu funeral rites that lasted for several weeks, while Lyndon Johnson's approach was more simple and straightforward: it was enough to have Kennedy's widow by his side at the time he took the oath of office. In other words, the delivery was different and adjusted to the appropriate cultural setting, but the aim and the goal of the ritual was precisely the same in both cases: to borrow political legitimacy (Kertzer 1988).

Durkheim's Theory of Solidarity and the *Social Communion* Element of Political Ritual

What is the driving force behind political ritual and ritual at large? Do societies create rituals or

are they created through rituals? Such questions arise during the investigation of rituals and their significance in modern societies and this paper puts particular emphasis on political rites. Some of these questions can be answered by examining Durkheim's theory of solidarity that pinpoints ritual as a crucial factor for producing and maintaining solidarity. Even though it deals with ritual in general, Durkheim's theory can be extended to include political rites and it helps explain why there is so much need or even necessity for it. Durkheim (1915) proposes that if we are left by ourselves, that leaves our existence at the mercy of other people, and as such, humans have the innate need to comfort themselves by emphasising and constantly reaffirming the strength and positive aspects of the society in which they live in. This need for 'social communion' can, therefore, only be met through some form of common action which has the power to binds us together: "It is by uttering the same cry, pronouncing the same word, or performing the same gesture in regard to some object that they become and feel themselves to be in unison" (1915: 230). According to Durkheim (1915), it is only by such means – the use of symbols – that humans can communicate their deepest and most intimate feelings and mental states. He argues that the modern nations are not any different than primitive societies in this respect and both have the same need to utilise rituals to maintain social solidarity, thus rendering rituals an essential and integral part of every society. There is another important feature of ritual that concerns its standardisation. Kertzer noted a strong connection between standardisation and emotions when he wrote (1988: 42): "This, along with its repetitive nature, gives ritual its stability. Stability, in turn, serves to connect ritual to strongly felt emotions: emotions experienced in past enactments of the ritual re-emerge at subsequent re-enactments". To further expand on this notion of ritual's connection to emotions, we can turn to Munn's (1973) commentary on Durkheim's theory. She postulates that the "ritual dramatizes and energizes collective representations that mediate between society and the individual" (1973: 583). It is obvious how this notion connects to modern political parades, speeches and election rallies, and how the individual is made to be part of something much larger than themselves by participating in such activities. This 'societal control system', as Nancy Munn (1973) puts it, has the ability of creating a connection between the individual and others participating in the same ritual "through the symbolic mobilization of shared life meanings" (1973: 605). Modern political symbols such as flags, national anthems, certain public holidays, physical artefacts such as buildings that house the governmental apparatus, the president and the parliament provide the general public with means through which they can worship their culture, society and the nation state. Max Lerner echoed Durkheim when he compared the United States Constitution with a totem:

Every tribe needs its totem and its fetish, and the Constitution is ours. Every tribe clings to something which it believes to possess supernatural powers, as an instrument for controlling unknown forces in a hostile universe...Like every people, the American people have wanted some anchorage, some link with the invariant (1941: 236).

Durkheimian theory is not without its critics though, and the main criticism lies in the fact that his theory does not really deal with political change, but in fact, "acts to reinforce the status quo" (Kertzer 1988: 61; 66-67). Kertzer (1988) argues that Durkheim's theory of solidarity does not address social conflict and, therefore, ignores the political changes, how solidarity is affected by rituals or how rituals get affected over time by these very dynamics and mechanisms of change. Regardless of some of its shortcomings, Durkheim's theory of solidarity provides us with a meaningful and elaborate way of explaining some of the major forces that affect individual's attitude toward rituals and the role that rituals have in the society at large.

Conclusion

Drawing parallels between the ancient god-kings and modern day political leaders might seem preposterous. One could be tempted to make such a claim if there wasn't a whole plethora of evidence that connects the behaviour of these seemingly distant entities. The most important link between kings and politicians lies in the fact that both entities have used and continue to use ritual as a way of legitimising their respective roles. This so called "theocratisation" of political ritual (Collingwood 1946: 14) is paramount if one wants to project to the outside world that his right to rule is derived from a source much higher than his/ her corporeal nature. As Hocart put it so eloquently: "The earliest known religion is a belief in the divinity of kings" (1927: 7).

Political ritual under its various guises has the power to strongly engage the emotions of the spectators and create a powerful illusion that they are somehow connected with the charismatic political figure and are, therefore, part of the power structure itself. Durkheim's theory of solidarity addresses this particular aspect of ritual down to its very core. 'Social communion' is an important agent in facilitating the emotions during an election rally or an uprising and its great power and allure lies in the fact that it produces the effect of being one with the rest of the participants; or put in crude terms, 'social communion', in its most extreme instances, engenders herd mentality.

Various instances of political utilisation of ritual described in this paper evidently show us that "Transmission of messages through ritual dramatization is much more powerful than communication through verbal declaration" (Kertzer 1988: 30). Ritual as a means to demonstrate and communicate strength and dominance to allies and foes alike has had a long historical application. Aztecs are infamous for their ceremonies involving human sacrifices and they were known for inviting "foreign dignitaries" to these vicious events. It is not very hard to guess what kind of an effect did the ritual murder of hundreds or event thousands of captured soldiers have on these "guests of honour" (Foster 1950: 63- 64).

Finally, to the sceptics who hold the belief that rituals employed in the past by kings, Tzars and emperors do not have any actual significance and are obsolete in this day and age I present the quote from Clifford Geertz (2000: 142-143):

The relevance of historical fact for sociological analysis does not rest on the proposition that there is nothing in the present but the past, which is not true, or on easy analogies between extinct institutions and the way we live now. It rests on the perception that though both the structure and the expressions of social life change, the inner necessities that animate it do not. Thrones may be out of fashion, and pageantry too; but political authority still requires a cultural frame in which to define itself and advance its claims, and so does opposition to it. A world wholly demystified is a world wholly depoliticised.

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The Subaltern Kashmiri: Exploring Alternative Approaches in the Analysis of Secession

Dustie Spencer

Introduction

The Kashmir dispute has been widely regarded as the most serious impasse in India-Pakistan relations since the birth of the two countries, after the British withdrew from the subcontinent in 1947. Yet even before then, Kashmiri Muslims had begun to forge an identity based largely on perceived oppression by the less populous Hindu Dogras (Zutshi, 2004). After independence and several subsequent wars, the *de facto* border, the Line of Control (LoC) was demarcated between Indian-Administered (IAK) and Pakistan-Administered (PAK) Jammu and Kashmir. At this time, Kashmiris comprised the majority of the Kashmir Valley in IAK, which will be the focus of this discussion. For generations, Kashmiris have been fighting for greater autonomy and more freedom from their perceived oppressors in modern times: the Indian Union Government. Although given a significant amount of autonomy constitutionally through Article 370, the State of Jammu and Kashmir has a history of New Delhi meddling in its internal affairs, rigging elections, and has been accused of being passive on human rights' abuses perpetrated by Indian security forces, especially in the Kashmir Valley. As Cockell suggests, this sense of collective persecution has led to a growing ethno-nationalist subaltern identity (2000). This Kashmiri identity, or *Kashmiriyat*, it is argued, is one of the primary motivations for politically mobilizing Kashmiris (Dasgupta, 2005, p240). It could follow then, that this subaltern identification has led to several generations of Kashmiris calling for greater autonomy, or outright independence from India.

The Kashmir separatist movement has come in and out of the limelight over the years, but has never left the interested academic bored with new theories or methodologies through which to analyse the ongoing conflict. In the tradition of realism, Kashmir has been analysed in terms of an Indo-Pakistan conflict; one which has gained international attention as being the first big test – and subsequent failure – of the United Nations (Schaffer, 2009, p17). Although Schaffer and others offer a concise account of political negotiations and events relating to the conflict, they fall short of offering a truly Kashmiri perspective. The political sciences and international relations remain saturated by scholars that undertake a more neo-realist or neo-liberalist evaluation of the conflict. Paul (2005), for example, claims that the conflict is more of an 'enduring rivalry' between India and Pakistan, rather than an intractable, intra-state conflict. The truth is that the Kashmir conflict is both an 'old war' as well as a 'new war', and therefore needs to be evaluated with an approach reflecting the dynamics of ground realities. Whereas the paradigmatic theories and methodologies historians have deployed to analyse historical events and discourses have evolved to incorporate a greater comprehension of subaltern actors, international relations theorists have largely been reticent to follow suit. Likewise, Subaltern Studies as a means to study *history* from below fails to reflect contemporary situations where the modern subalterns are underrepresented. Rather than scrapping Subaltern Studies as a passing fad, this essay argues that a subaltern approach can be most useful as a means to study *politics* from below. Being a disputed territory in South Asia and also a seemingly intractable conflict, Kashmir is a prime case for which to study the subaltern element within the context of a grander international relations theory.

Subaltern Studies and its Critics

South Asian and Orientalist studies at large, as posited by scholars such as Edward Said, have been formulated by a Western, imperialist interpretation of history that unjustly removes the agency of the subjected 'Other' through the dominant forces of colonialism. As a departure from elitist and colonial discourse, Marxist scholars such as Antonio Gramsci set the precedent for the Subaltern Studies discipline, which seeks to apply a revisionist historiography, giving voice and agency back to the subjugated masses and peasants. Viewing history through this alternative lens is what gave birth to the discipline of Subaltern Studies. Although the discipline has had much debate among members of its core group and has adopted a variety of methodologies and theoretical frameworks that has given it a certain mutability that makes it relevant today, As Chatterjee (2012) suggests, the discipline is in need of a revision that can adapt to a more modern paradigm that places it appropriately in contemporary India. Analyses of contemporary collective mobilization movements have been sparsely contextualized through the lens of the subaltern, but just after the Kashmiri insurgency of the 1990s had died down, Cockell (2000) attempted to do just that. In the inter-disciplinary domain of international relations, the inclusion of such theoretical frameworks as subaltern identity as an alternative perspective for evaluating modern conflicts can widen the narrow scope of neo-realism and neo-liberalism which have been status quo theories (Ayooob, 2002, p28).

Gyan Prakesh, part of the editorial group of the Subaltern Studies collective, states that the notion of the subaltern is:

drawn from Antonio Gramsci's writings [and] refers to subordination in terms of class, caste, gender, race, language, and culture and was used to signify the centrality of dominant/dominated relationships in history (1994:1477).

Gramsci, a Marxist imprisoned under the fascist regime of Mussolini, developed theories of cultural hegemony and subaltern identity, which later impacted a multitude of scholars and disciplines. The basic principles of the Subaltern project was based on the rejection of the predominate discourses of nationalism and elite bias in previous historical writing, Marxist notions of modernity as 'progress,' and the colonialist or imperialist doctrine that removes agency from the non-elites. Essentially, the Subaltern Study group's aim was to "restore history to the subordinated" (Prakesh, 1994, p1477). Furthermore, the approach was a departure from 'empirically' evaluating the peasant rebel as a "member of a class, but not as an entity whose will and reason constituted the praxis called rebellion" (Prakesh, 1994, p.1478). Works such as Guha's 1983 book *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency* were primarily aimed at a more comprehensive understanding of the Indian peasantry under British colonialism. Other essays in the *Subaltern Studies* collection have grown to include the subaltern 'untouchable' castes, religious minorities, and women. In addition to Guha's vague use of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* that describes the subaltern as someone of 'inferior rank,' he continues to suggest that the subaltern is 'a name for the general attribute of subordination in South Asian society whether this is expressed in terms of class, caste, age, gender and office or in any other way' (1988, p35). Although one cannot deny the putative political correctness of this definition, it is largely ambivalent and highly subjective. There has been much debate over who exactly can be classified as a subaltern. As stated earlier in this essay, Spivak argues that although there is not a singular homogenous subaltern, there are groups that a subaltern can fit into, albeit with some fluidity and ability for mobility into other categories (1988, p284). Bayly also raises the questions of who was actually considered to be a subaltern, and goes so far as to criticize Subaltern Studies for marginalizing those that don't fit neatly into the 'peasant' category (Bayly, 2008, p116).

Taking an interpretivist stance, who counts as a contemporary subaltern is largely a matter of perception. The implication is that academics and policymakers are in need of identifying the subaltern in conflict situations so as not to overlook these important actors and stakeholders in the process of conflict transformation and resolution.

As of Bayly's review of the first five volumes of *Subaltern Studies*, he noted that "The subaltern authors have not yet deployed a mass of new statistical material and indigenous records nor have they made much use of the techniques of oral history to supplement the colonial documentation" (1988, p111). In defence of this, however, the sheer difficulty of locating sources outside of those in colonial documentation is highlighted by the fact that "Indian peasants had left no sources, no documents from which their own 'voice' could be retrieved" (Prakesh, 1994, p1480). Chatterjee does, however, recognize the lack of sources that could have been integrated had there been more methodological rigor in the implementation. Because the historical transition from empirical inquiry to the inclusion of pragmatic ethnography had been slowly shifted into the foreground by Subaltern Studies, this may advent the inclusion of visual and popular culture sources (2012, p48). Despite the need for a revision of the Subaltern Studies discipline, Chatterjee only passively mentions how future historians of South Asia can progress the discipline by utilizing the "...panoply of modern technologies of communication..." (2012, p49). Indeed, in much discourse on the use of cyberpolitics, it would seem that Subaltern Studies could benefit greatly through the excavation of internet resources where many voiceless actors are granted a voice in the new mediums available. A critique raised of politics in general – and in the case of Kashmir studies in particular – is that political scientists tend to avoid ethnographic methods, even as a complementary tool. As a tool in general, it can provide the links of micro-scale ground realities to grander themes of power politics (Bayard de Volo & Schatz, 2004). In the case of Kashmir, ethnographic methods can be utilized to engage with the subaltern actors, often under-served in Kashmir discourses. It is through the exploration of alternative, more progressive methodologies that the researcher may 'hear' the voice of the subaltern.

Another predominate criticism of Subaltern Studies is the binary logics of 'elites' and 'non-elites.' Ludden describes this dichotomous barrier as a "concrete slab separating upper and lower space in a two storey building" (2001, p10). He further notes how this "hard dichotomy alienated subalternity from social histories that included more than two storeys or which move among them" (ibid.). This essentialising of the categories echoes the critics of the Marxist distinction between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie which does not take into account class mobility. However, Spivak defends this criticism by suggesting that Guha proposed a 'dynamic stratification grid' which refutes the essentializing or the bifurcation of categories, instead insisting on the heterogeneity of the categories (1988, p284). Chatterjee also addresses the issue of this dichotomy by suggesting that subalternity needs to be re-defined in a modern era where there is a more complex 'framework of democratic citizenship' (2012, p46).

The Subaltern Kashmiri

A dominant theme of Subaltern Studies is the idea that a subaltern identity may be shaped in some way by a shared collective consciousness or identity, whereby heterogeneous subaltern groups have a consistently "unchanging character: that is, the notion of resistance to the imposed domination of the elite class" (Louai, 2001, p6). Spivak and Guha both discuss the idea that there is a subaltern consciousness of sorts. Despite the acknowledgement that these are not simple binary 'us' versus

'them' logics and that there are no dynamics that essentialize the non-elites as subalterns, group identity as a social and political construct is not denied. Indeed, as Guha and others re-visit the peasant rebel or insurgent as a collection of subalterns, Cockell (2000, p321) describes the Kashmiri subaltern identity as a collective consciousness borne of "the historical experience of discrimination and exclusion [which] serves to heighten the shared perception of a core commonality and shared values which may serve as the foundation for collective action..." This collective consciousness is identifiable by the common call for *azadi*, or freedom, in Kashmir. Elsewhere in South Asia, sub-national movements may also reflect a collective, subaltern consciousness and share similarities to the nationalist movements and revolts against Great Britain (Mitra, 1996, p14).

Cockell affirms that in the case of Kashmir, the collective Kashmir identity is a subaltern identity because of the Kashmiri's inferior political relationship with the dominant political institution (2000, p332). Writing in the aftermath of the full-scale insurgency in Kashmir, he suggests that Kashmiris have asserted an "autonomous insurgent consciousness' based on the theoretical components of the '...genealogical aspect of ethnicity in nationalist mobilization, and...the particular salience of such nationalist mobilization for *post-colonial* ethnic politics" (2000, p321). Despite the contradictions that a model of nationalism creates within the framework of a subaltern argument, Cockell purports that *ethno-nationalism* is not the same as a statist version of nationalism (ibid). Although implicating the subaltern identity, the arguments of a collective *ethno-national* identity are echoed in other works, such as Ganguly's (1996). Cockell continues to highlight the *ethnic* aspect of ethno-nationalism by suggesting that this identification with a common ethnicity, which has been developed and strengthened over years of continued subjugation, remains more salient than other identity markers such as religion or class (2000, p322). By consulting a Chatham House study, 'Kashmir: Paths to Peace,' it would seem that those districts of the State most in support of a separate nation-state is the Kashmiri-dominated Valley (Bradnock, 2010).

Although the subalterns of Jammu and Kashmir have scores of varying regional, ethnic, linguistic, and religious identities as explored in literature on identity politics, such as Chowdhary's *Identity Politics in Jammu and Kashmir* (2010) and Malik's *Kashmir: Ethnic Conflict, International Dispute* (2005), there has been much debate about whether or not there is any overarching communal consciousness to sustain a cohesive political movement based on any single identity alone. In fact, when juxtaposing the analysis of academic works with that of online chatting and blogging, there is a sharp contrast between some overarching Kashmiri identity and that of the Kashmiri *Muslim* identity (Spencer, 2010). Zutshi (2004) also describes the overlapping of these salient identity markers. The *only* common theme, regardless of how dynamic or loose the definition may be, is that those who are mobilizing *feel* they are being unfairly subjugated in some way; that their voices are not being heard. Whether through political pressure, a violent insurgency, massive demonstrations, or stone pelting, the politically active Kashmiri associates him- or herself with a subaltern identity.

The Subaltern in International Relations

Although an extensive discussion of Indian foreign policy is beyond the scope of this essay, it is worth noting at least cursorily that India's foreign policy itself has not fit neatly into a Western framework like 'realism' or 'liberalism.' India's policy of non-alignment, for example, was a denunciation of Cold War *realpolitik* of competing hegemonic world powers. Hewitt (1997) argues this policy was in part based on India's attempt at becoming a great regional power. This strategy,

liberal economic reforms, India's intervention in Sri Lanka, and the country's nuclear posturing with Pakistan have created confusion in foreign policy analyses. For example, Ayoob (2002) interprets Indian policy towards Kashmir as a post-colonial state's attempt to consolidate power. Ayoob argues that India has been unjustly pressured to cede to hegemonic Western doctrines. In his view India is a subaltern state, and he argues for 'subaltern realism' (2002). Where his arguments falls flat according to human rights' advocates is when he essentially vindicates Indian abuses and state repression in Kashmir by arguing that these actions are "for consolidating state authority" and should be distinguished from "...purely predatory activities of self-seeking rulers who are interested...in privatizing the state to enrich and empower themselves" (Ayoob, 2002, p46). Regardless of how the conflict is perceived outside of Kashmir or portrayed in mainstream Indian media, state repression is very much perceived in Kashmir as a predatory action by the Indian government and the 700,000 troops stationed there. Whereby India may perceive itself as a subaltern entity vis-à-vis Western powers, advocates of an independent Kashmir may perceive their state to be subaltern vis-à-vis India – the growing global powerhouse occupying disputed territory.

One of the most distinguishing features of Cockell's argument is his criticism of the arguments of prominent Kashmir experts, who repeatedly place the Kashmir conflict within the framework of institutional decay or under the guise of a fundamental Islamic insurgency (2000, p325). Overused explanations of the current situation in Kashmir are second only to the Indo-Pakistan dialogue, which seemingly extinguishes Kashmiris completely from the conflict as autonomous actors. Despite Cockell's dismissal of institutional decay, this argument does seem to hold merit. Ganguly (1996) analyzes the breakdown of institutions in the state which paved the way to the violent uprisings of the 1990s, exacerbated by an influx of Islamist militants from Pakistan. Had Kashmiris been given the option of voicing their dissent through a fair electoral process, he argues, they would have been less likely to opt for the militant option. The failure to uphold autonomy of Kashmir, to hold a plebiscite as a means to discover what political destiny Kashmiris wanted, the more recent violent repression and human rights violations, and the over-bearing presence of military camps and check-points have contributed to the supporting of a collective subaltern, Kashmiri consciousness. These politically conscious subalterns are weary of their subjugation and eager to let their voices be heard. If indeed history has a tendency to repeat itself and Kashmiris continue be denied a forum to voice their dissent, the dangerous consequences are readily apparent.

In conceptualizing the subaltern in a contemporary political movement, it would not be useful to construct an image of a peasant during the British Raj, but rather of the contemporary Indian peasant (Chatterjee, 2012, p45). The same can be said for the subaltern Kashmiri. The historical construct of ruling authorities residing 'outside the bounds of the peasant community' (Chatterjee, 2012, p46) no longer applies in an India where "the activities of the government have penetrated deep into the everyday lives of rural people and affect matters like the supply of water to their fields or electricity to their homes...transport...schooling, public health services..." (Chatterjee, 2012, p47). There is dynamism and an intersection between the call of secession and the need for issues of local governance. Despite decades of insurgency, inter-state war, and political turmoil, Kashmiris, soldier on. As Chatterjee points out, there is a distinction between politics of sovereignty and the more "...ordinary stuff of democratic politics..." (2012, p47). After the Amarnath land grab controversy over the transferring of Kashmiri lands (on a Hindu pilgrimage site) sparked protests in both Jammu and Kashmir from Hindus and Muslims, the Indian government placed a positive

spin on the turnout of voters for local *panchayat* elections (Tremblay, 2009). As Tremblay suggested (and events since then have alluded), Kashmiri support for *azadi* has not waned, but Kashmiris understand the need to engage with their local governments while in pursuit of *azadi*, as a means to continue to go about their daily lives the best they can (ibid).

In his critique of Subaltern Studies, Bayly questions the implication of the peasant's "...occasional and diverse moments of resistance..." whereby the question is raised "...why peasant, tribal or workers' movements occurred at particular times and not at others..." (1988, p114). This suggests a discontinuity in the peasant movement over time. In the case of Kashmir, people didn't suddenly stop agitating for *azadi* or for more autonomy at some points, and spontaneously erupted into protests or insurgency at others; but they adopted different methods for agitation at different times. It could be a more concise question, however, if we asked what specific events led to subsequent violence, for example. The absence of violence is not acquiescence with the ruling elite. As Cockell purports, the adoption of violence only occurs after attempts at engaging in non-violent means to illicit change (2000). As a young Kashmiri in the Channel 4 documentary *Trails of Torture* (2012) contends, he is not going to just become a suicide bomber overnight, but if everything is lost, that's when he would not care anymore.

Conclusion

Failure to include the 'Other' in historical textual analysis is, in a sense, the failure to include any supporting cast in a production. The analysis of the 'Other' as a departure from elite, colonial texts can also guide the contemporary discourse of disciplines other than those traditionally associated with Subaltern Studies, such as history and anthropology. However, the inclusion of the 'Other' in reaching a deeper understanding of the context of modern popular political movements can add depth to other disciplines of social science. As Chatterjee (2012) asserts, the discipline of Subaltern Studies is in need of revision in order to make it relevant for today's political context. This unfortunately and invariably means that problems such as who exactly a subaltern is today are left without a rigorous framework for analysis. In the context of Kashmir specifically, the subaltern represents a somewhat negotiable position in the secessionist movement, and as such there needs to be flexibility in analyses and methods within which to advance the study of the subaltern identity in contemporary secessionist movements. Although the most vocal in the conflict are those who are either activists who do not fear reprisal from the Indian government or those using new media as a means for voicing their discontent, there are many who have suffered as a direct result of a central Indian authority in Kashmir, and they remain marginalized. A more dynamic approach then is required if academics and policymakers are to better understand the dynamics of grievances in this, and other, separatist movements. As Spivak affirmed in the words of Louai (2012, p7), "...the task of an intellectual is to pave way for the subaltern groups and let them speak freely for themselves." Regardless of the discipline or the methodologies utilized, it is the duty of the academic to ensure that these voices are being 'heard' and analysed so as to justly represent them where they would otherwise be condemned to silence.

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Participatory Approaches to Slum Upgrading and Poverty Reduction in African Cities

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Introduction

Many of Africa's cities have been neglected for decades in an environment of rapid urbanisation. Alongside failed policies and often a lack of political will, this has resulted in deterioration and recent mushrooming of slum areas where over 60% of sub-Saharan Africa's urban residents now live (UN-HABITAT, 2010a). The inadequate housing conditions within the slums increasingly do not match the hopes or needs of slum dwellers and have contributed to increased levels of poverty (Gilbert, 2008: 257). Not only are improvements required to address the 'backlog of urban neglect' (UN-HABITAT, 2003: xxxii) experienced by the majority of cities, but they are also required to meet the needs of the millions of newcomers expected to arrive over the next few decades. It is anticipated that the housing situation is only going to worsen, with denser living conditions in city centres and radial expansion of cities outwards as the demand for housing increases (UN-HABITAT, 2003).

Many Africans migrate from rural areas to the cities in search of employment and, in turn, a better life for themselves and their families. However, when they arrive, most are faced with the ubiquitous problems of basic, crowded and poorly constructed shelter, and a lack of services such as water provision and sanitation facilities. Further to these physical issues, the majority of city dwellers face difficulties in paying their rent, have insecure tenure, are excluded from economic opportunities, and rent their houses instead of owning them despite common desires for ownership (Gilbert, 2008: 257). Most migrants expect to leave the slum areas soon after earning enough to afford better accommodation; however, many do not due to high levels of formal unemployment and low incomes in the informal sector which only cover basic needs (UN-HABITAT, 2003). In sum, the housing problem is a manifestation of a recent phenomenon - the urbanisation of poverty.

There has been an increasing realisation that urgent solutions are required, especially through participatory programmes (Mansuri & Rao, 2013). This paper attempts to make a strong argument for these programmes by comparing a participatory and a non-participatory project in Kenya and examining their effects on poverty. Following this, some of the challenges and limitations to participatory slum upgrading, which need to be overcome, are considered.

Poverty and slum upgrading

Poverty exists in many forms in urban Africa and the question of how it should be defined, measured, and in turn mitigated within its unique context is a complicated one. One aspect, however, is clear: that virtually all manifestations of poverty in urban Africa, including overcrowding, environmental hazards, commoditisation, crime and violence, and social fragmentation (Baker & Schuler, 2004), are intrinsically linked to issues of housing. This phenomenon results from the exclusive structures and urban planning which have prevailed since colonial rule, in which the poorest households of all African cities are generally isolated on a spatial level from their richer counterparts (Locatelli

& Nugent, 2009: 5; Home, 1997: 220). As such, almost exclusively, those living in the slum areas experience acute poverty.

Most housing projects in the postcolonial era followed one of two traditions: the building of subsidised housing and slum clearance programmes (Buckley & Kalarickal, 2005). The former was very expensive to implement on a big scale, and rents proved to be unaffordable, despite subsidies, for the majority of slum dwellers (ibid.). These dwellers were displaced and, therefore, little to no poverty reduction was achieved. The latter had many negative consequences, ranging from the emotional impact on slum residents, to the rebuilding of slums by the residents elsewhere, rendering the activity largely pointless (ibid.). Slum clearance is, therefore, widely unpopular today, and is now rarely pursued (ibid.). If anything, it further entrenched the poverty of the residents by removing their homes and destroying the frameworks they had worked to establish there.

Instead, over the last twenty years, slum upgrading has increasingly been regarded as the most effective method for mitigating the problems faced by slum dwellers (UN-HABITAT, 2010a). It is actualised in various forms, including the regularisation of tenure security, provision of or improvements to infrastructure and the construction of communal facilities (Majale, 2008). In all, upgrading so far appears to be the best solution for relieving poverty in Africa's slums, especially considering that residents often defend their environments when faced with the alternatives of displacement or eviction (Huchzermeyer, 2008).

The participatory approach to upgrading is a relatively new methodology. Within the last 15 years it has increasingly taken form at the decision-making, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and maintenance levels, and has become the favoured practice. The approach allows for local communities to no longer be 'subjects' of development projects, but to be active participants at all stages, thereby acknowledging the importance of their needs, knowledge and opinions. This approach also complements the recent discourse on good governance and poverty reduction, while acknowledging the limited ability of many African governments to provide necessary urban services and infrastructure (Myers, 2005: 6).

Slum upgrading in Kenya

This paper addresses whether upgrading in a participatory form contributes meaningfully to poverty reduction by comparing two projects implemented in Kenya. The first is a participatory upgrading project located in Kitale, and the second is a non-participatory project based in the capital, Nairobi. Kenyan projects have been chosen based on the relative abundance of literature that exists on the issues of urbanisation in Kenya.

Despite this 'literature bias', Kenya's cities share the common problems witnessed in other African cities (Archambault et al., 2012). In fact, a study of Kenyan cities is well suited for the purposes of this paper for two reasons. Firstly, like many African cities, its population is growing very fast, at a rate of an extra one million people every year (UN-HABITAT, 2010b: 145). This is leading to significant backlogs, especially within its cities, in the need for housing and services (ibid.). Secondly, this rapid population growth is resulting in a large informal employment sector in which many young adults are now employed. This problem is a survival strategy that does not pay above subsistence wages and keeps these individuals from moving from the inadequate living conditions of the slums.

Building in Partnership: Participatory Urban Planning Project (BIB:PUP)

The BIB:PUP project, which ran from 2001 to 2004, was funded by the UK's Department for International Development. It aimed to reduce poverty within three slums located in the rapidly growing secondary town of Kitale by addressing some of the existing frameworks' deficiencies (Majale, 2009). Particularly, the formal supply of housing and services was being increasingly outmatched by a population growth rate of 12% per annum as a result of high levels of rural-urban migration (*ibid.*). This paper looks at the project's work in one of the slums, Kipsongo, which housed some 4,000 residents in 2001, and demonstrates why participation enabled a reduction in poverty within the community.

In the initial decision-making stage, the BIB:PUP committee, comprising representatives of all stakeholders (local government, development practitioners and the Kipsongo community) identified two major problems facing residents which were to be addressed by the project. Firstly, infrastructure was very poor, and in turn was posing an array of problems including restrictions on enterprise productivity, and the limiting of employment creation (Majale, 2008). In particular, the committee identified two services in need of improvement: sanitation and water facilities. Before the project began, the community had to use polluted water from a local stream for domestic purposes which resulted in numerous outbreaks of disease. There were also no sanitation facilities of which to speak (*ibid.*). Secondly, youth unemployment in the slum was very high due to the low levels of education and skills possessed by the residents (*ibid.*).

The identification of these problems was accomplished primarily through a 'scan' survey of community respondents, including many from local institutions such as NGOs, CBOs, FBOs and a range of private businesses (Majale, 2009). The survey allowed for the respondents to state their needs with regards to a range of issues including access to land, infrastructure and housing, social services and amenities, funding for development interventions, and governance. This form of inclusive decision-making highlights why participation in the first instance is crucial as a means to poverty reduction. Particularly, it enables partnerships between all stakeholders within the public, private and civil society sectors. This is vital for improving living conditions in poor communities because there is otherwise a limited flow of information, and at times limited trust, between governments and communities (Majale, 2008). Poor communities tend to be excluded from normal social and economic networks, and so their voices rarely inform government policies (*ibid.*). Participation fills this information gap, and allows for residents to be included in decision-making processes. Another advantage includes the alleviation of "individual sectorial weaknesses by taking advantage of other sectors' strengths", an example being the weakness of the private sector, which shuns unprofitable services (Otiso, 2003). Partnerships, therefore, foster efficiency and allow for resources to be distributed rationally in the decision-making process in a way that finds common ground between all shareholders (*ibid.*).

Participation also allows for the local human capital of residents to contribute to decision-making. Many residents are likely to have developed resilient, unique or sustainable forms of survival, and therefore, reduced poverty in their economically constrained environments. Their (context appropriate) methods can be shared with development practitioners and local government who most likely have the resources to scale up or advocate these methods at neighbourhood or city levels. Or, at the very least, their human capital could be able to shed light on community issues that were previously ignored or unknown to development practitioners and government officials.

This idea has been suggested by a number of academics (Locatelli & Nugent, 2009: 4; Pretty & Scoones, 1995: 157). Pretty and Scoones, for example, acknowledge that the beginning of planning requires input from those who know most about their own livelihoods. Easterly (2006) more fully deliberates this idea through his distinction of ‘Planners’ and ‘Searchers’. The former, he argues, use top-down methods of intervention, set large goals and do not have enough local information to hold their promises of change. In the context of participatory upgrading, ‘Planners’ reflect local governments that implement inadequate housing policies (i.e. subsidised housing). ‘Searchers’, however, understand realities on the ground, have the incentives to succeed, and discover what works in order to be rewarded. They represent the primary stakeholders, the residents, in participatory upgrading. As Easterly summarises, “it is easier to search for solutions to your own problems than to those of others” (2006: 303).

At the implementation stage, the BIB:PUP committee realised that the problems of poor infrastructure and high unemployment were intrinsic and that they could be resolved simultaneously through a “pro-poor, pro-employment urban development strategy” (Majale, 2008). This entailed utilising improvements to the infrastructure directly for employment creation. They constructed two protected springs, which were to provide the community with safe water for domestic use and five sanitation blocks, using local labour (ibid.). All groups within the community undertook construction, including young workers aged 15-24 who were most in need of employment, and women (ibid.). This provided various poverty reducing measures, including employment for all groups and the expansion of their skill sets. And, as both implementers and beneficiaries of the project, the community likely took greater care in the construction of the facilities than would have outsiders (ibid.). In addition to these benefits it can also be argued that this form of participation enabled the development of self-reliance among residents in order for future housing issues to be solved independently at the community level (Lizzaralde & Massyn, 2008).

This approach to upgrading, through which residents were able to provide meaningful input into the project, may also have led to the empowerment of the residents (Majale, 2008). As Sen (1999) explains, participation allows people to expand their capabilities, and in turn, their freedom. If so, participation is not only a means to poverty reduction but also an end in itself. However, empowerment is difficult to measure (Cleaver, 1999), and so further study into whether and to what extent participatory slum upgrading empowers residents is required.

Further to direct community outcomes, this project demonstrates that the resources required for participatory projects are primarily human (knowledge and labour) as opposed to economic (expensive building materials). Therefore, participation is a relatively low-cost option for poverty reduction, and in turn, is a realistic, achievable methodology for upgrading especially in the many African countries where resources are limited.

The literature certainly addresses the many benefits to participation. However, this paper goes further and posits that the decision-making and implementation stages of participatory upgrading have the potential to stimulate a cycle of participation (Figure 1). Firstly, poverty reduction and empowerment is achieved following the initial stages, as outlined above. In particular the poverty manifestations of social fragmentation, environmental hazards, and commoditisation can be directly targeted through these stages in the cycle. It is anticipated that in turn, economic growth can be stimulated, at least at a local level, and as the community develops further reductions in

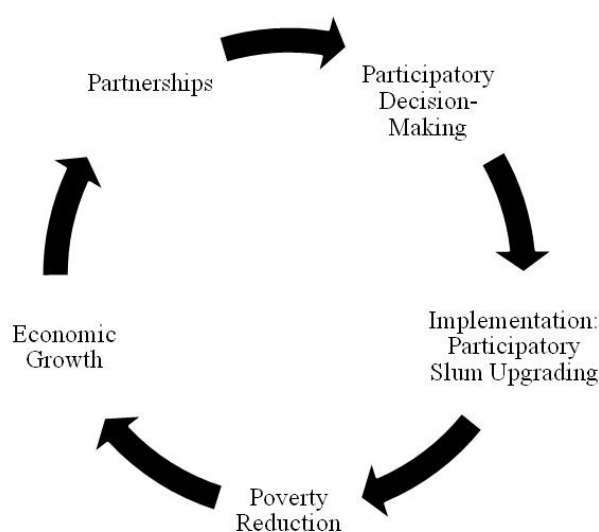


Figure 1. The Participatory Cycle. Author's own image

other manifestations of poverty, such as crime and violence, can be observed in time. This increases the legitimacy of the community, allowing further partnerships to be nurtured, and in turn, the participatory cycle to continue. This has happened in Kipsongo where the community is now included in processes of municipal planning (Majale, 2009). However, participatory upgrading is still in its infancy and so whether sustainable cycles in this form will come to fruition is yet to be seen.

In sum, participation at all project levels is crucial both as a means and an end to poverty reduction (Nelson & Wright, 1995: 1) and may in fact be a sustainable, enduring process. Top-down government planning, unfortunately, is not privy to the intricacies and unique qualities of each community, and therefore, does not have the same advantages in order to promote prolonged poverty reduction.

Kenyan Slum Upgrading Program (KENSUP)

The KENSUP program is a joint initiative that was launched in 2004 by the Kenyan government and UN-HABITAT in the large Soweto 'village' of Nairobi's Kibera slum. On commencement of the project the village housed 60,000 residents, of which most were tenants (Huchzermeyer, 2008). This program, therefore, targeted a much greater number of residents than the BIB:PUP project. This may mean that the successful implementation of the program was more challenging, and thus, that comparison between the two is slightly biased. Nevertheless, the difference in impact between them has been great, making for good comparison for the purposes of this essay.

Following a situation analysis, the main issue identified by the programme coordinators was poor quality rented accommodation, which had seen years of minimal maintenance by the illegal landowners (ibid.). Therefore, the plan has been to redevelop the slum with housing units that are

50m² and comprised of two bedrooms (ibid.). The important difference between this project and that of BIB:PUP is that it is non-participatory. Residents were not part of the planning committee and did not voice their need for new housing. Instead, at the very most, UN-HABITAT informed stakeholders of aspects of the programme and arranged “Social Mobilization activities” which “sensitise communities on slum upgrading” (UN-HABITAT, 2012). This appears to violate, or at least manipulate, human rights law that states that national housing strategies “should reflect extensive genuine consultation with, and participation by, all of those affected including the homeless, the inadequately housed and their representatives” (CESCR, 1991).

A significant negative consequence of the project has been the fear of displacement among residents, due to worries that the upgraded housing would be unaffordable, and that corruption would affect unit allocation (Huchzermeyer, 2008). Residents are aware of this having happened in the past through other redevelopment projects. Unfortunately, the strict government building codes in Kenya, which include high minimum, middle-class standards for housing and which have been in place for decades, mean residents’ fears could be realised (ibid.; Dafe, 2009). In previous projects, units were traded to the middle class who wished to live in the newly improved area and the cash offers given to the original residents rarely allowed them to find appropriate serviced accommodation elsewhere (ibid.). This means no funds spent through KENSUP are likely to contribute to poverty reduction within the community and that this may only result in gentrification. Had participation been a key aspect of the KENSUP project from the beginning, these concerns would have been addressed from the outset. In fact, participation would have allowed other stakeholders to learn whether or not the residents even desired new housing. If so, they would have been able to learn exactly how much the average slum household could afford and build new housing accordingly. Similar projects implemented in Nairobi, such as the Mathare 4A Slum Upgrading Project, have avoided displacement through the relaxation of these strict minimum standards (Otiso, 2003). Houses built were smaller, with higher densities, and were built with cheaper, nonconventional materials, which all contributed to keeping the prices low and affordable for the residents and ultimately prevented displacement (ibid.).

Outwith the KENSUP project, a further example of the inability for top-down planners to foresee all important consequences of their projects is their indiscriminate provision of free access to water (Huchzermeyer, 2008), which is assumed to benefit everyone within all communities. Instead, this has often resulted in the unemployment of local water sellers in past projects and furthering the poverty of these significant groups (ibid.). In sum, meaningful reductions in poverty through more appropriate, secure housing, better access to services, and empowerment have not been achieved by KENSUP to date and are unlikely to ever be achieved through any other non-participatory projects.

Challenges

Unfortunately participatory upgrading has its challenges and the three most significant are addressed here. These need to be addressed; otherwise the result of participation will invariably be the underachievement of poverty reduction. Firstly, participation itself is unlikely to be able to guarantee, and in turn sustain, poverty reduction (Lizzaralde & Massyn, 2008). In addition to the essentials of employment creation and finance schemes (Yeboah, 2005), complementary government reform and decentralisation of decision-making is also required in order to make a lasting impact on poverty reduction (Shah, 1995; Buckley & Kalarickal, 2005; UN-HABITAT,

2009). Top-down planning often leads to a restricted understanding of poverty in the slum areas of sub-Saharan Africa today (Mansuri & Rao, 2013). Importantly, this does not take into account the fact that the housing problem is multifaceted. It is political, economic and social. Therefore, appropriate government reform, which would allow for communities to voice their opinions and to make their own decisions, would result in a more sustainable poverty reduction process (UN-HABITAT, 2009). In other words, a more far-reaching, holistic approach, which involves socio-economic and political considerations, to support sustained poverty reduction in the slums of African cities is required. What is lacking among some states is political will, either due to a lack of common interest among government officials or the existence of opportunities for rent-seeking, which limit the efforts made by government officials toward public goals (ibid.; Leftwich, 2000: 126). Realistically, however, governments that lack political will do not reform overnight (Cox & Negi, 2010). Government reform is a huge challenge, and is perhaps the largest barrier to poverty reduction through participatory upgrading.

Secondly, at the local level, members of the community are not homogeneous (Emmett, 2000; Arandel & Wetterberg, 2012). They may have different desires, interests and capabilities, and therefore all participatory projects need to take these heterogeneities into account. In particular, funding for participatory upgrading is likely to be exposed to elite capture where strong local organisations are absent or a local elite is dominant within the community (Platteau & Gaspart, 2003; Conning & Kevane, 2002). A local elite is more able to appropriate external funding than the average community group, leading to only a fraction of the funds being allocated to participatory upgrading (Platteau & Gaspart, 2003). Interestingly, communities are found to support these elites when they experience only a modest improvement to their livelihoods and yet are aware that the elite has benefited disproportionately. They believe their modest improvements would not have been possible without the work of the elite (ibid.). This difficult situation did not happen in Kipsongo, most likely due to the presence of many local organisations, such as NGOs and churches, which were able to keep checks on the development of the BIB:PUP project (Majale, 2008). Therefore, in implementing participatory upgrading programmes, strong local organisations must already be in place. Alternatively, appropriate measures that counteract the local elite, such as social mediation that addresses community power relations by tackling social issues and resolving conflict, are required to ensure funds are distributed to their intended use (Arandel & Wetterberg, 2012).

Lastly, a related challenge is that participation may only be able to address the poverty of women and other marginalised groups to a limited extent within some communities (Kothari, 2005). Having women who were previously excluded from decision-making participate in upgrading committees may not feel able to make their voices heard in such contexts. As a result, their presence within committees may only have the impact of legitimising the suggestions made by male members, instead of actually being able to express their own needs and concerns (ibid.). This is likely to have large negative consequences for women as their needs are likely to differ to those of men. Studies have shown that indeed women experience poverty on a greater scale in slums than men (McEwan, 2003). Therefore, it is essential that the decisions made throughout account for all previously excluded groups. In practice, this limitation should be relatively easy to mitigate so long as project participants carefully analyse the dynamics of each neighbourhood to ensure the requirements of those most at need are always taken into account.

In addition to these challenges, all forms of upgrading, participatory or otherwise, can only

improve the existing housing 'stock', and therefore, further interventions are required to address the future 'flow' of new residents to urban areas (Gulyani & Bassett, 2007). In particular, additional projects and appropriate policies are required alongside upgrading projects for this purpose (UN-HABITAT, 2010a). However, this does not necessarily remove from the large reductions in (absolute) levels of poverty as a result of participatory slum upgrading.

In sum, reductions in poverty through participatory slum upgrading face significant challenges. But, as the BIB:PUP project demonstrates, this is not to say participation cannot achieve poverty reduction. Instead, its impact on poverty is potentially limited by the above challenges in practice and these need to be mitigated. The success of participation largely lies in complementary government reform, the presence of strong local organisations and the full inclusion of all stakeholders, all of which are to some extent achievable.

Conclusion

Solutions to the inadequate housing conditions that exist within Africa's slums are urgently required. This paper has attempted to make a strong argument for the use of participatory slum upgrading programmes as a possible solution by comparing the effects on poverty of a participatory project in Kenya with one that has been non-participatory. However, the evidence suggests that these programmes currently do not contribute meaningfully to poverty reduction in African cities. While a number of individuals have benefited from them, they are still implemented on too small a scale to have large poverty-reducing impacts at the city level. Nonetheless, this paper has argued that participatory programmes do result in improvements for communities and that there is a large potential for poverty reduction through scaling these up to city level. This has certainly been shown by the BIB:PUP project in Kenya, which stimulated job creation, improved service provision and potentially empowered slum residents. There are, however, challenges to participatory projects that can undermine their success in poverty reduction. A holistic approach, combining government reform, the presence of strong local organisations and the full inclusion of all stakeholders is required in order to mitigate the challenges faced.

Participatory projects and the relevant literature are still in their infancy, and the full extent of poverty reduction through these projects is yet to be seen. A broader literature base is required for a more nuanced understanding of the unique dynamics of poverty experienced in different African cities, and of the unique relationships between participatory slum upgrading and poverty reduction. A good place to start would be further contributions out with those focused on the urban experiences of Kenya and South Africa, which dominate the academic literature to date. African cities do not exist in a homogeneous form and, therefore, much can be learnt from further study into their specificities.

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