

Culture, Mind, and Society

JUSTICE

***Political Sentiments
and Social Movements***

The Person in Politics and Culture

***Edited by Claudia Strauss
and Jack R. Friedman***



Culture, Mind, and Society

Series Editor

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The Society for Psychological Anthropology—a section of the American Anthropology Association—and Palgrave Macmillan are dedicated to publishing innovative research that illuminates the workings of the human mind within the social, cultural, and political contexts that shape thought, emotion, and experience. As anthropologists seek to bridge gaps between ideation and emotion or agency and structure and as psychologists, psychiatrists, and medical anthropologists search for ways to engage with cultural meaning and difference, this interdisciplinary terrain is more active than ever.

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Claudia Strauss · Jack R. Friedman
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Political Sentiments and Social Movements

The Person in Politics and Culture

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*We dedicate this volume to everyone who is making this a better world
through political action.*

SERIES PREFACE

Psychological Anthropologists study a wide spectrum of human activity: child development, illness and healing, ritual and religion, personality, political and economic systems, just to name a few. In fact, as a discipline that seeks to understand the interconnections between persons and culture, it would be difficult to come up with examples of human behavior that are outside the purview of psychological anthropology. Yet beneath this substantive diversity lies a common commitment. The practitioners of psychological anthropology seek to understand social activity in ways that are fitted to the mental and physical dimensions of human beings. Psychological anthropologists may focus on emotions or human biology, on language or art or dreams, but they rarely stray far from the attempt to understand the possibilities and the limitations of on the ground human persons.

In this book, Claudia Strauss and Jack Friedman present a collection of papers that bring this sensibility to bear on questions related to the formation, realization, and effects of political subjectivities in a variety of cultural settings. At certain times, and in certain people, a society's political arrangements rise out of the taken-for-granted background of everyday life to become foci of reflection, debate, and action. Such moments, which birth a higher level of political engagement, often attract the attention of historians and social scientists. However, in most cases scant attention is devoted to how these transformations are realized on the ground in people's thinking and action. This volume addresses precisely that question. The perspective developed here not only helps us to

better understand how politics can seize the person, but also provides a nuanced approach to the question of how political movements can effect social change.

Tulsa, USA

Peter G. Stromberg

PREFACE

The aim of this volume is to bring the topic of political subjectivities to the fore among psychological anthropologists while describing the theories, concepts, methods, and analytics of psychological anthropology that would enrich the study of politics in other disciplines. The lack of focused attention on political subjectivities in psychological anthropology is ironic since some of psychological anthropology's earliest founders were engaged in the psycho-cultural study of politics. The subfield, arguably, began with culture-and-personality studies, including ones that examined connections between typical personality structures in a society (e.g. "authoritarian" personality) and the form of government in that society. Unfortunately, their overly general descriptions and reliance on confluations of individuals and entire nations were rightly critiqued. Sadly, as Jeannette Mageo and Bruce Knauft explained in their introduction to the volume *Power and the Self*, as a result of missteps in this early work, as well as suspicion of unfounded psychological universals, other anthropologists who study political processes have sometimes been critical of psychological approaches.

We believe that it is critical to return to the study of the political through the lens of psychological anthropology. There have been scholars (some of whom are represented in this volume) who have been doing this for decades, but we felt it was time to coordinate our scattered efforts. The timing of this effort could not be more fortuitous. We are writing this in 2017. Observers of politics in the United States are puzzled about how voters in the same country could elect both Barack Obama and Donald Trump. Observers in Europe have been trying to

understand the Brexit vote; other issues are urgent elsewhere in the world. The first decades of the twenty-first century have seen fervent grassroots political activism across the political spectrum, the rise of new forms of global terrorism and violent resistance, and other expressions of popular discontent—all of which have forced scholars to reconsider how they study and interpret contemporary politics. The practical need for a better understanding of how people think about politics, and become politically active, is obvious. The person-centered approach taken in this volume addresses these concerns, along with theoretical ones about how to conceptualize the way individuals construct meanings, react emotionally, and take political action.

We do not necessarily believe that there is something genuinely new about the political landscape of the early twenty-first century—every era believes that—but we do believe that scholars who once felt they could ignore the political have started to think about it, just as scholars who have always been interested in politics are coming to see the importance of understanding individuals. To this end, we believe we have made a significant contribution in this volume, but we also believe that this is—and, should be—only the first step toward a more fully-formed understanding of human beings in culture, society, and politics.

The papers in this edited volume had their origins in a workshop, organized by Jack R. Friedman and Claudia Strauss, entitled “Culture and Political Subjectivity,” held May 29–31, 2015 at Columbia University (New York, NY). This workshop was the culmination of several years of planning and meetings during which the contributors to this volume presented versions of their papers, discussed and debated, and received feedback from each other and members of the audience. Earlier presentations included a panel entitled “Political Selves” at the 2012 annual meeting of the American Anthropological Association (November 13–18, 2012, San Francisco, CA) and a panel entitled “Political Subjectivity” at the 2013 biennial meeting of the Society for Psychological Anthropology (April 4–7, 2013, San Diego, CA). As part of the preparation for the 2015 workshop, we created a website (<http://www.politicalsubjectivity.com/>) that includes a bibliography of relevant work and course syllabi. We hope those resources are useful and welcome suggested additions.

Norman, USA
Claremont, USA

Jack R. Friedman
Claudia Strauss

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There are a number of people and institutions to which we are indebted. The “Culture and Political Subjectivity” conference was supported by the Lemelson/Society for Psychological Anthropology Conference Fund, made possible by a generous donation from The Robert Lemelson Foundation. We thank Harold Odden, Byron Good, Jill Korbin, and Suzanne Mattingly for their leadership and shepherding of the Lemelson/SPA Conference Fund. We wish to personally thank Dr. Robert Lemelson for his generous and thoughtful support of the SPA/Lemelson Conference Fund. Robert Lemelson’s support for a number of important initiatives to promote and encourage cutting-edge work in psychological anthropology—his support of students, early career faculty, and the works of established scholars—has shaped and will continue to shape the direction of innovation and important work in psychological anthropology.

During the workshop, a number of scholars contributed their time and expertise to act as discussants for our workshop contributors. We are grateful to Kevin Birth, Ian Hansen, Murphy Halliburton, Alexander Hinton, Manissa McCleave Maharawal, Jeff Maskovsky, Aseel Sawalha, Lesley Sharp, and Micah White for their thoughtful contributions, suggestions, and efforts.

When planning this workshop, one of our goals was to invite local scholars and students to attend to reinvigorate excitement for psychological anthropology and what psychological anthropology has to contribute to questions of politics. Logistically, though, this required

that the organizers of the conference—Claudia Strauss (Pitzer College) and Jack R. Friedman (University of Oklahoma)—plan all of the events outside of their home institutions. Fortunately, Katherine Pratt Ewing, a colleague of both of the organizers and a key contributor to this volume, agreed to host the workshop at Columbia University. We are deeply indebted to Kathy Ewing, Columbia University’s *Institute for Religion, Culture, and Public Life*, and the Union Theological Seminary for allowing us to host the workshop at Columbia University. Of special note was the care and support that we received from Walid Hammam and Jessica Lilien at the IRCPL. In addition to the assistance provided by Columbia University, we extend our appreciation to William Farrell at the University of Oklahoma’s Centre for Teaching Excellence for the use of, training on, and postproduction assistance with a number of video resources used during the workshop. Finally, two graduate student assistants should be especially recognized for their assistance with the workshop: Miriam Laytner and Matthew Winters. Without their organizational and planning acumen, the workshop that was the basis for this volume would not have succeeded.

Finally, we are very grateful for the insights of Peter Stromberg, the editor of the *Culture, Mind, and Society* book series with Palgrave, and an anonymous reviewer for the press as well as for the support offered by the helpful editorial team at Palgrave.

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Introduction: The Person in Politics and Culture

Jack R. Friedman and Claudia Strauss

The papers in this volume show how people construct political meanings and become involved—or not involved—in political actions. The stories, commentary, and actions of people in diverse cultural settings provide a deeper understanding of behaviors that are often confusing from a distance. In this introduction, we explain our person-centered approach to politics, place it in relation to other work on politics and social movements, and argue for the insights to be gained from drawing upon the theories and methods of psychological anthropology.

We are grateful for the feedback of Peter Stromberg, several contributors to this volume, and an anonymous reviewer for Palgrave.

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POLITICS, CULTURE, AND PERSONS

As many scholars have noted, defining “politics” is tricky. Some definitions limit the realm of politics to issues involving “government as mediator, target, or claimant” (McAdam et al. 2001, p. 5). This would narrowly cast politics as being about what disputants think governments should do. At the other extreme, we could follow the lead of feminists, including many cultural anthropologists, who, in defining politics, point out the way “power is both structured and enacted in everyday activities—notably, in relations of kinship, marriage, and in inheritance patterns, rituals, and exchange systems” (Ginsburg and Rapp 1991, p. 312). This politics of everyday life deliberately highlights the “political” in nearly all interactions. Research from both the narrow and broad paradigms has been extremely valuable, but neither corresponds to the notion of the political we use in this volume. For our purposes, the politics of everyday life is too broad. That research importantly points to power relations that are often hidden, but our focus is on what is disputed. Following Swartz, Turner, and Tuden, we agree “politics always involves public goals” (Swartz et al. 2002 [1966], p. 105), and add that it is about contention regarding goals for some collectivity. Those goals could be material ones about “the allocation of scarce resources in the face of conflict of interests,” as March and Olsen (1989) explain political systems (quoted in Aronoff and Kubik 2013, p. 23), or they could involve competing understandings of collective identities or the grounds for social respect. We believe there is much that can be productively explored by looking at how persons draw upon learned meanings to interpret, psychologically manage, and engage—with varying degrees of hesitation or enthusiasm—with disputed goals and identities in their society. In so doing, however, we keep in mind the contribution of scholars who have shown the way powerful ideas and entrenched structures prevent or obstruct disputes from ever arising about legitimate authority and about the distribution of material and symbolic rewards.

The papers in this volume study politics through case studies of people engaged in (or disengaged from) political contests in Denmark, India, Israel, Jamaica, Kuwait, Nigeria, Romania, and the United States. Many of these cases concern social movements, for example, the Tea Party and Occupy Wall Street in the United States, third gender activism in India, Rastafari in Jamaica, and Salafi movements in northern Nigeria and Kuwait. Snow et al. (2004) define social movements as collective

actions for social change that have some longevity and operate outside of established institutions. They argue that social movements are increasingly prevalent and can be considered “a kind of fifth estate in the world today” (Snow et al. 2004, pp. 4–5), so a better understanding of them is essential. Several of the chapters focus on change over time in people’s sense of themselves as movement actors; some others consider the way people interpret social movements or are shaped by them.

We believe a better approach lies in an improved understanding of the forces shaping people’s outlooks, feelings, and actions. Outside of cultural anthropology, the place of culture in studies of politics, including social movements, has been growing (Aronoff and Kubik 2013; Polletta 2008). This “cultural turn,” as it has been called, is positive. A necessary next step, however, is a better understanding of culture and its relation to individuals. As the sociologist James Jasper (2010) explains cogently, it is not enough to gesture vaguely at “social construction” or “collective interpretation” without explaining who is constructing or interpreting and how those people think and feel. He calls for building better theories of social movements by starting at the micro-level with a deeper understanding of social actors. We agree with him that “we need to insert individuals into our models, along with their decisions, dilemmas, defections, and so on” (Jasper 2010, p. 967).

A better understanding of social actors meshes well with one current in mainstream ways of thinking about culture in contemporary anthropology. Brightman (1995) summed up theories at the end of the twentieth century, which critique an older “image of culture [and society] as an autonomous system,” like “a grammar ... independent from the individuals who followed their rules” (Rosaldo 1989 cited in Brightman 1995, p. 513). Outlining the rules of the system took precedence over understanding how people recreate, improvise within, and sometimes change that system. Seeing culture as an autonomous system typically minimized historical change and the impact of external influences, underplaying the diversity of ideas and practices present in a society.

By contrast with culture as an autonomous system, “anthropological writing has increasingly focused upon culture as ... constructed, reproduced, and transformed in and through the ideation and practices of agents” (Brightman 1995, p. 514). Culture is central to understanding agents’ ideas and practice, but this is not culture as an abstract system. Instead, it is culture as what is experienced, then enacted, by different members of society. For most anthropologists, cultural meanings

“should not be understood as a separate domain of human activity, contrasted for example with politics or economy”; instead, they are “a dimension of all social interactions since as humans we always traffic in meaning” (Aronoff and Kubik 2013, p. 60). The meanings in which we traffic, however, may not be the same from one person to the next.

Psychological anthropologists theorize acting subjects, studying the sociocultural contexts in which cognitions, emotions, and motivations are formed and the psychological factors that are important in culture learning and expression. We focus on the personal, affectively invested meanings of public discourses, structures, and collective actions, and how those meanings develop over time and motivate or demotivate people’s action. Individuals’ meanings shape the practices that reproduce and change social structures and public culture. Psychological anthropologists study people’s narratives, subjective identities, phenomenological experiences, emotions, memories, discourses, explicit and implicit beliefs, conscious goals and unconscious desires, conceptual structures, and psychological development in diverse social and cultural contexts (Strauss 2015). These aspects of people’s subjectivities and expressions can be applied to politics.

Distinctive to psychological anthropology are “person-centered” methods and ethnographic descriptions that focus on “the individual and on how the individual’s psychology and subjective experience both shapes, and is shaped by, social and cultural processes” (Hollan 2001, p. 48; see also LeVine 1982). It is rare, in contemporary psychological anthropology, for “culture” to be a generalization based solely on mass phenomena, surveys, or public cultural symbols. What is typical, instead, are studies based on specific people whose outlooks (spoken or tacit), feelings, desires, and actions provide insight into the interaction between culture in its multiple manifestations in the world and culture as complexly incorporated—and contested—in persons. Observation, interviews that give people maximal opportunities to tell their own stories and express their personal outlooks and concerns and experiences, and other forms of their conscious and unconscious self-expression are key tools (e.g., Hollan 2003; Mageo 2011; Quinn 2005).

In many ways, though, the very features of person-centered research that have allowed it to shed light on unexpected and under-mentioned aspects of political subjectivity are also the ones that have been critiqued as being poorly adapted to the study of politics. Specifically, some have argued that person-centered research is so focused on the emergence of subjectivities in individuals that it fails to account for the broader, structural forces at play in politics including global and local power structures,

economics, structural inequalities, and legal systems. We insist, however, that a deep understanding of structural conditions is, in fact, critical in the analysis and interpretation of person-centered research because it is only through this broader knowledge that a person's story can be understood (cf. Friedman 2007). Person-centered research cannot replace the vitally important study of structural conditions, public culture, and history, but it complements it by focusing on the personal meanings of those conditions, messages, and events. Furthermore, approaches to the study of politics that *fail* to account for person-centered data—including, accounting for deep and difficult to understand *contradictory* or *inconsistent* data—will be incapable of predicting or even understanding how and why a political climate can seem to change so rapidly (see also Mageo and Knauff 2002). Still, this approach to research has its own political hazards, to which we will return at the end of this introduction.

Person-centered research is not only a method of data gathering and form of ethnographic writing; but it also includes a set of theories for understanding how social experience and cultural meanings are incorporated in persons. Those theories can bring a deeper understanding of political subjectivities.

POLITICAL SUBJECTIVITY—MEANINGS AND THEORIES

Another way to put the topic of our volume is that it is about political subjectivities. That term has also been used by others, so we need to clarify what we mean by “political subjectivity” and the theories we will use to understand it.

Due to its association with the works of Michel Foucault—and, particularly, with his idea of governmentality—the concept of subjectivity has often been reduced to how people are subjected to forces beyond their control, including how they think about individuality (Clifford 2001). In Foucault's vision, these forces are intimately tied to the technologies of the nation-state, which relies less on force to govern people and more on the scientific management and “disciplining” of the subject through social institutions like schools, hospitals, the military, and prisons. Foucault's modern subject self-governs rather than being coerced by force and threats of violence. Beyond the institutional forms of discipline, Foucault's vision of subjectivity is intimately tied to the power of new forms of knowledge that shape and constrain and motivate people to see, feel, and understand the world in ways that make them easier to govern. Thus, in the Foucauldian view, subjectivity is a reflection of the

workings of disciplining power—of institutions that order the day-to-day, sometimes minute-to-minute, way in which people live their lives, and of knowledge that orders the way that people perceive and interpret their experiences in the world and themselves (Clifford 2001).

While this view of subjectivity helps one to understand the subjective effects of new configurations of power and knowledge, it is a crude tool that downplays conflicting social configurations and often fails to account for the fact that all people are not affected in the same ways by the workings of the nation-state. We share the critique made by others that a theory of subjectivity must be able to account for those aspects of personhood that are not reducible to a disciplining, discursive system of power. Ortner (2005), for example, notes that Foucauldian analyses of subjectivity usually focus on the social subordination of women, racial minorities, and other subaltern groups. She adds, “This is not an unimportant exercise by any means, but it is different from the question of the formation of subjectivities, complex structures of thought, feeling, reflection, and the like, that make social beings always more than the occupants of particular positions and the holders of particular identities” (Ortner 2005, pp. 36–37).¹

That is not to say that our approach to subjectivity ignores Foucault’s insights. We acknowledge the importance of the Foucauldian perspective, but we see subjectivity as demanding a different set of analytical questions and theories that must include a more sophisticated psychology (Luhmann 2006) along with the sophisticated tools for studying the workings of power that have been inherited from Foucault. Three strands of contemporary theory in psychological anthropology inform the contributors to this volume: Cultural models studies in cognitive anthropology; psychodynamically informed anthropology; and social practice theories of identity. Together these theories contribute to a deeper understanding of how subjectivities are cultural without people becoming “cultural robots” or “cultural dopes.” There is no space here to develop these arguments in depth, but we will refer to sources where they are explained more fully.

Cultural Models in Cognitive Anthropology

Cultural models (Holland and Quinn 1987) are shared cognitive schemas, that is, mental models of reality. Humans and other creatures use schemas to interpret their experience, imbuing perceptions with

larger meanings and associated emotions. Schemas also are the basis for filling in the shared understandings that remain unspoken, for reconstructing fuzzy memories of the past, and for predicting the future. They can be learned primarily through observation, for example, a child's expectations about how parents and other adults will exert authority or implicit biases drawn from the way stock characters are raced and gendered in media. Schemas can also be learned from the simplified political commentary one might hear or read, from which people acquire not a detailed ideology but basic, affectively charged understandings of how the world works, who benefits and who is harmed by policies, who is "us" and who is "them." However, given the heterogeneity of each person's experiences, it is common for people to have a mix of schemas about contentious public issues instead of a single, consistent ideology or attitude. For example, Strauss (2012) heard native-born Americans segue from the cultural models that see immigrants as outsiders who need to learn to fit in, to ones that see immigrants as exemplifying human desires for a better life. Strauss and Quinn (1997) explain how culture learning creates individuals who share meanings with others without being cultural dopes. Most culture internalization, they argue, is not a matter of being programmed with fixed rules; it is, instead, a process of discerning patterns. People with similar experiences extract similar patterns. However, no two people have the same experiences, and the schemas they form, as well as what is emotionally and motivationally important for them, shape what they pay attention to and how they interpret and remember later information. Thus, even siblings do not remember the same events or messages the same way (Strauss n.d.).

Psychodynamic Anthropology

At the core of the psychodynamic tradition, both Freudian and post-Freudian, is psychic conflict. People are caught between multiple desires and expectations, both conscious and unconscious, and inconsistencies or contradictions between these expectations create anxiety. Psychodynamic approaches to subjectivity (generally) and political subjectivity (specifically) tend to favor a deep engagement with the ways in which people respond to repeated experiences of anxiety arising from such conflicts. Unlike cognitivists and practice theorists, psychodynamic theorists focus in particular on what is unconscious because it is too psychically dangerous to acknowledge. This potentially raises dimensions of political

subjectivities that are not considered by cultural models or social practice identity theory researchers. For example, Ewing (2008) examines the fantasies of Germans about Turkish immigrants and of the Turkish immigrants themselves, finding elements of wish fulfillment and substitutions for difficult-to-acknowledge concerns. Hinton (2005) has combined cultural models with psychodynamic approaches to understand the psychological processes of seeing political enemies as subhuman and facilitating genocide. Hollan (2000), summarizing the research of Mageo, Lambek, and others, explains the way the splitting of self in dissociative states allows people without formal power to express social criticism.

Social Practice Theories

In social practice theories of identity, cognition, and emotion, anthropologists are not as concerned with the details of mental content or inner conflicts. Instead, they examine how people's meanings, identities, and capacities for agency develop and are deployed in particular social and material settings and communities of practice (Lave and Wenger 1991; Holland and Lave 2001). Social practice theorists are interested in the gradual transition to self-investment in identities and practices, along with an increased sense of personal efficacy; they also consider the loss of feelings of efficacy and reactions to power such as self-censorship. Some are inspired by the Soviet psychologist Vygotsky's conception of mediating devices, that is, intellectual tools (Holland and Valsiner 1988; Holland et al. 1998). As Holland, Price, and Westermeyer's paper in this volume explains, Vygotsky emphasized the way people can use cultural resources agentively as tools to organize and modify their own thoughts and emotions. Holland and her collaborators have applied this approach to the development of political identities (Holland and Lave 2001; Holland et al. 1998). For example, Holland and Skinner (2001) highlight the way collectively produced songs for the Tiji festival in Nepal become a vehicle for women to express Communist and feminist criticisms of the government and of village life, to fashion new self-understandings, to engage in innovative actions, and to carry out sometimes painful self-evaluation.

Although these three approaches have different core theories of the person in culture, it is increasingly common to combine them. One of the reasons for this, we believe, is the transition to a commitment to person-centered research, which forces all researchers to engage with things

that might have been ignored or minimized in earlier scholarly research traditions. In conducting person-centered research, cognitivists must account for anxiety, emotions, identities, and questions of developmental processes from childhood on (data that, in an older tradition, were the domain of psychodynamically focused scholars), while psychodynamically focused scholars must account for patterns and structures of cultural knowledge and meaning making (data that, in an older tradition, were the domain of cognitively oriented scholars). Practice theorists recognize that cultural models are an example of mediating devices; cultural models researchers have discussed the relation between automatic cognitive processes that are their focus and the more controlled, deliberate ones that are the focus of social practice theory (Strauss and Quinn 1997; see also Kahneman 2011). Person-centered studies of narrative and memory can productively combine several of these approaches (White 2001).

Cultural models and psychodynamic approaches can be combined to provide a deeper understanding of hegemony in Raymond Williams' (1977) sense as going far beyond ideology to include "a whole body of practices and expectations," "our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world," "a sense of reality for most people in the society" (Williams 1977, p. 110). Those "common sense" understandings are often unsaid. Delving deeper into what that means psychologically, we can distinguish different kinds of unsaid subjectivities. For instance, in some cases, the beliefs that inform political subjectivity remain unsaid because they are not even imagined; they are far beyond a social order conceivable in a society at a given moment. They are *unknown unsaids*. Those are different from *implicit unsaids*. Implicit unsaids are the taken-for-granted common sense in a society. Implicit unsaids are the presuppositions of what is said. They are seemingly so obvious that there is no need to say them or think about them (cf. Bourdieu 1977). This common sense (e.g., that nation-states have borders) is knowable and sayable if challenged. Such implicit unsaids are often the focus of cultural models research. This brings us to a third kind of unsaid belief, the *controversial unsaids*, which are known explicitly by some people, but are not widely disseminated. Fear of expressing a view can result in what Noelle-Neumann (1993) calls a "spiral of silence." The controversial unsaids are explicitly known by some, but not speaking them leads to lack of challenge to the implicit unsaids of others in their society (Strauss 2004). Finally, we can also consider *repressed unsaids*. If controversial unsaids are those that, while being too offensive to be shared in a wide

community, might be shared within a community of like-minded believers, the repressed unsaid are those beliefs that people are unaware of because they have been pushed out of consciousness. The concept of the repressed unsaid, then, can account for actors who describe sudden moments of enlightenment where they feel that they have “always known something” but it has been something that they just never could accept (about themselves, others, political milieu, etc.).

CROSS-CUTTING THEMES IN THIS VOLUME

The papers in this volume address key practical and theoretical questions of concern to scholars and activists. Although it is not possible for an edited volume to present a unified answer, the following summary of how the papers address some of the key questions will foreshadow the contributions they make.

What Is the Role of Emotions in Politics?

Clarke et al. (2006) highlight a tension between emotions and the political. The heightened emotions of contentious politics can be viewed as dangerous and counter to the rational ideal that politics and governments are held to, even though emotions are always present in the real-world practices of politics and government. Understanding the role of emotions in political action and political subjectivity formation is critical (Holmes 2004a, b; Thompson 2006; Isbell et al. 2006). While there are sociologists who consider emotions important for understanding politics, very few of these scholars have been involved in the kind of person-centered research we advocate in this volume (cf. Demertzis 2013).

Some anthropologists have attempted to fill this gap by examining the relationship between affects and politics through the lens of “affect theory” (Massumi 2002; Clough 2007)—an approach that emphasizes universal neurologically grounded feelings that give force and intensity to people’s lives in ways that evade the cognized, linguistically constrained, and socially mediated nature of emotions (Thrift 2004). Thus, for affect theorists (Ducey 2007), “emotions” are explicitly understandable and expressible by the members of a society, while “affects” create intense feelings but often do not have specific words, concepts, or meanings attached to them.

Drawing on Lacanian theories of psychodynamics and language (e.g., Lacan 1977) and poststructuralist theory (e.g., Deleuze and Guattari 1983) as well as their vision of the increasingly decentered nature of global and local politics and political economy (e.g., Hardt and Negri 2000, 2004, 2009), one of affect theory's conceptual cornerstones is that the shifting and changing social foundations of politics leads to volatile eruptions of intense feelings that are impossible for an emotion-centric approach to capture, understand, or predict (Shoshan 2014; Navaro 2017). Emily Martin (2013) challenges many of the assumptions of affect theory, arguing that a growing faith in unproven universals regarding the neurological foundations of preconscious processes—the “affects” of affect theorists—has led these scholars to dismiss the possibilities of framing these feelings within their particular social contexts (Martin 2013, p. S157; see also the theory of emotions in Luhmann 2006).

Both Casey and Friedman, in this volume, engage with many of the themes that concern affect theorists, but work to demonstrate that it is only through careful, empirical research populated by person-centered, ethnographic particularities that one can begin to peel back the layers and reveal the preconscious affects at play in political lives and practices. Casey's chapter explicitly situates her work within a certain aspect of affect theory, though she rejects the argument of Massumi and others that affects are universal. Instead, she places her work within the social contexts and situations of encounter in northern Nigeria and Kuwait, and the ontologies and epistemologies that underpin affective relations. Casey explores the emergence and navigation of affective intensities among young Muslims in Nigeria and Kuwait as they engage with political-spiritual discourses and sensoria found in global and local media. Affective intensities associated with war and violence become objects of scrutiny by Casey's respondents, as they seek to understand sensory affects, narrate them into emotion, and modulate intense emotions to bring themselves into some sort of resonance with others (whether through the cultivation of an ‘authentic’ spiritual self or an orderly medicalized self). These self-processes engage Salafi preaching and educational campaigns that explicitly link the importance of spirituality and health to the well-being and security of Islamic states. Friedman's chapter examines the ways in which affects intersect with cultural and personal emotions in the context of the rising anger and discontent of Romanian coal miners. Friedman focuses on coal miners who have seen not only a

loss of recognition for their labor—their contributions to Romanian society coming from the dangerous work that they do—but also a loss of recognition of their emotions. In essence, Friedman examines how unrecognized and unacknowledged emotions and affects—and the resulting righteous indignation about this lack of recognition—provides a link between people who might otherwise have been politically alienated from each other in the collapse of the coal mining industry and the labor union that had previously created a common bond among them during state socialism and during the first decade after the end of state socialism.

Other chapters in the volume do not begin with affect theory, but examine the ways feelings can precede more articulate beliefs (Goodman) and also how people become passionate about their political views (Strauss; Price; Holland, Price, and Westermeyer).

How Are Political Messages Taken up by Members of the Public? In Particular, How Do People Interact with Political Messages in Media, Including Social Media?

In studying politics, it is critical to consider how public messages—whether communicated via mainstream media, on social media, among neighbors, through television advertisements, or shouted from a soapbox on a street corner—are understood by members of the public. As political messages circulate, they both reflect the goals of those who crafted those messages and take on a life—and new meanings—of their own among the public. Since political messages about international, national, or regional politics typically reach the public through media, it is especially important to examine the meanings of media messages for the public.

Some of the most formative concepts in psychological anthropology assume that the foundations of a person's psycho-cultural development are built from intimate face-to-face social relationships. This framing has, in the past, led psychological anthropologists to underplay the influence of media. That is not the case here, however. All of the contributors to this volume take seriously the need to understand how media help shape contemporary political subjectivities. How they approach media depends on their theories of culture and subjectivity.

Hervik's chapter on Danish anti-immigrant sentiments deliberately challenges the more person-centered approaches taken in the rest of the volume. Instead, he focuses on the "fractal logic" of the trope of the

Danish “nation in danger,” where small differences are seen as serious threats. Hervik emphasizes the way this exclusionary reasoning about Muslims and immigrants is echoed in mainstream media and picked up by members of the public, who propagate those interpretations through social media. Hervik does not reduce this use of media to “propaganda”; rather, he shows how these nationalistic and xenophobic messages leverage well-worn cultural models of self-and-other. Furthermore, he emphasizes the way social media breaks down the gap many theorists have imagined between elites sending messages and a largely passive public.

Strauss’s chapter, by contrast, draws upon cultural models theory in a different way, stressing that even two people exposed to the same media image will attend to different aspects of it, recollect different things, and interpret its meaning differently in light of their prior schemas. Strauss reports multiple interpretations US bystanders gave to Occupy Wall Street’s slogan, “We are the 99%,” and they differed as well in their reactions to media images of Occupy’s encampments and demonstrations. Further complicating the public’s reception of the Occupy movement were that members of the public not only interpreted the movement in light of obviously related political discourses, but also in terms of their full *personal semantic network* (Strauss 1992) composed of memories, feelings, and schemas that were personally meaningful for them. Her chapter describes Carl Mathews, whose Black Nationalist and evangelical Christian beliefs all contributed to his distrust of political institutions and enthusiasm about Occupy’s message. Strauss compares him with another African American man, Terrance West, who had faith in the American political system, with the result that the Occupy movement left him cold.

In the social practice approach of Holland, Price, and Westermeyer, particular media messages are examined as cultural resources for actors who are, in Westermeyer’s US local Tea Party example, already searching for answers to their nascent political concerns. The messages (e.g., the advice in Sarah Palin’s book to focus on local activism or CNBC commentator Rick Santelli’s call for a new Tea Party revolt against government overreach) not only become tools that help people link their scattered observations and provide strategic advice, but also act as cultural touchstones, helping readers and viewers see themselves as part of a large imagined community of like-minded conservatives.

Casey’s more psychodynamic approach leads her to focus on the feelings evoked by media sensoria, as discussed above. Furthermore, like the social practice theorists, Casey examines ordinary Muslims’ *active use of*

recorded sermons and internet sites to craft, heal, and negotiate what it means to be a good person in Nigeria and Kuwait. For Casey, then, specific media are sought out and others are avoided in an attempt to self-author the person's moral self.

What Are the Subjective Consequences of Conflicting Political Discourses?

When we think of electoral politics, we usually focus on contending groups who are separated by their divergent outlooks, identities, and feelings. However, ideologies can divide people internally; people often learn multiple, conflicting discourses (Zaller 1992). The consequences of such internal conflicts depend on how conflicting discourses are combined: conflicting discourses can be compartmentalized, repressed, integrated, or the person could be ambivalently torn between them (Strauss 1990, 2005, 2012; Ewing 1990). Sometimes they are worked out in internalized dialogue with opposing voices associated with known others (Holland, Price, and Westermeyer, Chapter 10, this volume).

For instance, Ewing and Taylor's chapter begins by contrasting Western discourses of gender binaries and Hindu devotional discourses. They demonstrate that these discourses have differing logics: In the Western model, a person has a true, inner sex and the purpose of sex reassignment is to align their anatomy with that essence; in the Vaisnava *bhakti* devotional tradition, the devotee takes on feminine qualities (*bhava*) in the course of their devotion to Krishna, making gender fluid and disconnected from bodily form. Nonetheless, they found when they talked to Manabi Bandyopadhyay, a public figure in India who has undergone SRS and become a woman, that she juxtaposed and strove to *integrate* these discourses. In discussing the sensitive topic of the nineteenth century Hindu saint Ramakrishna, Manabi uses Western binary discourses, speaking of Ramakrishna as "effeminate" and developing "such an identity," but inflecting this description with the Vaisnava view because, as Manabi proposed, Ramakrishna's feminine traits were developed later in life through the saint's love for Krishna, instead of being innate.

In other cases, people are *ambivalent*, consciously torn between competing discourses. For example, Musa, the Muslim Nigerian medical student described in Casey's chapter, wrote in his personal diary of the conflict between his reformist Islamic knowledge of the harmful

effects of Western television shows and a competing view, bolstered by his reading the Jungian psychoanalyst R. D. Laing, that he should follow the desires of his true self. Musa was consciously aware of the conflict between these alternative perspectives, unlike those whose conflicting views are compartmentalized. (When differing discourses are compartmentalized, it is as if each is in its own mental compartment, and the person has given little thought or concern to their connections.) His ambivalence was a spiritual dilemma with immediate practical consequences: Should he watch the shows or not? To resolve it, he integrated the discourses, deciding that when he was more spiritually developed, he could leave the Western media naturally, but at the current stage of his spiritual development, to do so would violate his true self. Conscious ambivalence, as in Musa's case, is uncomfortable and people seek to resolve it if they are repeatedly in situations in which they have to take a stance. Ambivalence can be unconscious as well, which is an enduring insight of the Freudian model of the person. For example, Ewing and Taylor allude to the unacknowledged mourning of the transgender women for the selves that were lost with their surgery, feelings of loss that slipped out inadvertently.

How Do People's Identities Relate to Their Politics?

In a strong challenge to the assumption that people vote on the basis of their stands on issues, Achen and Bartels (2016) propose, instead, that loyalty to one's own group and antipathy to other groups are the basis of political attitudes and vote choices. However, Achen and Bartels do not explain how people negotiate multiple identities or ones that change over time, or how people's subjective sense of who or what they are is not just based upon their race, gender, class, and the other basic social categories that feature in predictive models, or how people's beliefs about their social identities or about the very nature of identity might matter. It is necessary to distinguish, as Holland, Price, and Westermeyer do in this volume, the *social* identities assigned by others from a person's *subjective* (or *intimate*) self-identities.

All of the contributors to this volume engage, explicitly or implicitly, with the ways in which multiple identities intersect with political subjectivity and systems of power and political practice. Identities described in this volume include racial identities (Holland, Price, and

Westermeyer; Price; Strauss; Westermeyer), religious identities (Casey; Goodman; Strauss), sex and gender identities (Ewing), national identities (Friedman; Goodman; Hervik), and class identities (Ewing; Friedman; Strauss; Holland, Price, and Westermeyer). However, none of the cases that the authors examine are cases where any person has a single, uncomplicated identity. Instead, a person's multiple identities interact, often pushed by social situations, clashing and aligning in different ways in the process of developing a political subjectivity.

For instance, Westermeyer's chapter considers the tensions in the racial outlooks of whites in local Tea Party groups (LTPG). In Bonilla-Silva's (2014) terms they are "colorblind racists," that is, they do not believe there are intrinsic differences between races, but their individualistic explanations ignore structural inequalities. Westermeyer's local Tea Party members place blame for unequal economic outcomes on a "culture of dependency" created by Big Government, a departure from what they consider the sacred values set out in the US Constitution. Westermeyer's interviews with the Tea Party members shows that Tea Party members were enthusiastic supporters of conservative black politicians, and they did not understand why they were perceived as racists. Drawing on shared "figured worlds," Tea Party members contrast how they see themselves with the "racist" identities assigned to them by others. Westermeyer explores both what is said and what is left unsaid in their racial outlook.

Musa, the Nigerian medical student in Casey's chapter, like other Muslims following the United States's War on Terrorism, read and heard a great deal about US President George W. Bush. Yet, Musa's reaction was not based on his Muslim identity but drew from his self-understanding of his personality. He wrote in his diary that he had read that Bush was never able to "fashion an agenda of his own," or "to show imagination or initiative. Immediately when I read this, I knew it is a 100% description of myself and my condition" (Casey, Chapter 6, this volume). For the middle-class Indian transgender activists discussed by Ewing and Taylor, Indian "third gender politics" were uncomfortably linked to the activism of marginalized, mostly lower caste hijras. Also in play were identities associated with the colonial period during which the British "contrasted their own dominant masculinity with [...] effeminate qualities of the Bengali *bhadralok* (middle class)." Pastor Wilson, described in Holland, Price, and Westermeyer's chapter, is assumed by

White environmentalists to be concerned only with issues of environmental justice because he is Black. His subjective identity is different: He explains that he came to see justice for the earth to be related to justice for all social groups and considered himself a lover of nature.

Intimate identities also change over time. Price's chapter explains the psychologist William Cross's theory of Nigrescence, the phases of developing a positive Black identity. Holland, Price, and Westermeyer's chapter show how identities change through activism. As Polletta and Jasper (2001) put it, it is not just that people "choose to participate because doing so accords with who they are" but also "collective identities [are] constructed in and through protest rather than preceding it" (Polletta and Jasper 2001, pp. 284–285). Friedman's primary concern is with the struggles over the changing nature of *class identity* in a country that had recently transitioned from state socialism to post-socialism. Identities for most of his coal miners were profoundly tied to the recognition and valorization of their work and contributions to Romanian society. As state socialism and recognition from Romanian society dissolved in the years after 1989, both the social and subjective meaning of their identities shifted, as fathers could no longer care for their families, as workers could no longer expect a reasonable wage, as communities once held together by shared identities were fragmented by outmigration and the disappearance of common values, and as Romanian society's valorization shifted from industrial workers to either youthful, cosmopolitan businessmen or, in other cases, the valorization of modern-day, gangster oligarchs (Friedman 2008).

Strauss's chapter discusses not only her participants' multiple subjective identities, but also the beliefs connected to their identities. Carl Mathews and Terrance West are both African American men without a college degree, but what mattered for their political outlooks was how they thought about race (Carl's views were Black Nationalist; Terrance's were multicultural) and class (Carl thinks of himself as a middle-class consumer; Terrance thinks of himself as a worker).

Finally, some of the case studies show the range of cultural variation in the very conception of identity, from the fluidity of gender as a devotional stance in the Vaisnava tradition (Ewing and Taylor) to the essentialization of identity for Rastafari, for whom being Rasta is taking up a new identity but also coming to realize who they always were (Holland, Price, and Westermeyer).

What Are the Subjectivities of Political Bystanders?

One lesson from the papers in this volume and other scholars' research (e.g., Harris et al. 2010) is that lack of active involvement in politics need not mean apathy.²

Casey's description in this volume of two contemporary Muslim youth highlights that being unconcerned about politics is a luxury. In Kuwait in 2006, there were still bombed-out homes from the Iraqi invasion of 1990 and toxins from chemical weapons. Young Kuwaitis had to deal not only with these physical reminders of their vulnerability but also social media expressions of anger from Muslims who blamed Kuwaitis for both the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the 2003 US War in Iraq. Casey reports that Dahlia's conflicts with friends and family members over the 2003 US War in Iraq and the sights and sounds of the US invasion were "so debilitating that Dahlia fluctuated between obsession with broadcast and Internet-based media, or complete withdrawal from it" and she developed headaches, gastrointestinal problems, tumors, and trouble sleeping. Dahlia turned to religion to deal with her feelings of disharmony, veiling and praying more often, and she sought the advice of Internet-based Islamic scholars and psychiatrists.

Friedman's chapter on Romanian miners in the 1990s is a portrait of a different kind of political disconnection, a move from militancy to lesser involvement. Under state socialism, the miners were viewed as ideal proletarian subjects, receiving better pay, access to consumer goods, and the promise of more upward mobility for their children than most other nonpolitical elites. Following the fall of state socialism in 1989, the Jiu Valley miners recognized that increasingly free markets might undermine their job security, so they were involved in a number of high-profile, violent labor actions. Most of these strikes benefited the government in power, leading to a feeling that their political actions—their strikes—were "serving" the government. However, by the end of the 1990s, after a decade of economic stagnation, a new government decided to close the mines, leading the miners to respond with a massive, violent march on the capital city of Bucharest that, while being temporarily effective, did not stop the ultimate closure of the mines. Friedman's chapter portrays the subjective consequences of the loss of collective political efficacy, showing how his interviewees alternated between righteous anger and a removed "above it all" attitude as they navigated new political subjectivities.

Strauss's chapter discusses differing theories of social movement bystanders (Couldry 2013). Are bystanders yet to be convinced? Do they dislike contentious politics? Are they too ignorant to care? None of these generalizations represents the strongly held views several of her interviewees expressed about the Occupy movement to which they were bystanders. Her chapter argues for a richer analysis of how members of the public interpret and can become psychologically engaged in contentious politics.

How Do People Become Politically Active?

As we explained, not being politically active does not necessarily imply complacent apathy; there are many bystander subjectivities. From these various starting points, how do some people become more involved in trying to make (or stop) political changes? One recurring issue is whether becoming active is stimulated by a change in beliefs.

In Goodman's example of the Israeli soldier Benjamin, changes in his beliefs are an important part of the story, but it is not because he learned a new view and was converted by it. Instead, Benjamin's outlook changed slowly over the course of 18 years of serving in the Occupied Territories. His life history—growing up in an Orthodox family committed to the principles of Zionism—seemed to direct him to a more right-leaning political perspective that would support the idea that Israel's relationship with the Occupied Territories was based on national defense and a kind of "benevolent occupation." However, through experiences during his military service during the First Intifada, he began to feel agitated and puzzled by his observations, increasingly feeling like the messages that characterized Israel's role in the Occupied Territories as "necessary for the defense of Israel" were incongruent with his experiences. Gradually, through discussions with other soldiers and experiences such as becoming a father, he reaches a personal decision not to serve in the territories and a political decision to join other Israeli soldiers in an activist group, *Courage to Refuse*, whose members refuse to serve in the Occupied Territories. Such political activity is further elaborated by other soldiers who formed *Breaking the Silence*, which uses images of the occupation to make it visible to the Israeli public. As Goodman explains, Benjamin went from the sense that the soldiers' conflicts with both Palestinians and with Jewish settlers are just "surreal" and "crazy" to a well-worked out, explicit position that, while it is important to protect

Israel, the defense of Jewish settlers in Palestinian land was not a just and right thing to do. Interestingly, his account starts with difficult-to-name feelings that could be examples of the uncaptured “affects” (Massumi 2002) that are considered a point of escape [in the sense that Deleuze and Guattari (1983) used the term] from the monolithic “capture” of people in the subject-forming powers of contemporary states and capitalism.

Holland, Price, and Westermeyer’s chapter argues, by contrast, that changes in political views are only one small part of becoming an activist. How one becomes situated in a political group, and how members of those groups imagine who belongs and teach them how to belong, are important as well. Unlike theories of frame alignment (Snow and Benford 1992) that stress the work of movement organizers to adjust their message to connect with the concerns of target audiences, Holland, Price, and Westermeyer’s chapter stresses the work of “self-authoring” by which some activists use personally meaningful cultural resources like the Bible to connect a movement’s message to their existing senses of self. They also stress the fact that by participating in social movements people create new “figured worlds,” that is, “a collectively produced horizon of meaning that is materialized (performed) by a group of people in a particular time and space.” In the course of performing in this new world, people take on new roles and identities, new dispositions, new patterns of attending to the world and of reacting cognitively and emotionally. However, it is not enough for individuals to take on new identities; their identities have to be accepted by other members. They give the example of a Black minister, Pastor Wilson, who was not accepted by an environmental group working to protect a North Carolina river because they assumed that if he was Black, his only concerns were about environmental racism.

Price’s chapter explains that through much of the twentieth century Rastafari in Jamaica were stigmatized (rumors spread that they were cannibals, for example) and persecuted. Sometimes men’s dreadlocks were forcibly cut; early leaders were sent to insane asylums, beaten, jailed, and lynched. How is commitment to such a movement created and maintained in the face of such repression? Klandermans (2004) reports that research on commitment to social movements highlights a combination of “leadership, ideology, organization, rituals, and social relations that make up a friendship network” (Klandermans 2004, p. 373 based on Downton and Wehr 1991, 1997). Price’s account discusses Rastafari rituals and fleshes out key elements of their ideology. As both his chapter and the joint chapter by Holland, Price, and Westermeyer explain, repression and the need to fight against it are expected in Rasta ideology as part of their

idea of Babylon, the forces oppressing the people of God. Furthermore, being Rasta provides spiritual foundations and pride in being Black. Price highlights a final factor (also found in Friedman's chapter): "sacrifice functioned like an investment: the more one sacrificed, the more one invested in Rastafari identity, and the more Rastafari identity seemed central to one's self-concept."

In all of these examples, becoming politically active is not a quick, simple step, but a long-term project, one that involves transformations not only of ways of thinking but many other aspects of subjectivity.

How Do We Explain Populist Politics?

Many of the authors in this volume examine political subjectivity and its connection to populist politics where they have conducted research. Westermeyer's examination of LTPG and Strauss' study of reactions to the Occupy Movement both speak to populist political movements (on the Right and the Left, as well as off this ideological grid) in the United States during the first decades of the twenty-first century. Friedman's chapter on Romanian coal miners seeks to understand how *fin de siècle* populist political subjectivities emerged during the first decade after the end of state socialism to fill the gap left after the erosion and abandonment of what had been a more traditional patron-client relationship that had characterized working-class politics during state socialism in Romania. Hervik's chapter examines how anti-immigrant narratives in Denmark both reflect and actively promote populist nationalist tropes.

As Friedman's chapter explains, most scholars of populism, however defined,³ either implicitly or explicitly state that populism depends on emotions—fanning the flames of emotions, flattering/pandering to emotions, taking advantage of emotions—phrases with subtly different assumptions about the relation between rhetoric and subjectivity. We believe it is important, however, to distinguish between studies of populism that take as their object of study elite political actors and institutions and studies of populism that take as their starting point ordinary people. This is a deceptively simple—perhaps specious—distinction, but one that can help us clear up some of the chaos that marks competing approaches to the study of populism. For instance, populist narratives, while being based on culturally relevant themes and tropes, can be propagated by elites with emotional rhetoric; however, as likely as not, this political rhetoric will have little influence on ordinary people if it does not account for the way that people link emotions, beliefs, perceptions,

and cultural schemas in their daily life. In other words, what happens in macro-level politics is often very distant from, and frequently fails to reflect, the ways in which people's political lives are shaped and worked out in their daily activities.

Accordingly, one of the contributions that this volume makes is to suggest new ways to study populism. We believe that person-centered research is, at its foundation, perfectly suited to understanding real-world instances of populism because, fundamentally, it is about trying to understand the world through the eyes of "the people." Instead of falling back on old tropes and debates over whether specific ideologies are populist—whether anti-elite is populist, whether populist movement must always have a crypto-fascist element or always reflect crypto-communist elements, et cetera—our commitment to bringing person-centered research approaches to bear on a psycho-culturally informed examination of the political subjectivity of persons in history and history in persons is well-suited to understanding how and why "the people" choose to, or choose not to, organize, act, and live politically.

CONCLUSION: THE HAZARDS OF PERSON-CENTERED APPROACHES TO POLITICS

As researchers who study the intersection of culture, personal outlooks, and politics, we would be remiss if we did not consider those intersections in our own research. Research on the political views of ordinary people sometimes rests on a kind of unspoken populist premise that the views of ordinary people are more complex and interesting than the way they are portrayed in academic scholarship. The opposition of "ordinary citizens" to "elites" is common in the work of qualitative researchers who take time to talk in-depth with people. For example, the political scientist Jennifer Hochschild (1981) wrote that the problems of political communication "lies with the myopic elites, not the [so-called] ignorant masses" (p. 237). We tend to agree, and repeat that trope in pointing to the gaps in "expert" knowledge and some experts' derogatory views of ordinary people in this introduction.

We continue to think that ordinary people's subjectivities are more complex and interesting than they are often portrayed as being. Now that social movement studies are moving away from unified theories of the movement actor (Wolford 2010), person-centered approaches have much to offer. However, getting to know others' political views in detail

carries its own hazards. Person-centered research provides the people whom we study substantial freedom, self-determination, and agency to define themselves for us. While this allows the anthropologist to avoid some of the risks of guiding or influencing the interviewee to tell their story in a way that is artificially imposed from the researcher's own pre-conceptions of what might count as political, this also opens up the possibilities of collecting stories and narratives and glimpses into the subjectivities of an interviewee that might challenge the researcher's capacity to empathize. What we mean is that, the longer that one conducts person-centered research, the greater likelihood that one will find that even the most sympathetic research subject might hold political, social, or cultural beliefs that are *repellent* to the researcher's own beliefs. These sources of moral ambivalence might never be revealed, or only revealed in a cursory and nonsystematic manner, if researchers are focused on the public practices of an organization (e.g., how meetings are held, how recruitment occurs), shifts in public narrative construction (e.g., how the media is or is not engaged, how slogans or messages are created and propagated), or the struggle with the material realities of putting politics into practice (e.g., funding for marches, dealing with legal fees, countering police actions).

We discovered in writing this introduction that we had different reactions to that situation, which we had both faced. Friedman had listened to some displaced Romanian coal miners express nostalgia for the authoritarian, Ceaușescu regime and blame their decline on a conspiracy of Zionists and Freemasons out to destroy Romania; Strauss had heard some fellow Americans express negative attitudes about racial minorities, immigrants, or gays. Friedman described experiences of deep discomfort, ungroundedness, and loathing of both self and other. Strauss reacted by focusing on the multiplicity of people's views; how something troubling they said at one moment would be contradicted or modified by something they said at another moment (Strauss 2012, n.d.).

Once a person-centered perspective is employed, it often reveals profound and troubling differences, inconsistencies, and a lack of expected structure in the subjectivities of political actors. When conducted in an unreflective manner, the challenges posed by person-centered data can force the unprepared researcher to fall back on the elision of or compartmentalization of troubling instances of inconsistency and division, especially when the researcher is predisposed to being sympathetic to the struggles of the people one is studying (Robben 1996).

However, when reflective and grounded in the complexities and contradictions that emerge in people's stories and lives, these troubling moments become critical instances of political subjectivity in practice—instances when political subjectivity is not simply enacted, but, rather, when it takes on a negotiated life. We need to engage in these moments and learn from them.

NOTES

1. As Luhrmann (2006) points out, this sort of critical theory approach to subjectivity continues in the work of anthropologists (e.g., Biehl et al. 2007) who use “subjectivity” to focus on “the *emotional* experience of a *political* subject, the subject caught up in a world of violence, state authority and pain, the subject's distress under the authority of another” (Luhrmann 2006, p. 346).
2. See also Eliasoph's (1998) thoughtful discussion of the way apathy is not natural, but socially produced, and Holland, Price, and Westermeyer, this volume.
3. In contemporary scholarship on populism, it is common to find defenses of one particular definition of populism or conflation of different ways of thinking about populism. For example, is populism an ideology (Mudde 2004; Abts and Rummens 2007; Stanley 2008)? Is it a cynical political rhetoric of the elite (a “communication style,” in Jagers and Walgrave's terms (2007))? Is it a structural relationship (e.g., Taggart 1996; Canovan 1999)?

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PART I

Political Sentiments

Engaged by the Spectacle of Protest: How Bystanders Became Invested in Occupy Wall Street

Claudia Strauss

Imagine the participants in a political demonstration. They are animated not just by beliefs about the righteousness of their cause but also strong emotions such as indignation or attachment to their fellow protestors. Now imagine someone else who is not at this scene but is reading about it online or watching a brief news story about it on television. What is that bystander thinking or feeling, if anything? Do they care?

I define a bystander as an uninvolved witness to contentious politics. Their attitudes about the events could be positive, negative, mixed, neutral, or absent.¹ Little research has been conducted to understand the thoughts and even less on the feelings of bystanders to contentious politics despite the views of many political organizers and scholars that bystanders' opinions and engagement or apathy matter (McCright and Dunlap 2008) and despite a turn to studying emotions in politics (Goodwin et al. 2001; see Eliasoph 1998 and Gamson 1992 for important exceptions). Regarding social movements, Turner and Killian (1987) posited, "How the movement is publicly understood and defined

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will have more effect than the views and tactics of typical adherents” on its recruitment, sources of financial support, opposition tactics, and state tolerance (Turner and Killian 1987, p. 256). Public support for a social movement gives the movement credibility in its political battles, whereas public apathy or antipathy toward a movement hurts it. Even if bystanders do no more than to talk about contentious politics (face-to-face or on social media), they contribute to the climate of opinion about it. Yet, the thoughts and feelings of bystanders to contentious politics are too often simply assumed (if the political actions were successful, then their message must have resonated with the public) or public opinion is assessed with brief surveys that do not help us understand if respondents cared, and if so, why. The very term “bystander” may suggest someone who should be involved but remains on the sidelines out of apathy or fear.

Theories that expect bystanders to be psychologically unengaged would not explain why Carl Mathews, an unemployed security guard I interviewed in southern California in 2011, said about the Occupy Movement, “I *love* it” and was particularly excited by images of protestors clashing with police, or why Terrance West, an unemployed logistics clerk who was active in local electoral politics, was “upset because they destroyed the lawn at [Los Angeles] City Hall” and found images of protestors clashing with police “depressing.” Terrance and Carl are both working-class, middle-aged, African American men. There is nothing obvious about their social identities that would explain their contrasting reactions to Occupy. Instead, we need to know more about their affectively imbued cultural schemas and personal semantic networks to understand why both were psychologically engaged, but with different outcomes.

THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT AND MY PARTICIPANTS

Carl Mathews and Terrance West were two out of 64 ethnically and socioeconomically diverse unemployed southern Californians whom a research assistant and I interviewed in the fall of 2011 and spring of 2012, when there were persistent high unemployment levels in the region following the Great Recession.² My goal was to learn how they coped with and interpreted being out of work, including their ideas about politics and the economy. I did not expect them to be politically active and most were not, with fewer than a quarter involved in any political activity beyond voting. Most did not even sign online petitions.

In the summer of 2011, when I planned my project, I could not find any local or national groups organizing the unemployed. My grant applications quoted a commentator who asked, “Where, if anywhere, is the outrage?” (Rampell 2011).

We did not know that the Occupy Wall Street protest was being planned that summer. From a small demonstration on September 17, 2011, the movement grew, and Occupy tent encampments sprang up across North America and elsewhere. Eventually, there were 950 cities with Occupy encampments or demonstrations in more than 80 countries and over 3200 protesters were arrested (Chappell 2011; Mother Jones News Team 2011). Between mid-November and early December 2011, cities forced the closure of the encampments. Although some Occupy groups continued after they were evicted from public lands, the movement became much less visible. Still, their unusual tactics of occupying public spaces captured public attention and demonstrated discontent. Occupy’s slogan, “We are the 99%,” “became a household slogan seen everywhere from sidewalk graffiti to Facebook memes” (Gaby and Caren 2016, p. 413).

Despite its short life, the Occupy movement had lasting effects, politicizing participants with little previous experience in activism, inspiring organizing in the years that followed, popularizing discourse about economic inequality, and energizing support for populist political candidates like Bernie Sanders, while depressing support for Hillary Clinton in the 2016 US presidential campaign (Gaby and Caren 2016; Krieg 2016; Leonhardt 2016; Levitin 2015; Milkman et al. 2013). But what were the views of the Occupy movement among members of the general public like my research participants, only two of whom participated at all in Occupy demonstrations? I found no scholarly research on that topic; only public opinion surveys, the most interesting of which was a November 2011 Gallup poll showing greater approval than opposition for the goals of the movement, but the reverse for the way the movement was conducted (Saad 2011). What might be the basis of those attitudes?

SHOULD WE EXPECT BYSTANDERS TO CARE ABOUT CONTENTIOUS POLITICS?

Rejecting early views of protesters as irrational mobs as well as later views of protesters as hyper-rational cost-benefit calculators, some social movement researchers now seek a more nuanced understanding of emotions in political activism. There have been interesting studies of the emotions

that motivate participation, activists' emotional pedagogy (e.g., learning to replace fear with anger), affective bonds with leaders and other participants, and the "adrenaline rush" that can come from participating in protests (Goodwin et al. 2004; Gould 2004).

That research gives a much fuller, richer understanding of motivations for the participants in political protests, but does not go very far in helping us to understand the reactions of those who do not participate. Couldry (2013) posits two conceptual approaches to social movement bystanders: "For those interested in expanded political agency, bystander publics are the standing reserve of political action, available for recruitment to parties and movements" while "For those concerned with apathy, bystander publics signal entropy in political systems: the temporarily mobilized lose interest and revert to the 'bystander frame' which simply wants an end to conflict" (Couldry 2013, p. 163).

Couldry's two categories are a good starting point, but there are theoretical differences within each of these camps. Those concerned with public apathy attribute it to different sources. Some scholars imagine most people as ignorant about current events, barely caring about any politics, conventional or contentious, and only expressing opinions if forced to by a pollster, at which point they resort to cognitive shortcuts like repeating the majority opinion among others in their primary identity group (e.g., Achen and Bartels 2016) or what comes to the top of their mind due to its predominance in the media at the time (Zaller 1992). For them, the most notable feature of bystanders' political emotions is their absence. Others imagine the general public as apathetic not out of insufficient interest but from a passive spectatorship inculcated by mass media and the powers that be in current capitalist societies (Debord 1995). A different portrait of the public is posited by Turner and Killian (1987), who describe bystanders not as apathetic but as worried about the harm they may suffer from contentious politics. They propose, "As a general principle, all publics tend to become bystander publics when oppositions remain active over a long period of time" (Turner and Killian 1987, p. 217). The predominant emotions in this bystander perspective are annoyance and fear.³ Unlike Turner and Killian's universal principle, Eliasoph (1998) and Gould (2004, 2013) describe specific political cultures and social norms that inhibit political action. The bystanders in their vivid ethnographic and historical portrayals in the United States of the 1980s and 1990s are suffused with emotions like shame, anxiety, and a self-protective shell of cynicism.

These portrayals of uninterested or annoyed or anxious or cynically detached members of the public partly applied to some of my research participants. Eleven of my participants did not know about the Occupy Movement and some of those were not very interested. For example, Jake Taylor, a young military veteran, likened involvement in a political movement to being in a religious cult and said, “I have never had any interest in what other people think.” However, those eleven were not apathetic in general; each became animated at some point when our discussion turned to politics and the economy. The particular scholars in this first group (e.g., Achen and Bartels 2016) who focus on the public’s ignorance of specific facts or standard political ideologies overlook the ways ordinary people can find politics meaningful in the absence of detailed political knowledge.

Those who see bystander publics as the standing reserve of political action, potentially mobilizable for action, generally imagine ordinary citizens as an audience that can be aroused with the right message, one that is culturally and experientially resonant (e.g., Gamson 1992, 2004; Snow and Benford 1988, 1992).⁴ Within this general approach, some theorists focus attention on the framing of messages, assuming a fairly passive, culturally homogeneous public (Snow and Benford 1988). As Benford himself later admitted, the image of a movement’s frame “resonating” or not with the public assumes that “participant mobilization [was] simply a matter of movement activists pushing the appropriate rhetorical button” (Benford 1997, p. 421), and there remains a need “to focus on the interplay between elite and non-elite framings of contentious events or issues” (p. 422). As critics such as Steinberg (1998) pointed out, and as various mass communication researchers have emphasized (e.g., Sandvoss 2011), this one-way model of communication overlooks what different audiences bring to an engagement with messages. By bringing together working people for focus group discussions of current issues, Gamson (1992) showed that ordinary people become engaged by drawing upon a mix of cognitive resources, including but not limited to media frames. This general approach is the one I extend here. Bystanders psychologically engage by amplifying the images and words they encounter, imbuing them with thoughts and feelings from their learned schemas and personal semantic networks. My approach draws upon cultural schema (“cultural models”) analysis in cognitive anthropology (Holland and Quinn 1987; D’Andrade and Strauss 1992; Strauss and Quinn 1997).

SCHEMAS AND PERSONAL SEMANTIC NETWORKS

Schemas are simple interpretive frameworks that people hold, their assumptions about typical sequences of events or features of things. As the name suggests, they are schematic, simplified mental models, not specific facts or detailed ideologies or particular memories. These simplified models are automatically inferred and constantly updated from first-hand experience (e.g., learning from infancy how to behave around different categories of persons), from media representations (how different social groups are typically portrayed), and may also be conveyed in talk (Strauss and Quinn 1997; Strauss 2012). Schemas provide generic plot lines and stereotypes. They are not filters that prevent learning new information, but they have an expectation-preserving bias because they direct attention to some aspects of a situation rather than others, fill in ambiguous or missing information, and recast fuzzy memories. Experience shapes schemas, but as schemas become well-learned, they shape the meanings people attribute to their subsequent experiences (Strauss and Quinn 1997). The result is active interpretation without active effort; this information processing happens prior to and sometimes in contradiction to conscious thought, as studies of implicit bias have shown (Bohner and Dickel 2011).

The way schemas automatically fill in missing details explains why people do not need much specific information to care about current events. This is particularly important for reactions to political protests, which bystanders generally encounter only through sketchy media reports (Gamson 2004; Gitlin 1980).⁵ Bystanders react not just to the minimal information they are given, but to everything that is evoked in them by that information, including the emotions learned with those schemas (Strauss and Quinn 1997). Political schemas are often learned as affectively charged dramas. For example, in the widely shared American populist schema that Reich (1988) called *The Rot at the Top*, the system is rigged in favor of the rich and powerful. No one in charge of politics or the economy can be trusted. The *Rot at the Top* schema is typically learned along with anger or cynicism.

Giving a schema a name like *Rot at the Top* reifies it; no two people's versions of that schema are exactly alike because each person learns it from different sources. However, common experiences, media representations, and peer commentary create a cultural overlap in people's schemas. Of course, schemas need not be shared by everyone in a society to be cultural or be the only interpretive framework available in that

society, and divergent cultural schemas create differing interpretations of the same political events.

Thus, one way in which bystanders can become engaged by the spectacle of political protests is to interpret the protests using emotion-imbued schemas, in addition to any pertinent facts or ideologies they may happen to know. However, there is more to the story, because each person's schemas are in turn connected to other schemas as well as to specific personal memories, and ideas about who they are and what they want in life. This whole associative network I call a personal semantic network (Strauss 1992). Thus, the actions or message of a political demonstration would arouse not only directly relevant cultural schemas, but also other emotion-laden schemas and specific beliefs linked to those. All of those schemas and beliefs are also mentally associated with a person's self-identities, relevant personal memories, and desires. This provides a richer web of personal associations by which individuals can find additional meanings and become engaged in political events like protests, or indeed, any message, personality, or event.

INTERVIEWING FOR CULTURAL SCHEMA AND PERSONAL SEMANTIC NETWORK ANALYSIS

Cultural schemas can be recognized in popular culture, social media and other public discussions, focus groups, as well as interviews. Personal semantic network analysis, on the other hand, requires lengthy semistructured or unstructured interviews. There should be plentiful opportunities for interviewees to free associate and elaborate on what matters to them (Strauss 2005). Multiple meetings with each person are preferable.

This analysis is based on this sort of rich, in-depth interviewing. In the first wave of my research, I met with participants for two lengthy recorded interviews. In our first meeting, I gathered a life history and learned about their present circumstances. In the second interview, I asked them how things are going in the country, the cause of problems in the economy, how they see society and their place in it, their vision of a good life, and a number of other questions about politics and the economy, including in what ways, if any, they have been politically active. About two months into my research, I realized that I should be asking my participants for their thoughts about the Occupy movement, which I raised by asking, "Lately there have been these different movements that have been in the news, the Tea Party, Occupy Wall Street. Do you have any opinions about those?"⁶ Because this question was a late addition, not everyone

was asked. Some of my participants discussed Occupy before I asked about it, but only two had been involved in any way with it. Two years later, I was able to meet with most of my participants for a follow-up interview. I was also in touch with many through email or social media (Facebook and LinkedIn), and in a few cases, phone calls or informal meetings.

TWO VIEWS OF THE OCCUPY MOVEMENT

One might think that people who were unemployed would be more sympathetic to the Occupy movement than the public at large, but I did not find that to be the case among my interviewees.⁷ Out of the 46 people whose views my assistant and I solicited or who brought up the topic on their own, 24% had a favorable view, 46% had a mixed or negative view, and 30% had no opinion.⁸ That spread is similar to the median attitudes about Occupy in several surveys of national adult samples in November and December 2011 (29% in support; 42% opposed; 29% uncertain or no opinion or decline to state).⁹ However, like the respondents to the Gallup survey cited earlier, my participants tended to support Occupy's message but not its tactics. Why was the movement's message more popular than its tactics?

To answer this question and explore bystanders' engagement in the issue, consider the comments of Carl Mathews and Terrance West, whom I briefly quoted at the beginning. When I asked Carl Mathews, a former security guard for the city of Los Angeles, what he thought about Occupy, he responded enthusiastically¹⁰:

Claudia S: What do you think about the Occupy Movement?

Carl Mathews: Wonderful. About time. How long can you beat somebody down? How long can you take advantage of people? I like what they did with the banks on November 22nd, everybody was going to credit unions. Credit unions were getting people by the hundreds of thousands. You know what? I *loved* it. Get out of them banks, show them that they can't do what they want to do. Let them know we're going to take all our money out and go into a credit union, yes sir. You know, the corporations now got to understand: you've got to help us. You got helped by Bush but you still don't want to help us. Get rid of them. I *love* it. They gonna keep on doing it and pretty soon the people *will* prevail.

Claudia S: You think so?

Carl M: It's just going to take a while. You know why? It's peaceful now, [...] it's peaceful now but it won't be so for long. And this is something, it's not a racially motivated thing, it ain't black, it ain't Mexican, it ain't Jews, ain't homosexuals, it's *everybody*, holding hands, fighting for the *same* thing, the 99%. That's what's going on. And pretty soon—you can only tear gas and mace people so long but let's face it, we got more people out here with guns than police officers. You know, police got it good because people like me and you choose to not hurt no one. When the people change their heart, then they need to watch out.

Claudia S: So you think people might actually, you know, start demanding their rights with guns?

Carl M: If it don't get better it always gets worse. If you notice something: things always get worse before they get better because you know why? [...] Most things don't dissolve easy. It takes struggle on both ends until something pops and breaks and then you have to restructure everything. Then after that it calms down. Just like with the Watts riots. [] the Watts riots. Blacks didn't hardly have jobs, when after the Watts riots they were hiring people that couldn't even hardly speak (laughs) or even had education because they was black. [...] What it was, black people got tired of being broke. And a lot of things *happened* after that. But it shouldn't take civil unrest before the government do something.

Claudia S: Yeah, yeah.

Terrance West, a logistics clerk, also had strong opinions but they were much less favorable. He volunteered his thoughts about the Occupy protests in answering my question about whether he had ever been attracted to a cause or movement. Terrance is gay and he supported the protests of California's Proposition 8, passed by voters in 2008 but later overturned by the courts, which made same-sex marriage illegal: "I remember watching the coverage of the protests that were taking place in Los Angeles and West Hollywood, Beverly Hills and that type of thing. Unfortunately I wasn't able to get down there to participate in any of that." Then, although it was the summer of 2012 when we spoke, long after the Occupy movement had disappeared from mainstream news

coverage, and without any prompting from me, he added his thoughts about that movement:

Terrance West: I also felt really strongly about the Occupy movement that was taking place.

Claudia S: Oh, yeah? What did you think about that?

Terrance W: I felt like I was on both sides of that. The reason why I'm saying that is because I understand the *anger* and the hostility towards the bad economy and some of the folks that we believe may have had a part to play in that, but then again, there was a lot of property damage that cost millions of dollars. There was a lot of illegal activity that was taking place that I think some people were just using it as an excuse to get out and do things that they wouldn't normally do.

Claudia S: You mean do drugs or –

Terrance W: I was actually afraid to go into Los Angeles during the time when the movement was at City Hall.

Claudia S: Oh, really?

Terrance W: Because of the reports of violence that was taking place, different things that were going on, and then also I liked the way the police department handled it because they were being understanding but being firm at the same time. On a personal level, I was upset because they destroyed the lawn at City Hall and L.A. City Hall is one of the most spectacular landmarks in L.A. and I hate that they messed up a part of what makes L.A., L.A. I hated seeing people getting beat in the other cities like in New York and in Oakland and in Boston because we're all Americans. We're all suffering through the same bad economy and the cop that might've been out there beating that protester is probably only a paycheck or two away from being out there *with* that protester, so that's why. It was kind of depressing. It was disheartening to see that.

Standard scales of political ideology would place Terrance's political views to the left of Carl's, making the contrast between Carl's fervent support and Terrance's criticisms of Occupy surprising. A deeper understanding of their schemas and personal semantic is needed to understand their sentiments.

WHAT WAS OCCUPY'S MESSAGE?

On the surface, Carl and Terrance do not seem to differ much in their views of Occupy's message. Like two-thirds of those of my participants who were familiar with Occupy, both approve of it. However, Carl was enthusiastic ("Wonderful. About time") and continued for several lines, while Terrance's discussion of his agreement with Occupy's message was short and emotionally ambiguous ("I understand the *anger* and the hostility towards the bad economy and some of the folks that we believe may have had a part to play in that..."). Was Terrance angry? Or does he "understand" the protestors' anger, sharing their views but not their passion? There are subtle differences between Carl and Terrance's interpretation of Occupy's message that partly explain the difference in their enthusiasm.

While the Occupy movement's slogan, "We are the 99%," was memorable and repeated, the interpretation of that slogan varied a great deal. Pickerill and Krinsky (2012) propose that the message was so powerful because it was ambiguous, an ambiguity compounded by the movement's grassroots, decentralized structure. There was no one in charge to coordinate messaging, which varied by location and depending on whether one consulted statements issued by a particular General Assembly or principles enunciated at websites like occupywallst.org. This created openings for bystanders to impose their own interpretations, a process I believe always happens, but that was particularly apparent in this instance.

Among my participants, there were four common schemas for interpreting Occupy's message. The first was a Rot at the Top populist schema according to which the average people of society are pitted against not only big money but also establishment politicians from both major parties. As Tom Dunn, a former corporate recruiter (later turned medical marijuana courier) put it, "My biggest problem with the Democrats and the Republicans is not the philosophies; it's the corrupt system. And I think that's really, on its face, what the Occupy Movements are all about." The second was a standard US liberal political schema critical of excessive corporate power and an unfair distribution of wealth skewed toward the very rich. For those who held this schema, key actors in the US political and economic system are large corporations and the rich aligned with the Republican party, who are opposed to the economic interests of ordinary people. For example, when I asked Krystal Murphy, a former bank administrative assistant, why she had said she could support the Occupy movement, she replied that it was

because “our economy is being very manipulated... I think it started under Georgie first [*her belittling term for President George H.W. Bush*]. When they took—a lot of the government regulations were just done away with. That’s why they were able to write all these bad notes because there was nobody there saying, ‘You can’t do that. That’s against the law.’” She may have been thinking of the repeal of the Glass–Steagall Act intended to separate commercial banking from investment banking. The legislation repealing the Glass–Steagall Act was signed not by the Republican George H.W. Bush, but by a Democrat, Bill Clinton, demonstrating the way fuzzy memories can be shaped by schemas. Like *The Rot at the Top*, this US liberal cultural schema has a clear drama of conflict between opposing forces, which was emotionally arousing for some of the people I talked to.

By contrast, political conservatives interpreted Occupy’s message as a wild-eyed demand to eliminate banks and corporations, which they saw as totally unrealistic as well as hypocritical. Caroline James, who has held management positions in the entertainment industry, had a low opinion of Occupy protesters: “It seemed to be people that were my age demographic and younger who were very well off, had iPhones and had all the different things that the corporations they’re railing against made and they use them every day but yet they’re railing against the corporations.” Those who interpreted Occupy’s message in this way felt scorn for it.

Finally, a number of participants saw Occupy’s message as targeting immoral, greedy Wall Street bankers. They could be angry at those individuals but there were so many of them and most were unknown to the general public. Furthermore, as some of my participants articulated, greed is not limited to Wall Street. One Republican participant, Robert Milner, had a hard time making up his mind what he thought about Occupy. The first time I talked to him, he brought up Occupy on his own and commented, “It’s just greed. It’s those few that are up top.” The next time we met, he said he wanted to modify his previous comments because he believed that greed was a widespread human failing: “People have to be willing to not be so greedy, even the regular people, even the regular people like me.” Among my participants, those who interpreted Occupy’s message as being about immoral individuals tended, like Terrance, to voice short, concessionary nods to the message, or like Robert, had mixed views of the message.

Carl understood Occupy’s message to be directed toward banks and other corporations: “You know, the corporations now got to understand: you’ve

got to help us. You got helped by Bush but you still don't want to help us. Get rid of them." This is an example of the US liberal schema: Corporations are aligned with Republican politicians against the people. I argue below that Carl's full personal semantic network shows a distrust of Democrats as well as Republicans; his views combined the US liberal schema with a more thoroughgoing antiestablishment schema. Terrance had earlier criticized relaxed regulations that had allowed "creative financing," but when he summarized Occupy's message he focused on individual bad actors: "the bad economy and some of the folks that we believe may have had a part to play in that." His interpretation of Occupy's message thus drew primarily on the less arousing bad actors schema.

IS THIS WHAT DEMOCRACY LOOKS LIKE? CULTURAL SCHEMAS ABOUT OCCUPY'S TACTICS

My participants also differed in the schemas that shaped their reactions to Occupy's tactics. Interestingly, more than half of those who discussed both Occupy's message and its tactics liked one of those but disliked the other. Thus, it is not enough to investigate thoughts and feelings about the movement's message; we also need to study how bystanders interpret the spectacle of protest tactics.¹¹

The Occupy Wall Street movement was planned with the hopes of sparking revolutionary change. As one of the organizers, Kalle Lasn, put it in an October 4, 2011, interview with *Salon*, "We felt that there was a real potential for a Tahrir moment in America," referring to the Arab Spring demonstrators' occupation of Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt earlier in 2011, which led to the resignation of the long time Egyptian president. The Occupy movement did not have similar revolutionary effects, but the movement's spread and their colorful encampments in urban centers, convenient to reporters, meant that many people were exposed to images of Occupy encampments and protests, sometimes in person but more often through the media.

None of my participants sought out an Occupy encampment, but three had a chance encounter with one and two joined one-time protests on related issues. All the rest learned about Occupy through media reports. What did they think about the movement's tactics? The majority thought about political protests by drawing upon dominant cultural schemas about political involvement; revolutionary change was far from

their minds. I found three primary schemas among my participants: Protests are a way of expressing and acting on one's ideals, which is a democratic right; protests should be nonviolent and orderly; protests should be solution-oriented and a productive use of time.

Those who saw political protesters as making a stand for their ideals had a positive, sometimes even joyful, reaction to the sight of the Occupy protests. For example, Phoenix Rises had a proud generational identity as a protester. When I initially explained my project to her over the phone, she said she would be happy to voice her views. She added that when she was in school in the 1970s she was of the generation that "burned our bras" and "stood for something," turning the denigrating mythical trope of feminists as bra burners into a positive symbol of idealistic protest. In our third meeting, she talked about choosing to be a special education teacher in order to make a difference, which she saw as typical of the Baby Boomers. That made her think of the Occupy Movement. She said, "I'm very proud of the kids that were standing up and doing what they were doing downtown camping out in Oakland. It made me very proud to see young kids once again trying to do something for what they believed in." She added, "They're just trying to invoke their rights." When Phoenix Rises looked at the Occupy movement, she did not just see Occupy; she saw young idealists expressing their beliefs, just as she imagined her generation.¹² It is a schema of personal moral commitments as a basis for civic and political activism (Lichterman 1996).

This positive view of political protest as an expression of one's views and laudable political involvement ("do something") was not limited to Baby Boomers. Katarina Spelling, who was in her late twenties when we met, did not agree with Occupy's message because she thought that home buyers who took on mortgages they could not afford were as much to blame for their economic problems as "evil" bankers. Nonetheless, she admired the fact that the protesters cared enough to get involved. She had been the president of a local chapter of the Young Republicans and had found that it was a struggle to interest young people in politics: "I think it's great that people are involved. [...] I feel like it's a little bit of a waste of time, but at the same time I admire their tenacity. Like good for you for caring, kind of how I feel about Obama getting people involved that are my age. I've always felt that way. I always wanted people my age to care more." For Katarina Spelling all forms of political activism, whether with the Young Republicans or going

to an Occupy protest, are laudable because they show “caring” and being “involved.” Others, like Phoenix Rises, valued protest as distinct from electoral politics, but they all admired those who made the effort to act on their beliefs. Their admiration goes to the commitment shown by individual protesters, not to the sight of collective solidarity.

This cluster of participants encompasses almost all of those who liked Occupy’s tactics. The only other schema that led to a positive view of Occupy’s tactics was that held by Carl Mathews. Carl Mathews’s militant protest schema was an outlier among my participants. Recall that he commented, “you can only teargas and mace people so long, but let’s face it we got more people out here with guns than police officers. Police got it good because people like me and you choose to hurt no one. When the people change their heart, then they need to watch out.” When I asked, “So you think people might actually start demanding their rights with guns?” Carl defended “civil unrest” as a last resort if the government does not act on people’s legitimate concerns, the same view that led to the American Revolution and is held by some Americans today. No one else among my participants voiced it, but it made Carl excited by Occupy protesters’ clashes with police.¹³

As I stated above, opposition to Occupy’s tactics was more common than support. One schema that led to opposition was the view that protests should be peaceful and orderly. Those who held this schema often agreed with political protests in principle. However, they reacted negatively if protests were violent, infringed on opponents’ equal rights to express themselves, damaged property, or even left trash behind. We saw that with Terrance West, who was upset that the result of Occupy LA was “a lot of property damage that cost millions of dollars.” Maria Carrera was disgusted with the mess the encampment left: “I mean it’s okay to have an idea and to fight for it, but [...] there was so much trash behind there. Why didn’t they clean it?” Theresa Allen, a former waitress, recounted telling the Occupiers she had met in her small town, “Good for you that you can stay out here in tents and you can believe in something.” However, she drew the line on political protest if people and, especially, animals were hurt: “I’m all for peaceful demonstration. I don’t wanna see people getting [into] riots, and burn things, and get hurt. I don’t like it when the police are on horses and the horses are getting hurt. That really bothers me.” Linda McDaniel, a former executive assistant in her early 50s, said, “I think the fact that people are engaging and talking is a good thing in general, as long as they don’t go into

a meeting and heckle someone so that they can't speak." These participants share the first group's positive view of expressing one's beliefs ("it's okay to have an idea and to fight for it," "Good for you that you can stay out here in tents and you can believe in something," "the fact that people are engaging and talking is a good thing in general") but they had greater emotional energy linked to the concern that this expression should cause no harm to people or animals or property.

Another group of people with whom I spoke carried concern with disorder further, rejecting all political protest as too "angry," "crazy," "messy," or as prone to violence. They favored political involvement, but not street protests. Several were immigrants with bad memories of protest in their home countries. For example, Kham Sy Phouphan, who left Laos when the Communists took over in 1975, associated political marches and chanting with Communist demonstrations. Charlie Mike Romero, an immigrant from El Salvador, worried that "it always turns into a great disorder [...] you know, they end up throwing stones." This skepticism about political demonstrations was not limited to immigrants. Robert Milner recoiled at the anger in the Occupy protests. As we saw above he was sympathetic to their message of excessive Wall Street greed, but believed, "We need to stop fighting and come together." Similarly, we saw that Terrance West "hated seeing people getting beat in the other cities like in New York and in Oakland and in Boston because we're all Americans." Terrance was not opposed to all political protests; as we saw, he wished he could have participated in the protests of Proposition 8 in California. However, he objected when the protests created opposition between the demonstrators and fellow Americans who had the job of policing those protests.

Another prominent schema that led to negative views of Occupy's tactics was that protests should have a clear purpose and be a productive use of time. Those who interpreted protests with this lens were exasperated by the fact that it was not clear what the Occupy movement hoped to achieve. Elizabeth Montgomery, a former business-to-business salesperson, complained, "I didn't think Occupy Wall Street came with solutions. They just came as a protest. So I was kind of, 'Well, this is weak. You're [] on your feet but you're not like, Let's put groups together to try to come up with ideas.'" Miriam Ramos, a hair stylist, commented, "A lot of us were just kind of like, 'What are they doing? What is their purpose?' It just seems like a lot of people that were out of work that were just trying to jump on a bandwagon and have a reason to have something to do that day." Unlike those quoted above who had the schema that taking the

trouble to stand up for one's beliefs is valuable in itself, these Americans were more pragmatic. Those who held this schema could not see the point of voicing discontent without also proposing solutions, a concern that divided members of the Occupy movement as well (Juris 2012). Miriam Ramos's comment that the Occupy protestors were looking for "something to do that day" also hints at a productivist disdain for protesters who do not have anything better to do than to demonstrate and camp out for a vague cause. Miriam (whose political outlook I know very well because she later became my stylist, and I chat with her every month) is quite progressive in her politics, but is scornful of those she considers lazy, like some of her coworkers. A productivist view was explicit in Caroline James's sarcastic comment about Occupy, "I can camp out in a tent for five days because Mommy and Daddy are paying for me right now.' Great. That's awesome. So that kind of made me angry." Possibly because my participants were unemployed, this productivist view was not commonly expressed by them; but, as I discuss in the next section, it may help explain why Terrance had a mostly negative view of the Occupy movement.

PERSONAL SEMANTIC NETWORKS

Psychological engagement in a social movement draws in part on emotions connected to the cultural schemas aroused by the movement's message and tactics. However, it also draws upon the way those cultural schemas are embedded in a person's full personal semantic network, which includes other cultural schemas, sometimes detailed beliefs and belief systems such as religious views, personal experiences, identities, and motivating values. The combined charge of different emotion-imbued schemas and their links to what a person cares about in life can provide a way for people to become engaged by a social movement even when they do not participate in it. To see those links, we can trace connections from points in a person's commentary using clues such as shared topic, key terms, and discourse style, starting from topics that were particularly arousing (Strauss 1992, 2005). I will trace some of these connections, first for Carl Mathews, then for Terrance West.

Some elements of Carl Mathews's personal semantic network. Carl Mathews's comments on Occupy covered banks; the alignment of big corporations with Republican leaders (Bush); solidarity of "the 99%" across lines of race, ethnicity, and other differences; peaceful versus violent tactics; clashes with police; and the Watts uprising of 1965.

Carl's animus against big banks stemmed not only from anger at their role in the financial crisis but also from his personal experience, because his bank had not allowed him to modify his mortgage until it was too late to prevent foreclosure. Losing his home not only meant losing shelter but also the loss of Carl's deeply meaningful personal identity as middle-class, which was the only identity he mentioned when I asked what social groups he belonged to. His formal interviews and informal comments showed that the type of house he owned, along with his vehicle, and other forms of consumption, were central to his understanding of being middle-class. Before he lost his job, he had worked almost 70 hours a week to afford a home that was like "a palace." When we got together again two years later, he eagerly showed off his new SUV and clothes. The Occupy movement's targeting of big banks was personally meaningful for Carl, as it was for many Americans whose mortgages were foreclosed during and after the financial crisis of 2008.

Carl was a political independent, but he particularly disliked Republicans: "Republicans just don't give a shit about the unfortunate or the misfortunate. [...] if you don't make a certain amount of money in a year, you're garbage." Before Carl lost his job, he was one of my wealthiest interviewees, with a household income that had sometimes exceeded \$200,000 a year, most of which came from overtime hours in his city job. However, after he lost his job and his home and his wife left him, he was destitute, a situation that was imminent when we met for the first wave of interviews. Carl on two occasions told the Biblical story of the rich man who was tormented in hell for failing to care for a poor man, Lazarus. Not all devout Christians heed Biblical teachings about care for the poor, but for Carl that message was powerful. Like blacks in Watts in 1965, he was tired of being "broke," a term he used seven times to describe himself during that interview. He predicted the middle-class would soon disappear, racial differences would be insignificant, and it would just be the very rich against everyone else: "there's going to be rich and poor, which is going to be the new racism." He was excited by Occupy's message of the 99% banding together to improve their situation.

Still, racism remained a major concern for Carl. Using Black Power discourses, he spoke of the way criminal justice was biased against black and Latino men, and the racist history of the United States, which led him to be distrustful of Democrats as well as Republicans. Carl's lack of trust in the political establishment, so congenial to the Occupy movement, came not only from his understanding of US racial history but also from his

interpretation of Christian teachings: “I don’t trust none of my government officials. I mean one law’s right and that’s God’s law.”

Black Power discourses spoke of the necessity of more militant approaches to redress racial inequality. Carl’s service with the National Guard was another source of his view that violence is sometimes needed to serve a higher purpose: “[*In the National Guard*] We used to tell each other things all the time, ‘Don’t worry about dying, you already know you can die; worry about how many people you’re going to kill.’ [...] Uncle Sam got a problem, we got to stop it, that’s all there is to it.”

Some of these formative elements (devout evangelical Christianity faith, Black Power discourse to interpret his experience as a black man in the Los Angeles metropolitan area at the end of the twentieth century and beginning of the twenty-first, swings of personal economic fortune, military service) might seem to be unlikely bedfellows, but in combination they provided affective hooks to Carl Mathews’ interpretation of the message and tactics of the Occupy movement.

Some elements of Terrance West’s personal semantic network. Terrance’s comments about Occupy covered a different set of topics than Carl’s: The bad economy and the people who contributed to that; the unsightly presence of the Occupy encampment on the grounds around the Los Angeles City Hall and resulting property damage; and the depressing sight of cops set against protestors, when they are fellow workers and fellow Americans. The result was mixed attitudes: Support for Occupy’s message but not for their tactics.

Before we talked about Occupy, Terrance had criticized Wall Street financiers and looser regulations, a result of which was that “the stock-brokers went ballistic. You have some of them running away with millions of dollars while other folks are being made bankrupt behind it. That wasn’t fair.” However, he did not make a personal connection between their behavior and the bad economy that had resulted in him being out of work for over two years and unable to pay rent, forcing him and his boyfriend to live with Terrance’s cousin. Instead, he blamed the fact that California “has such a non-business friendly environment that I’ve worked with two companies that have fled the state.”

Although Terrance agreed with Occupy’s message, as we saw, the spectacle of the L.A. encampment and Occupy protestors’ clashes with police aroused negative emotions in him (“I was upset,” “I hate that they messed up a part of what makes L.A., L.A.,” “I hated seeing people getting beat in the other cities,” “It was kind of depressing,”

“It was disheartening to see that”). Why was that so upsetting for him? The contrast between his views about the police and Carl’s are particularly interesting given that Terrance had an arrest record that was part of the reason he had trouble finding another job, and Carl did not. I think there is a mix of explanations at work.

Unlike Carl, for whom being a consumer was central to his class identity, for Terrance, it was being a worker. Throughout the interviews, he often spoke of his strong work ethic and that of his mother and sister, contrasting it with younger people whom he saw as lazy: “Look at you with your iPod and your \$300.00 True Religion jeans and your mommy takes care of everything for you.” His comments sound much like those of Caroline James, who commented sarcastically about Occupiers, “I can camp out in a tent for five days because Mommy and Daddy are paying for me right now. Great.” Terrance’s productivist views are like Caroline’s and although they did not come up when he was talking about the Occupy protests, it is notable that he characterized the police as workers who, like him, are economically insecure (“only a paycheck or two away from being out there with that protester...”).

Terrance also spoke of both protesters and police as “Americans” and approved of order over civil disorder. Terrance is ten years younger than Carl; he was a teenager in the 1980s. Black Power rhetoric was further in the past and his family was involved in electoral politics. One of his role models was Tom Bradley, who served five terms as mayor of Los Angeles when Terrance was growing up and was the first African American mayor of a large city with a majority white population. Mayor Tom Bradley, and more recently President Barack Obama, were symbols for Terrance that the system could work for all ethnic minorities and for working-class people. About Obama’s election he commented, “it means to me is that anybody of any race could sit in that seat. It meant that we could have a President Gonzales. We could have a President Wong.” Terrance is attached to the American political system. When we met in 2012, recent court decisions striking down Proposition 8 confirmed for Terrance the power of America’s founding documents:

Any time we segregate a segment of society and then tell them that you can’t do what the rest of society does, that’s unconstitutional. Thank God for Thomas Jefferson and those beautiful words he wrote. Thank God for all the other authors that contributed their words to it. It’s a well-written document and 200 and some odd years old and it’s still wonderful.

Terrance likes serving as a poll worker on election day: “it’s just cool seeing people coming out and voting and partaking in the whole democratic system. I don’t care who they vote for, just as long as they’re voting, they’re getting their voice heard, they’re participating.” For Terrance protests were not generally necessary because an American can get “their voice heard” by voting.

Why did Terrance say, “On a personal level, I was upset because they destroyed the lawn at City Hall...”? As we saw, he was not the only one who was upset by property damage or trash left behind; several interviewees with whom I spoke shared these views. For Terrance, there was an additional emotive charge partly because he loves Los Angeles and its symbols, but perhaps also because he identifies with City Hall. When he was only 16, Terrance called up the white mayor of his suburban town to volunteer after the mayor said he wanted more African Americans and Latinos involved in city government. The mayor gave him an after-school job working for the city, and when Terrance turned 18, the mayor appointed him to one of the city’s commissions and proclaimed a day in his honor. Terrance’s goal was to become a young mayor himself, and he even entered a sham marriage in his twenties to present a more acceptable public image. When he commented on local political issues, he often did so from the imagined perspective of a mayor or city council member. He identifies with politicians instead of seeing them as symbols of a corrupt establishment that cannot be trusted.

In the months before the 2016 election Terrance frequently reposted from the Occupy Democrats Facebook page. Their stated position is, “We support the Occupy Movement, President Obama, the Democratic Party, and we vote!” Occupy Democrats was the perfect group to express Terrance’s politics. It supported working people’s concerns and equal rights for all but did so within the current political party system.

THE PERSONAL, CULTURAL, AND SOCIAL IN BYSTANDERS’ POLITICAL SENTIMENTS

I have argued that bystanders can become psychologically engaged in contentious politics. Affectively imbued cultural schemas give greater meaning to political messages and actions; personal semantic networks connect those cultural schemas to a person’s identities, other beliefs, memories, and goals. These explain psychological engagement.

My analysis was illustrated by the examples of Carl Mathews and Terrance West. How typical were they? Carl and Terrance were better informed than average among my participants. However, even those who consume less news had cultural schemas for engaging with issues. For example, when I asked a struggling single mother, ReNé McKnight, if she knew about Occupy Wall Street and if so, what she thought about it, her response suggested she was reacting to “Wall Street” but not to “Occupy Wall Street”:

I don't know too much about it, but – I don't like it. I don't know how it benefits, and I don't know how it's an advantage or disadvantage for us. And I guess my thing is – I could be wrong, I don't know – but I'm assuming that the money's coming from the banks and all of the other higher capitalist areas – they're pulling our money and gambling it.

I surmised she was talking about Wall Street and ReNé agreed, showing that she had a schema for suspicion of financiers' activities:

Claudia S: So what you don't like is Wall Street and what they're doing?

ReNé M: I don't know too much about 'em, but yeah...

Claudia S: And then the Occupy Wall Street movement has been protesting that. Yeah.

ReNé M: Okay. How you can just gamble and throw somebody's money away in order for you to get richer? It doesn't make sense.

I counted ReNé among those who had no opinion of Occupy Wall Street, but as this excerpt illustrates, she had a cultural schema that gave her sentiments about the issues at stake. It is a topic with which she would become engaged if political organizers made the effort to reach out to her about it.

Cultural schemas can be complex, conflicting, and shifting (Strauss and Quinn 1997). Although I have emphasized the prior schemas my participants drew upon to interpret the Occupy movement, those schemas may have changed due to Occupy. I do not know what they thought before we met in the fall of 2011 or later. Similarly, personal semantic networks are never fixed, and a social movement's discourses can become an element in them. Nonetheless, it would be a mistake to see political sentiments as entirely constructed on the fly. For example, Theresa Allen's concern about police horses being hurt in political demonstrations draws from decades of concern about animal welfare. The most

wrenching part of my first interview with her was her detailed description of how her husband's job loss meant being forced to move back in with her mother, who did not let Theresa bring her 18 pets, some of whom had to be euthanized. I have no doubt that she would become very upset if a political demonstration meant harm to animals, no matter how skillfully the movement's message was framed. Personal semantic networks help explain the attraction between people and particular cultural schemas out of a larger social repertoire (e.g., Lamont 2000).

Person-centered research of this sort does not assume isolated individuals. People's cultural schemas come from shared experiences, discussions with others, and various forms of media and popular culture. Miriam Ramos's comments about the Occupy protests referenced previous peer discussions ("A lot of us were just kind of like, 'What are they doing? What is their purpose?"). Maria Carrera's concern with the trash left behind by the Los Angeles Occupy encampment echoed some mainstream media stories, such as a November 30, 2011, *Los Angeles Times* online story with the headline, "Occupy L.A.: 30 tons of debris left behind at City Hall tent city." Elsewhere I describe the conventional discourses, that is, the commonly repeated schemas, that Americans can learn from the media and discussion with others (Strauss 2012).

It is not enough, however, to study media representations of the issues. A person-centered anthropological approach provides not only a description but also an explanation for how people think about and why they care about politics.

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NOTES

1. For Tarrow (2013) "contentious politics" is episodic and includes social movements, waves of strikes, political riots, wars, and revolutions. My definition of bystanders differs from that of McCarthy and Zald (1977), for whom bystanders are "nonadherents who are not opponents of the

SM [*social movement*] and its SMOs [*social movement organizations*] but who merely witness social movement activity” (McCarthy and Zald 1977, p. 1221). Gamson (2004) points out, “A term like ‘bystanders’ has an individualistic bias. Like the term ‘audience’, it conjures up an image of atomized individuals...” (p. 243). In my model bystanders are not isolated individuals, but I have retained the term because of its fit to those who do not actively participate in contentious politics.

2. I recruited 53 unemployed and underemployed men and women by attending career counseling sessions and networking groups or standing outside job fairs passing out flyers describing my project. I also asked everyone I knew for contacts and, in that way, found some people who were out of work but too discouraged to go to job fairs or career counseling sessions. I deliberately chose equal numbers of women and men from a variety of former occupations, socioeconomic levels, and ethnic groups. In addition, a Spanish-speaking research assistant interviewed eleven unemployed/underemployed immigrants from Latin America. Twenty-five self-identify as white (not Hispanic), twenty-two as Latino/a or mixed, twelve as black/African American, and five as Asian American. All interviewee names are pseudonyms.
3. Turner and Killian define “bystander” as someone who is neither an adherent nor opponent of a social movement (Turner 1970, discussed in McCarthy and Zald 1977, p. 1221). Thus, they would not say that the “bystanders’ frame” applies to all bystanders in my broader definition.
4. See also Kemper’s (2001) model of the way power and status relations induce guilt and shame among social movement bystanders.
5. Deluca et al. (2012) compare traditional media and social media reporting on the Occupy movement in its first 30 days.
6. My assistant asked her interviewees, “What do you think of that movement that was called ‘We are the 99%’ and all those movements?” or variants on that.
7. It is common for research on unemployed workers to find that being out of work is not by itself a radicalizing experience (e.g., Pappas 1989).
8. In addition to eleven who knew nothing about the movement, three more had heard about it but did not know enough to have an opinion.
9. All survey results reported here were obtained from searches of the iPOLL Databank and other resources provided by the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research. These medians are based on all surveys ($N = 28$) with agree/disagree; support/opposition questions and national adult samples in the Roper Center’s iPOLL databank for October through December 2011.
10. Transcription conventions:
 - [] unintelligible
 - [...] deletion
 - Italics* speaker’s emphasis.

11. Interestingly, Occupy Wall Street was inspired in part by the Situationist political philosophy Guy Debord articulated in writings that preceded *The Society of the Spectacle* (Bureau of Public Secrets 2011).
12. Many of the politically uninvolved Americans Eliasoph (1998) talked to disdained protest as “a form of self-promotion” (p. 143). It is interesting to consider what factors may have led to our differing findings.
13. Although the Occupy movement, in general, was nonviolent and its public face was mostly white (Patton 2011), there were more Occupy protesters of color in Oakland, California, and some militant actions (e.g., smashing bank windows), which had been in the news about a month before this interview with Carl Mathews.

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Progressives' Plantation: The Tea Party's Complex Relationship with Race

William H. Westermeyer

On a crisp afternoon, three weeks before Christmas, 2010, I was sitting in the bed of a large pickup truck with Mike, cofounder of the Hawthorne County Tea Party. We were participating in the central North Carolina town of Reston's Christmas parade. Towed behind us on a flatbed trailer, was a homemade parade float assembled by members of that local Tea Party group (LTPG). Members had made a plywood silhouette of a teapot-shaped sleigh and reindeer along with the Hawthorne Tea Party logo and placed them on top of the trailer. Three members of the group were standing on the float dressed in colonial era costumes waving at the bystanders. As we proceeded slowly up the town's main street, Mike, his children, and I handed out small American flags to people in the audience lining the street. At one point we passed a young black woman who did not reach for a flag. She looked at Mike and said "I don't like the Tea Party because I'm black." Mike looked at me and in a mix of indignation and amusement said, "Did you hear that? She thinks we're a bunch of freakin' racists!"

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This was not the first nor would it be the last time that I would hear a Tea Partyist relate with indignation being labeled as racist. A common conception of the Tea Party Movement (TPM) held by many of its detractors is that it is driven by racism. Some have argued that racist individuals have joined together in the Tea Party specifically because of the election of a black man, Barack Obama, as president of the country (Parker and Barreto 2013). Others have seen the TPM as a reaction to the loss of status on the part of whites as ethnic and racial minorities gain social, political, and economic benefits in a multicultural America (Street and DiMaggio 2011). Still others have argued that while the Tea Party may not have been formed specifically for racist purposes, it nonetheless is populated with racist organizers and has provided a new political space for militia members and white supremacists (Burghart and Zeskind 2010). My research suggests that, while the antipathy toward President Obama was a common organizing principle of the TPM, portraying the movement as driven by those who champion white supremacy misses an important aspect of how racial difference is conceptualized by Tea Party participants. Ethnographic research with Tea Partyists reveals, instead, how racialized discourses are actually incorporated into the frames and practices that constitute Tea Partyists' political identity.

My 18 months of field research with 8 local-level Tea Party groups in central North Carolina showed a conflicted relationship between Tea Party members and race. Tea Partyists often ruminated in their meetings about how to attract more blacks to the movement. Though the themes expressed by my consultants quoted here were prevalent throughout my research, there were also many who spoke of deep family histories of support for black freedom—sometimes going back to the Civil War and Reconstruction. Many Tea Partyists actively supported and volunteered for black conservative political candidates. Media personality Glenn Beck, a central and inspirational figure of the movement, spoke of the contributions of black Americans to American history, often through the promotion of the book *American History in Black and White* by Christian fundamentalist and pop-historian David Barton. Beck also organized the “Restoring Honor Rally” held on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial on the 48th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I have a Dream” speech. At the same time, many Tea Partyists rejected the enduring presence of institutional and individual racism and, drawing on time-worn stereotypes, attributed the rejection of the TPM by most black Americans to government dependency, dysfunctional black culture, and black identity politics.

To illustrate these distinctive and sometimes contradictory views, I relate a conversation with James. James is a 52-year-old digital applications technician who views his path to the Tea Party as beginning long before its inception, in the second term of George W. Bush. James views government as a “pathological packrat,” constantly accumulating more power for itself at the expense of individual liberty. As he saw the Bush administration continuing that tradition, he registered to vote as “non-affiliated” prior to the election of Barak Obama. As the Tea Party emerged, he found his political beliefs represented in the nascent movement.

I asked James how the nation had changed. As he began his reply, I thought he may have misunderstood the question.

We have generated problems in this country and we've done it from the original founding. For instance, slavery. If I could do one thing, I would sink every slave ship ... I don't want to kill the people that were being kidnapped but destroy the whole premise that we needed people here to do the work. Think of what that would've done to this country today with all the divisions that we have with blacks now.

James, like most Americans, rejects slavery. However, framing slavery as a more misguided means of procuring labor than a human tragedy was puzzling to me. The point of his reply and his perspective is clarified as he articulates what he sees as the source of needless racial divisions.

If blacks had come here through voluntary immigration, we would probably still have a little racism going on, but we wouldn't have all this crap about the never ending “we've been victimized” thing going on....It (racism) will never be gone until there is some complete intermixing of the races where no one will be able to say they were victimized any more than anyone else. That problem has been propagated. I've never had slaves. And I'm not aware that I have ever repressed anybody who is black. But I am still suffering for something like that while we are trying to deal with broader issues.

James admitted that slavery was a wrong that was perpetrated in the past. However, the wrongdoing has passed. While racial division still exists, in his eyes, many of those divisions are the results of the no-longer-valid resentment on the part of blacks to historic wrongs. But in stark contrast to the sensibilities of a white supremacist, he saw the mixing of the races as a desirable if not inevitable process of history.

While I *did* experience instances of unvarnished bigoted statements regarding blacks as well as Latinos and Muslims, in most cases, I observed Tea Party participants attempting to understand racial difference in the contemporary United States using the frames and narratives of modern conservatism. James was applying the foundational conservative discourse of individualism.¹ He articulated an underlying assumption that the troubled race and ethnic relations in America are more the result of group-based, identity politics, which subverts the individualism that is commonly associated with an American cultural identity. In his thought experiment, by “intermixing” races, Americans become phenotypically the same, and by extension, make clear that it is one’s individual talents and resourcefulness that determine success. He illustrates this perspective further when he shifts to discussing immigration.

The main reason that I think we’re having all these clashes is because people aren’t really connected with the idea of the United States as being a free people-everyone is created equal. I don’t know when this started, but all this stuff about dividing people into smaller groups and getting the groups to try to vie for their own group grievance. That’s the worst thing that happened to this country...We are no longer a melting pot we are a freaking tossed salad and the lettuce is kicking the carrot’s ass or whatever. It’s a nightmare and I don’t see how it’s going to end. Especially since we’re bringing in 1 million new immigrants a year and another million illegally. I see that as a train wreck because the people that are coming in are bringing in their own little ethnic differences with them. We are not melting them into the pot anymore. They’re just becoming another little group.

This outlook signals a shift in discourses that is distinct from the symbols and discourse of racial resentment tapped by the “Southern Strategy” and Willie Horton television advertisements of the sort aired during George H.W. Bush’s presidential campaign. It indexes a contemporary “colorblind” race ideology more attuned to neoliberalism and privatization (Omi and Winant 2015).

My research revealed a dual relationship between Tea Partyists and race that reflects the Tea Partyists’ political identity. On one hand, Tea Partyists were performing a particularly vivid form of white cultural identity that is starkly displayed in their attention to the hegemonic interpretations of American history, patriotism, and individualism. Constituent in the concept of whiteness is the discourse of colorblindness which ignores enduring institutional and interpersonal discrimination in American life

while asserting American nationalism and unity across the supposedly disappearing boundaries of race (*ibid.*). On the other hand, Tea Partyists frame the problems of the black underclass as the tragic result of dependency created by government action such as “Great Society” social programs. Both concepts were meaningful in light of the distrust of government and the attention to individualism and personal achievement that characterize the core frames of Tea Party members’ collective identity. Moreover this outlook provides, for Tea Party participants, an explanation of blacks’ unwillingness to join the TPM. Many believe this dependency, what some termed modern day “plantation dependency,” creates strong loyalty to the Democratic Party and strong social pressure for conservative blacks to hide their true feelings.

My research was conducted within municipal-level, local Tea Party groups, the small groups of Tea Party activists that constitute a key and often overlooked component of the TPM. Tea Party participants, and especially those affiliated with LTPGs, share a cultural or “figured world” (Allen et al. 2007; Bartlett 2007; Holland et al. 1998; Niesz and Krishnamurthy 2014; Urrieta 2007), a horizon of meaning, fashioned by movement participants that include moral, affective, symbolic, and discursive properties.

The concept of figured worlds (Holland et al. 1998) is grounded in several lines of social theory including those of Pierre Bourdieu, George Herbert Mead, and Mikhail Bakhtin. A primary line is drawn from cultural-historical psychologist Lev Vygotsky’s recognition of human’s penchant for conjuring imaginary or play worlds (Vygotsky 1978). We are familiar with children figuring themselves in imaginary worlds of firefighters or parents. Yet, throughout life, many groups of people fashion cultural worlds for different domains of institutional life—for example, academia, video game communities, or commodity trading. Each of these worlds is a “tradition of apprehension” (Urrieta 2007) in which people are recognized and where words and events acquire meanings unique to that world. People “figure” senses of self based upon the persons, ideas, and symbols established in the world.

Any casual observer of the media representations of the TPM is exposed to clues regarding their figured world: libertarian economics, deep mistrust of government and especially President Obama, patriotism, cultural and political fundamentalism, and moral outrage. A unifying theme of the figured world is a deep concern regarding contemporary Americans’ apparent rejection of the foundational moral principles of American cultural identity.

Figured worlds (and Vygotskyan play worlds) are disclosed and mediated through cultural “artifacts” (I will use the term “cultural resources”) that act as symbols by which figured worlds are “evoked, collectively developed, individually learned and made socially and personally powerful” (Holland et al. 1998, p. 61). For example, in the figured world of the Tea Party the United States Constitution takes on meanings much different from Americans and even other conservative Americans. To Tea Partyists, the Constitution is a near-sacred document that must be read and understood in a manner often reserved for religious texts. And like religious texts, the constitution becomes a frame to evaluate the world, people, and political decisions. The figured world is the basis of durable collective identities, providing the interpretive frame in which to rearticulate meaning across a variety of issues, including race.

The figured world produced and circulated by the wider TPM served as important resources that people both learned from and about but also conferred personal meaning upon. I argue elsewhere (Westermeyer 2016) that the importance of the TP figured world is that people found resonances between personal experiences and beliefs and the symbolic and discursive components of the movement. In short, people were able to experience a sense of belonging by finding coherence between their own intimate sense of self and the cultural resources integral to the Tea Party figured world.

In the following paper, I will describe how Tea Partyists assign meaning to race relations in America and how they rationalize blacks’ absence from the TPM through an analysis of the Tea Party figured world and the attendant political identities it constructs. In my research I conducted 60 semi-structured interviews and observed some 75 meetings and events. I monitored internet social networks and other websites, followed conservative talk radio and Fox News, and was a recipient of many of the same organizational emails and Facebook posts as my consultants. Simply, the data allow one to understand how actual Tea Party participants incorporate race by first understanding the cultural schemas, interpretive frames, practices, narratives, and the collective identities produced by a multivocal and, despite popular portrayals of the Tea Party activists as orchestrated by powerful conservative billionaires (Tretjak 2013), decentered movement.

The responses that are centered on race were both elicited by me and spontaneously contributed by my consultants. My standard interview question was “why are there so few black Tea Party members?”

However, at the time of my research the racist label attached to Tea Partyists was widely circulated and their resentment was a significant feature of their collective political identity. So they often volunteered information regarding race relations.

After an explanation of social practice theories of identity and a short critique of existing explanations of racism in the TPM, I will apply theories of whiteness and colorblind racism to the political selfhood of everyday Tea Party members.²

TEA PARTY COMPONENTS AND THE FORMATION OF FIGURED WORLDS

The Tea Party follows the description of social movements from the classic work of Gerlach and Hine (1970)—a segmented, polycentric, and integrated network—in this case, combining everyday citizens as well as elite organizations and broadcast media. I describe (Westermeyer 2016; see also Skocpol and Williamson 2012) the TPM as composed of three independent, yet interlinked components: (1) large, national conservative organizations such as Tea Party Patriots and FreedomWorks, which I referred to earlier as NTPOs; (2) broadcast media, primarily Fox News and nationally syndicated radio talk shows, and (3) the small, autonomous local-level Tea Party groups (LTPGs). Anthropological approaches to social movements, however, have put less emphasis on the structural aspects of social movement studies characterized by resource theories (McCarthy and Zald 1977; McAdam 1982) and political opportunity (Tarrow 1998) theories. As Shapira has written, “In the process of focusing on the organizational dimensions of movements, resource mobilization scholars have mostly abandoned the project of understanding movements through understanding their participants” (Shapira 2013, p. 154). Extending Shapira’s point further, person-centered research deepens understandings of right-wing movements, a vein of knowledge that is fairly untapped by anthropologists yet crucial for understanding the current political period (Gusterson 2017). For example, Berlet and Lyons (2000) maintain that right-wing movements are often portrayed as extremist and “irrational” while overlooking the “rational” decisions and grievances that nurture their growth.

Anthropologists, instead, tend to focus on the construction of meanings and identities (e.g., Allen et al. 2007; Escobar 2008; Alvarez et al. 1998; Price 2009; Satterfield 2002). Social movements may

anchor “unfixed” identities by supplying a logic of articulation, which Escobar (2008) sees as constructing nodal points around which meaning and identities can be fixed. From the perspective of psychological anthropology, social movements construct new cultural schemas, “holistic, mental representations of objects events and relations” (Strauss 2014, p. 17). However, new schemas are assembled with other circulating cultural resources in the production and performance of cultural or “figured worlds” (Holland et al. 1998), horizons of meaning including interpretive frames, key symbols, and emblematic practices against which events, developments, self, and others are interpreted. These worlds are sites where identities, constructed around shared cultural resources, practices, and emotional investments are negotiated, fashioned, performed in social practice, and, often become self-defining (e.g., Holland et al. 2008; Melucci 1995). I argue that the figured world of the Tea Party circulating through different media explains the remarkable cohesion and ideological consistency of the movement.

All three Tea Party components contributed to the meaning-making going on around the events of 2008–2009 and were essential to the movement’s rapid growth. The LTPGs, meanwhile, created the possibility for everyday citizens to produce, materialize, and perform practices and activities understood in terms of the Tea Party’s political vision. In Escobar’s terms, the figured world “fixed” a collective subject and inspired activism.

Shortly after the inauguration of Barack Obama, the three components, organizing separately but connected through social media and broadcast media, coalesced around a consistent set of themes including historical narratives, patriotism, classical liberalism, and moral/political outrage. These themes resonated with and helped to order people’s vague yet powerful senses of precariousness, fear, and frustration which emerged in the context of the Great Recession, the contested stimulus policies proposed, and a new President who had been, throughout the 2008 campaign, demonized and “othered” (Miller 2008) by conservative media. Though the LTPGs are organizationally autonomous, they continually access the discourses circulating from other components of the movement. Participants augment and extend the meanings of Tea Party membership by continually acquiring and repurposing new frames, discourses, symbols, narratives, and practices as audiences of conservative media and as the recipients of information from other organizations and

personalities both over the Internet and through in-person visits to regularly scheduled meetings of the local groups.

The Tea Party figured world can be visualized as three broad interconnected themes: patriotism and the veneration of American history; the emotional registers of indignation and near-sacred purpose; and cultural and political fundamentalism. These themes are centered on a stream of moral resentment which enunciates a deep-seated cultural anxiety. The conditions that alarmed nascent Tea Partyists were not huge bail-outs, “wild” spending, and massive debt per se. These policies were, in their eyes, a grossly intensified contemporary instance of a process that had been going on for decades. The root of the national crisis was an intensifying “culture of dependency” on the part of “undeserving others” at the expense of an eroding core of American values characterized by personal achievement, self-reliance, and the sanctity of private property (Steele 2011; see also Cohen and Arato 1992, p. 24). Some of my consultants referred to these eroded values by using a number of terms including “American exceptionalism” or founding “principles.” Simply put, for many conservative Americans, the Tea Party narratives provided an interpretive frame for their vague feelings of confusion, fear, and anger over seemingly out-of-control government, negligent politicians, and broken-down citizenship. It portrayed a country whose political ideals of a state held in check by firm boundaries specified in the Constitution had been trampled. It figured black and white citizens—largely but not solely as the result of current government policies—as forsaking the ideals of patriotism, morality, and responsibility exemplified by George Washington, Ben Franklin, and other founding fathers.

My wider research with the TPM showed how Tea Partyists make the movement personally meaningful by establishing cognitive connections between aspects of their intimate sense of self such as family history, personal concerns, or religious upbringing, and aspects of the figured world of the Tea Party. Anthropologist Charles Price writes that establishing a connection between the personal and the sociohistorical is the first step in collective identity formation (Price 2007, p. 132; see also Price’s Chapter 9, this volume).

For example, the linkages made between spending, social programs, and betrayal of American cultural identity in the context of personal

experiences is articulated by Trey, a web designer and cofounder of the Hawthorne County Tea Party. As Trey became aware of the Tea Party and its morally based conservative discourse, remembered experiences of his younger years in Kentucky take on new meaning. This quote is also useful for teasing out Tea Party stances on race. Trey, a white man from Kentucky, condemns his own family on the basis of his Tea Party values.

My family members are Kennedy Democrats. And I've seen them sucking on the nipple of government. I've seen what it does to people - not just financially but what it does to people spiritually. No motivation or inspiration. Absolutely - you have to live in a society like that where it is all around you. The people down the street live like you do. The people across the tracks live like you do. Everybody in your little world lives like you do. You see people you know when you go down to sign up for your WIC [Women, Infants and Children-A federal assistance program providing health and nutrition benefits to low income pregnant women and mothers of children under 5 years old] card and everybody's waiting on a check at the beginning of the month...It creates the kind of society ... I just hate everything about it. I really do. That's an economic picture of it. The social aspect of liberalism is..... a lot of it is detached from morality to some standpoint. I think too much liberalism is a detachment from morality. When I talked earlier about things we need to stay tethered to, morality is one of them. I don't believe in perfect people; I'm not one. But I keep reaching for the bar. I probably will never reach it. But don't lower it. I believe liberalism is the lowering of the bar so that everybody can reach it. Liberalism socially promotes things like - I'm a soccer coach and we give out the same medals to the winners as the losers because we cannot promote a competitive environment. But that is why you do sports to begin with; it is to instill competitive nature in children.

Trey illustrates how the spending and debt concerns of Tea Partyists lie on the surface of what are truly felt deep-seated cultural concerns regarding the manner in which they believe government has eroded the moral framework of American greatness. This moral framework is a foundation of the Tea Party figured world and becomes one of the interpretive frames in which to judge situations and people.

Figured worlds and associated identities serve as interpretive frames which rearticulate the meanings associated with the figured world with persons and new political issues that arise (Escobar 2008; Gregory 1998, p. 11). Tea Partyists often find meaning in issues or debates that

seem ancillary to Tea Party grievances by interpreting them through the cultural schema of the Tea Party figured world. The simplest example is restrictions on gun ownership. There was no mention of protecting the right to bear arms in the initial grievances of the TPM. Yet, when I went to meetings of Tea Partyists, the threat to gun rights was a clear and present example of the eroding constitutional protections and the “nanny state.” By the end of my fieldwork, gun ownership became a mark of membership in the TPM with many of the LTPGs I participated having organized classes so members could acquire licenses for concealed firearms. Simply, the same frames and discourses used to explain government fiscal profligacy may also be applied to other issues such as the 2nd amendment and, as will be shown, racial inequality.³

Considered in this manner, a clearer picture emerges of the Tea Partyists’ conceptualization of race in America that reflects the changes in America’s racial landscape since the 1970s. Political Scientist Joseph Lowndes (2012) sees changes in the contemporary conservative movement regarding race in the post-civil rights movement era. His primary argument is that the conservative movement of the 1960s was forged in partial opposition to the civil rights movement. Barry Goldwater in 1964 and Richard Nixon in 1968 and 1972 each attempted to tap into white resentment of the extension of rights to blacks, as did Ronald Reagan with his reference to “states’ rights” in his 1980 post-convention campaign kickoff in Philadelphia, Mississippi. However, Lowndes believes that white populist anger is now directed at the state.⁴ When he was writing, there was no vast, organized black social movement on the scale of the Civil Rights Movement against which conservatives may argue.⁵ Also, the presence in popular culture of popular black athletes, politicians, and other celebrities have also partly drained affective power from such appeals to whites’ resentment of civil rights legislation. Finally, although my data do not fully support this claim, Lowndes believes that welfare reform and the full realization of the prison-industrial complex have removed welfare and crime as animating conservative action.⁶

DESCRIPTIONS OF TEA PARTY RACISM IN THE LITERATURE

Parker and Barreto (2013) and Bughart and Zeskind (2010) are two primary sources that are often used to parse racism in the TPM. I argue that both works have methodological shortcomings.

Burghart and Zeskind (2010), relying upon a survey of websites and media sources, argue that NTPOs such as FreedomWorks, Tea Party Patriots, and Tea Party Express are populated by numerous people with histories of racist leanings.

Burghart and Zeskind's analysis overlooks several important points regarding the TPM. Primarily, the analysis implies that the NTPOs are the predominant and prevailing component of the TPM, which, as I have argued, is an oversimplified description. The TPM is not, as some have described it, a hierarchy with elite groups orchestrating pseudo-grassroots supporters or "Astroturf" (e.g., Dimaggio 2011). Rather, a network of autonomous components. Second, Burghart and Zeskind completely ignore the influence of Americans for Prosperity (AFP), the organization formed and backed by industrialists Charles and David Koch, which, along with FreedomWorks and Tea Party Patriots, is the most engaged and effective NTPO in the Tea Party Movement. Aside from AFP's support for voter identification laws, which many outside the group regard as voter suppression laws, the professionally run organization has been successful in remaining free of racial controversy.

Parker and Barreto (2013) employing quantitative methods, present results from surveys of Tea Party supporters' inclinations toward racism. This work, which argues that the TPM is motivated by animus toward Barack Obama primarily because of his race (Parker and Barreto 2013, p. 34), is often cited as the primary support for racism in the TPM. Among their findings, they show that Tea Partyists, more so than Republicans in general, believe that the problems of black Americans are rooted in personal/moral failings such as individual responsibility and motivation. My research complicates the picture, as I have found that my consultants attributed the roots of the crisis in America to the decline of personal/moral qualities in Americans as a whole, not just black Americans. Along these same lines, Skocpol and Williamson (2012), one of the most accurate and well-respected sources on the Tea Party, point out that Parker's data itself also shows the same findings as mine: Tea Partyists hold a negative view of the personal/moral qualities of *most* Americans, whites included (Skocpol and Williamson 2012, p. 68).⁷ More significantly, the ability to capture a clear picture of the racial sensibilities of Tea Partyists is clouded by the very loose definition of a Tea Party "true believer" which encompasses many I would not consider Tea Party activists and whose support would likely be highly contingent on the political atmosphere at the historical moment of the survey.

Supportive of my critique is Meghan Burke's more recent yet rarely cited research (2015) among Illinois Tea Party leaders. She reaches similar conclusions as mine and Skocpol and Williamson's regarding race, yet goes one step further. She makes a compelling argument that Tea Party racism is really just "American racism ... not fundamentally different from the mainstream, including on the left" (Burke 2015, p. 37). This argument is based on her research regarding racial attitudes (Burke 2012, 2014, 2017) that is strongly informed by Eduardo Bonilla-Silva's work (1997, 2014) on colorblind racism, which I will discuss further below. Bonilla-Silva's earlier work critiques how racism was considered as something a person "has" such as some pathology while ignoring racism's social basis. Rather, he argues, people exist within a racialized social system in which racialized categories and social meanings impact all social institutions. Burke maintains that our education and media systems fail to adequately dispel "structured ignorance" (McVeigh 2004) surrounding, for example, why racial groups experience poverty differently. Considered in this manner, there is no stepping out of this racialized social system and that to suggest that only one population is "breathing the smog or doing so in ways distinct from the rest of us is wishful thinking" (Burke 2015, p. 6).

THE TEA PARTY AS A VERSION OF WHITENESS AND COLORBLIND RACISM

Whiteness

The Tea Party figured world provided a cultural schema for assigning meaning to participants' concerns. Its foundation rested upon the idea that Americans—black and white—had turned their backs on the morality, responsibility, and patriotism of the founders. Their vision of America, to a large degree, relies upon an idealized and white American past and a cultural identity espoused especially by Americans who happen to be white.

The concept of "whiteness" rests on a perspective that states that to understand the perpetuation and legitimization of racial inequality one must explore whites' understanding of themselves instead of a racial other (Hartmann et al. 2009). "The focus is on the identities, ideologies, and norms that are not always understood or even explicitly realized by those who benefit from them, and on the ways that these taken-for-granted assumptions can mystify, legitimate, and ultimately

perpetuate systems of racial inequality” (Hartmann et al. 2009, p. 404). The Tea Party is an especially useful space to investigate the presence of an identity in American political culture that has not been explicitly recognized in hegemonic discourses as a raced identity. Even more importantly the “whiteness” of understandings and practices of the American Right are not generally recognized or remarked upon in American political culture as “belonging” to whites. Frankenberg (1993) discusses three main characteristics of whiteness. First is the taken-for-granted or normative nature of being white, where whites have no acknowledgment of possessing any racial identity. Second, whites are unaware of the privileges that come with this race (e.g., McIntosh 1988) or what Lipsitz calls the “value of whiteness” (Lipsitz 2006, p. 22). Related to both is the third characteristic, “colorblindness,” in which whites are colorblind when it comes to racial inequality. They may see blacks as disadvantaged, but attribute their lack of success to insufficient individual effort and the distinctive characteristics of black culture. Hence, the lack of awareness regarding white privilege is related to an unawareness of structural, institutional, and interpersonal racism.

Colorblind Racism

The concepts of white identity and the invisibility of white privilege rest upon an ideology that is “putatively fair, meritocratic and universal” (Hartmann et al. 2009). Eduardo Bonilla-Silva (2014), adding theoretic weight to Lowndes’ discussion of changes in the racial landscape, argues that a new race ideology has emerged in the United States since the 1970s, which he attributes to the post-Jim Crow historical conditions in the United States. Unlike other forms of racism, whereby whites see themselves as representatives of a superior race or whereby they see blacks as evil or inferior—what Etienne Balibar (1991) terms “auto-referential” and “hetero-referential” racism, respectively—today’s racism is “colorblind racism” which claims that contemporary racial inequality is the outcome of *nonracial* dynamics. “Whereas Jim Crow racism explained blacks’ social standing as the result of their biological and moral inferiority, colorblind racism avoids such arguments of intrinsic inequality. Whites rationalize minorities’ contemporary status as the result of market dynamics, the ‘natural’ desire of minorities to live with people similar to themselves and blacks’ imputed *cultural* limitations” (Bonilla-Silva 2014, p. 2, emphasis added).⁸

Bonilla-Silva describes colorblind racism as characterized by the use of several interpretive frames, including abstract liberalism and cultural racism. As I will show, these frames are useful in explaining Tea Party members' outlook toward race. However, my data point to some specific variation and elaboration of Bonilla-Silva's theory that helps to explain colorblind racism in the context of current conservative populism. I will employ ethnographic examples to illustrate these frames within the context of the Tea Party figured world.

Abstract Liberalism Frame

"Abstract liberalism" ignores structural racism, instead focusing on the ideas of choice and individualism as determinants of success. This perspective relies upon the classical liberalism tradition of equal opportunity, in which success is understood as a function of effort on an equal playing field.

While the abstract liberal perspective is often described in the context of supposedly overly generous public assistance, I witnessed it being deployed in regard to criminal justice. There were many instances when Tea Party groups hosted speakers such as candidates, officeholders, and representatives from NTPOs or local conservative organizations. During one meeting of the Greene County Tea Party, Associate Justice of the North Carolina Supreme Court, Paul Newby, in the midst of his reelection campaign, was the invited guest. During a question-and-answer period, one audience member asked when the state was going to "start executing people again." Though capital punishment had not been exercised in North Carolina since 2006, the North Carolina legislature in 2009 passed the "Racial Justice Act" which prohibited capital punishment in cases where race was determined to be a contributing factor in the conviction and/or imposition of capital punishment.⁹ Justice Newby's response, which elicited applause and verbal affirmations from the audience, illustrates the abstract liberal perspective.

Now the problem is that you have this Racial Justice Act that was passed by not this legislature, but the prior legislature. It was very controversial then. It's as if race were relevant to any of this. I have discussions with people who say that there are too many black people in prison. I don't disagree with that, there are. But they are not there because they are black. They are there because they committed a crime. (Audience loudly agrees)
I have not yet seen a situation where the dead person cared what color the

person was that killed them. I mean, they are dead. That is the fallacy with this whole idea of hate crimes and all this kind of stuff. I mean, it's either a crime or it's not a crime. If you killed somebody, it's wrong. It doesn't matter what about them you didn't like.

Justice Newby articulates the Tea Party and conservative belief in personal responsibility and ignores the basis of the Racial Justice Act, specifically that blacks are disproportionately wrongly convicted and disproportionately sentenced to die. Speaking in a small, rural Tea Party group, Newby's authority and cultural capital draw on the premises of abstract liberalism and powerfully overwhelm any ideas of structural racism that some audience members may hold, instead making a link between colorblind racism and the Tea Party figured world.

My consultants more often articulated abstract liberalism in the context of public assistance. It was articulated by a number of consultants including Paul. Paul is a 46-year-old web consultant and evangelical Christian in a small town at the foot of the Appalachians. Paul traces his political awakening to Ronald Reagan and the Moral Majority and immediately saw the Tea Party's emergence through the moral lens of his Christian conservative beliefs.

We believe that the progressives are hurting people, not helping. Though conservatives may be more tough love, the point is that there is a better life out there. But if I talk about people taking care of themselves, I am termed a racist. It would be hard to find conservatives that wouldn't care about giving people a better life. My vision is that people should be empowered.

Paul's statement illustrates the abstract liberal perspective of individual responsibility though imbued with more spiritual themes of love and transformed lives. However, Paul's quote also shows the resentment and defensiveness regarding how his beliefs are viewed as racist by many opponents of the TPM.

These two forces—colorblindness and resentment—are clearly illustrated with Darrell. Darrell is a white, working-class, 67-year-old former civilian employee of the United States Army who spent his working years in New York before retiring to North Carolina. Darrell was raised in an Eisenhower-era, conservative New Jersey family and enlisted in the Army in the 1960s. He completed active-duty military service in 1963 and spent 15 years as a mechanic. He returned to the Army in the 1980s as a civilian

transportation instructor. In my interview with Darrell, he constantly and easily shifted between different aspects of the Tea Party figured world, describing the anxiety he felt as President Obama took office and the national debt ballooned through “bailouts” and his conviction that many of the nation’s present problems are derived from the rejection of the Constitution. I asked him about his anxiety and fear about government spending in the early weeks of the Obama Administration:

I didn’t know exactly where it [government spending] was going. But it was just to like --to spend your way out of something seemed wrong. To spend all that money. Then to borrow money. He’s spending money and we’re already in a hole, it’s like digging the hole deeper.

When I asked about “American decline,” he connected the spending to the Constitution.

.... And the Constitution ... said the government ...should not dictate what the people do or shouldn’t. The people should be self-sufficient and the government should be off the backs of the people. Basically the federal government should protect our borders and keep us a sovereign country, but not interfere with people’s private lives. Let the states take care of themselves as far as what they want to teach the kids in schools.

Darrell then articulates a linkage between government spending and individual “responsibility.”

The government is giving money to people that don’t need it or deserve it. No responsibility. People are going out and buying drugs and alcohol and big screen TVs. [They are] taking it from people that are working out there--working 40 or 50 hours a week or just barely making it.

This statement does not necessarily articulate racial grievance. In fact, at another point in the interview he applied the corrosive nature of government assistance, like Trey, to his own family. This quote also gets at Darrell’s thinking regarding the connection between patriotism and personal responsibility. I asked Darrell a definition of “patriotism.”

If you are a patriot, you would honor the Constitution and what it stands for. The freedoms and not want to have a dictatorship where people get everything for free. Nothing is free. My granddaughter gets

a little assistance from the state because her husband left. She once said something like, ‘if I do this I will get free transportation.’ I said ‘Liz, it’s not free. Some taxpayer is paying for that. Nothing’s free.’ These people get this idea that it’s free. It’s not free!

However, my interview with him did disclose a conflicted view of race relations reinforced by his personal experiences. He had close working relationships with blacks and whites, yet he was troubled by what he saw as self-segregation of blacks after decades of struggling for desegregation.

When we had picnics (held by his employer), the blacks would all go and sit at their own table. Weird. All day long you work with these people, but when they got in the group, they would all sit at their own table. They didn’t have to do that... Anyway, they perpetuate this racism themselves they didn’t have to sit by themselves. I don’t know, it’s weird. They want integration, integration. Okay, you’re integrated. But then when you go have a party you go and sit at your own table. Now what are you doing that for? We work with you all day long and you say that you’re my buddy. But when there’s a group of you, you also get your own table.

Darrell is noticeably frustrated by that memory. He had spent decades working side by side with black coworkers and did not understand the self-segregation. At the same time he proudly sees that the TPM was a movement for all Americans *qua* individuals—blacks included. Yet as indicated later, the obstacle to blacks joining the TPM was their own social identity (see also Tatum 1997).

Yet, while puzzled by the self-segregation, Darrell nonetheless is articulating the common stereotype circulating in conservative media of a black underclass of questionable responsibility, built on dependency and government largess. Throughout my interview with Darrell, he often articulated the theme of work and its inherent honor and righteousness. He sees himself as an example of his values on work, lifting himself into the middle class. For 15 years after leaving the Army, he worked as a mechanic at Lakehurst Naval Air Station and Fort Dix.

I think that was in the 80s. When computers first came out, I didn’t know nothing about computers and I certainly couldn’t type. A light bulb went off in my head that said if I ever wanted to get out of this crappy mechanic trade, these computers are it. So I bought one and I bought a typing program and taught myself how to type. Several years later a position came

up for an instructor and one of the requirements was that you had to type your own lesson plans on a computer. 'Ah! I can do that.' So I got the job as a maintenance assistant on an instruction team and we traveled all around New Jersey, Pennsylvania and New York to Camp Drum.... So that was good. I did that for 28 years until I retired.

I ask a standard question in my interviews regarding the keys to success. Darrell replied "Having ambitions and not being lazy...self-reliant and proud to make your own way."

Yet his next sentence injects a racially charged counterpoint to pride and ambition. "In the inner-city, they have lost the concept of pride to make your own way. 'Why should I work when I can sit here and get public assistance?'...They have been born into it." Notice in this quote, the use of the term "lost" instead of saying "never had," implying a change that has occurred, instead of laziness being inherent. Some process has changed the *culture* of the inner city poor. And to Darrell, it is government.

Cultural Racism Frame

Tea Partyists' racial perspective is not simply that institutional and structural racism do not exist, but that continued racial inequality is partially due to unfortunate, inherent qualities of black culture. Bonilla-Silva introduces the frame of "cultural racism," which uses culturally based arguments to make broad essentialist characterizations of blacks and other minorities (see also Ryan 1976). Bonilla-Silva describes this as "blaming the victim" and is related to the "culture of poverty" theory, which he traces back to the work of anthropologist Oscar Lewis (1960). The contemporary legacy of the "culture of poverty" is that "minorities' standing is the product of a lack of effort, loose family organization and inappropriate values" (Bonilla-Silva 2014, p. 88). To this view, conservative populism, such as that of the Tea Party, has added an important variation on Bonilla-Silva's cultural racism: the role of government. To Tea Partyists, these cultural aspects are not assumed to be inherent or primordial but rather the effects of "big-government" progressives. This reflects the continued influence of arguments made decades ago by Charles Murray in *Losing Ground* (Murray 1984) to the effect that government social programs create a culture of entitlement and dependency that does more harm than good. Returning to Darrell, "Blacks are

the same as us but their culture and environment made them dependent. It's the liberals who are racists because they don't think blacks are smart because they just continue to bribe them into voting Democrat." In other words, many blacks would be in solidarity with the TPM in terms of values and success if they hadn't become ensnared in a Faustian bargain with the Democratic Party.

Explicit in this perspective is that the Democrats not only demonize the Republicans, but have succeeded in bribing the poor and specifically blacks into voting Democratic because of generous public assistance benefits. This perspective was articulated in the 2012 presidential campaign when Republican nominee Mitt Romney declared that 47% of Americans don't pay taxes, feel entitled to government largess, and, consequently, will never vote for a Republican presidential candidate. As Darrell, explains,

The way the Democrats do it is they say that if you vote for us we will give you stuff. If you vote for Republicans, they will take your free stuff away. That's basically it. That's why we have ghettos in all the cities. All these people are on welfare and they have all this free money and it's just ingrained in them as they grow up that if you want to keep getting the free stuff, you vote Democrat. If you vote for Republicans, they're gonna take that money away from you. It's a plan. They got the black vote and the minority vote. These people were suckered into this. It is hard to take things away from people once you have given it to them.

This quote comes full circle back to Darrell's initial quotes regarding the decline of personal responsibility and government's role in it. Though it's apparent, such as in his reference to his granddaughter, that this decline in responsibility is not restricted to African Americans, he nonetheless does connect racial stereotypes to anti-statist frames of the Tea Party figured world.

More than just "bribery," however, Tea Partyists see a strong degree of group censorship perpetrated by liberal blacks upon other blacks who support conservative causes. Conservative commentator Ann Coulter put it memorably when defending black Republican presidential candidate Herman Cain. "Our blacks are so much better than their blacks because [they] have fought against probably [their] family, probably [their] neighbors...That's why we have very impressive blacks" (Rayfield 2011). Darrell, also referencing Herman Cain, connects this social context in

which blacks face social censure for expressing conservative views to why the Tea Party has trouble attracting Black members.

Because they will be called Uncle Tom if they side with it [the Tea Party]. I just heard this guy talking about it the other night. The guy that bought the pizza place (Herm Cain, who formerly was CEO of Godfather's Pizza) - brilliant guy. He says he goes to black churches and people whisper to him that they really like what he's saying. He asked them why they are whispering. They said that they don't want other people to know-- people that agree with Obama. I feel sorry for this guy, I feel bad for him and Alan West.¹⁰

Adding to his earlier frustration regarding blacks' apparent unquestioning loyalty to the Democratic Party, race relations become another social issue that makes sense in the context of the Tea Party figured world and which supports the main tenets of his political identity—distrust toward liberals and government. These utterances, which typically exclude any reference to institutional or structural racism (or class-based disadvantages either), portray my Tea Party consultants as blaming the liberal welfare state and the Democratic Party for maintaining a virtual “plantation” that keeps blacks tied to dependency. Progressives are not simply espousing a different ideology in the marketplace of ideas; they are actively destroying the very moral foundation of American cultural identity.

Naturalization of Difference

As mentioned above, many of my consultants saw blacks as purposefully segregating themselves from whites, reinforcing the naturalization of racial difference. Bonilla-Silva references that whites may explain away racial difference as natural and nonracial “because they [blacks] do it too” (Bonilla-Silva 2014, p. 76).

The earlier-mentioned idea of social pressure and symbolic violence of the “Uncle Tom” label have a deeper meaning when considering the strong emphasis on individualism held by Tea Partyists and their loathing of concepts of “collectivism.” The Hamilton County Tea Party organized a reading group to discuss conservative-oriented books. One book was Austrian-school economist, Frederick Hayek's *Road to Serfdom*, which critiques the idea of collectivism, arguing that one's dignity and

worth are destroyed when a sense of self is derived from his membership in a group and not from his individualism.

In conversations with me, Tea Party members often implied that blacks were focusing upon their group membership or their black collective identity instead of individualism. Robert is a 40-year-old cofounder of the Hamilton group who ran a failed campaign for state senate as a Republican. Hamilton County, containing one of North Carolina's largest cities, also contains a very active black middle class and black Democratic Party establishment which Robert called a machine. He cofounded that LTPG as a direct challenge to the Democratic Party establishment centered on the County Board of Commissioners. He hoped that, through careful organizing, his LTPG could help wrest control of the County Commission from the Democrats and install "constitutional conservatives." Part of this was tapping into the county's black conservatives. Robert applied Hayek to the black community in his county.

There are 2000 black registered Republicans in this county. I think that's an amazing number. Who would have thought? ...There is so much social pressure for conformity to the black community. The use of that word, 'community.' In the book club, we read Hayek's, Road to Serfdom. What he is saying is the conformity of a group into a certain ideal. Not a geographic community or a cultural community but a community-. When we think of community, we think of the neighborhood or the town where we live. Liberals use that community to identify an ideology. And there is a lot of pressure for blacks to conform to the black community.

Many Tea Partyists were resigned to the fact that blacks' collective identity prevented blacks who shared Tea Party values from participating in the movement. However, interestingly, the understanding that social pressure prevented blacks from joining the movement was strengthened when black supporters did participate and especially when they stressed their "Americanness" or whiteness instead of their black social identity. One supportive group was the Frederick Douglass Foundation, a black conservative organization that describes itself as "a national Christ-centered education and public policy organization with local chapters across the United States which brings the sanctity of free market and limited government ideas to bear on the hardest problems facing our nation." I was able to observe a speech given by the FDF's

cofounder Timothy Johnson, who, at the time, was also the Vice-Chair of the North Carolina Republican Party. The most interesting aspect of Johnson's address to the Burgoyne Tea Party was the manner in which he attempted to divest himself of one of the primary aspects of contemporary black identity—historic links to Africa.

The other thing that I want to make sure people know is that I am not an African-American. I am from Cleveland, Ohio and I'm an American. (Applause) I've never been to Africa, I didn't lose anything in Africa, and I have no intention of going to Africa. So when you see me and point me out, you can say there's a black guy over there. That's okay. Just don't say there's an African-American because I am not African-American. This is my country. (Applause). I'm a Christian and I'm an American and last I checked, that is a majority in this country.

Johnson's confident approach and the ramrod bodily hexis of a former military officer affirms an idealized American-Christian, disciplined and successful. Johnson also doubles-down on his claims of Americanness. As related to me by one of my consultants, at one presentation by Johnson, he asked a member of the audience when and from where their family had emigrated. After the audience member explained that his family emigrated from Germany during the wave of immigration at the turn of the twentieth century, Johnson responded that his family came over in the 1600s and in addition he had spent several years defending his country in uniform, concluding with a direct and pointed observation that he was more American than many of them.

This presence of highly successful black people who dismiss their blackness justifies interpretations that resonate with the colorblind frame of the Tea Party figured world. They cannot see themselves as racists. On the contrary, they are the ones that see the oppression. The government and liberals have created racial difference and more significantly, moral pathology.

CONCLUSION

During the period of my field research, Tea Party detractors commonly derided the movement as motivated by racism. Yet Joseph Lowndes asks an astute question: How do we “understand a movement that expresses the anti-statist discourse born of the racial logic of the modern right

and which demonizes a black president but which emphatically disavows racial motivations, appropriates icons and narratives of the civil rights movement and successfully backs prominent candidates of color?” (Lowndes 2012, p. 161). This question becomes less puzzling through the engagement made possible by ethnographic research. Interacting with and observing Tea Partyists and the networks in which they participate discloses the identities upon which these conflicting positions make sense in the figured world in which Tea Partyists exist.

The title of Bonilla-Silva’s book on colorblind racism, *Racism without Racists*, is an accurate description of race and the Tea Party Movement. The Tea Partyists I spent time with were not racist in the sense that they were motivated by hatred toward blacks. Instead, many of the cultural resources of the Tea Party figured world are based on pieces of the hegemonic understanding of America that ignores America’s unequal racial society. Yet, it is a movement that implicitly supports policies that perpetuate structural violence upon the poor and people of color; it supports racist policies of libertarian economics stressing limited government and the shredding of specific components of the social safety net. At the same time, most of my consultants truly wanted to share their social movement with people of color.

More specific to our purposes in this volume, this analysis extends anthropology’s study of social movements and politics—which departs from resource and organizational perspectives toward meaning-making—by elaborating on the psychologically informed perspective provided by cognitive anthropology. Nascent Tea Partyists do not simply “join” the TPM and they most certainly are not entrapped by Charles and David Koch. Tea Partyists are engaged in active “identity work” positioning themselves, with the help of others, within the meaning system of the social movement.

The figured world of the Tea Party is the conceptual space where Tea Party participants forge a new sense of their political self from the merging of existing conservative discourses and the TPM unique imaginary of patriotism, history, fundamentalism, and self-righteous anger. The identities provide the schema for the evaluation of problems and solutions—whether it be the decline of American exceptionalism or the enduring American racial divide. Those worlds also, as shown by Darrell and others, reveals the highly personal *and* social process constituent in all social movement mobilization.

NOTES

1. This particular form of individualism is strongly related to the current ideologies surrounding neoliberalism yet also has deeper roots in hegemonic understandings of American cultural identity such as described in Robert Bellah's *Habits of the Heart* (Bellah 2008). While many Tea Partyists will be familiar with neoclassical economics through texts such as *The Road to Serfdom* (Hayek 2007), many Tea Partyists cherish the outlook on individualism that Bellah (and de Tocqueville) feared. However, they take the analysis even deeper into human history. Many, including James, have come to understand individualism in the context of biblically inspired beliefs held by America's founders. Due to Glenn Beck's strong promotion, *The 5000 Year Leap: Twenty-Eight Great Ideas That Are Changing the World* (Skousen 1981) has become a central text of the TPM. The book claims that not only did the founders value neoclassical economics and neoconservative foreign policy, but that those values were gleaned by a close reading of the Bible. The salience of this distinction will be apparent in the discussion of the cultural world of the Tea Party below.
2. I am grateful for the editors pointing out that all of the consultants quoted in this chapter are male. After revisiting my data, it was apparent that while racial stereotypes were articulated by consultants of both genders, the most vivid references to colorblind racism themes were primarily articulated by men. I don't believe, however, that it should be construed from my research that colorblind racism is a particularly male phenomena.
3. I want to stress that people's political subjectivity is often composed of many personal experiences and beliefs that sometimes may seem unorganized or even contradictory (Strauss 1990). However, a large part of the TPM's success lies in its remarkable consistency of outlooks across time and space due to the circulation of the figured world through new media, social media, and broadcast media.
4. While white populist anger is still directed at the state in the era of Donald Trump (e.g. "drain the swamp"), the racialized other is now prominently represented by undocumented immigrant and primarily Muslim refugees.
5. At the time of writing, the racial landscape in America is undergoing another profound shift in relation to among other things, increased scrutiny of police tactics toward people of color, the Black Lives Matter Movement, protests over statues commemorating the Confederacy, and the "law and order" presidency of Donald Trump.
6. Although critiquing the impression that racism is the primary driver of the movement, Lowndes does not dispute that individuals with racist leanings most likely populate different aspects of the TPM. In fact, he writes that he would be more incredulous if a modern, conservative, populist movement emerged without attracting a number of racists.

7. It should also be pointed out that negative attitudes toward blacks' personal/moral qualities are not restricted to conservatives. As recently as 2012, the General Social Survey found 41% of white Democrats felt Blacks "lack the motivation to pull themselves out of poverty" (Silver and McCann 2014).
8. It is important to note that the shift in racial attitudes from the belief in biological inferiority to colorblind racism did not eliminate racialized thinking or belief in racial stereotypes. Bobo and Smith (1998) describe a concept similar to colorblind racism they call "Laissez-faire racism." They argue that the end of Jim Crow and the progressive change in attitudes by whites toward blacks did not "[Bring] an end to negative stereotyping of blacks. Instead the character or extremity of stereotyping has changed" (Bobo and Smith 1998, p. 200).
9. A repeal of the Racial Justice Act was passed by the Republican-controlled North Carolina legislature in 2013 and signed by Gov. McCrory.
10. Alan West is a former Florida congressman and Tea Party favorite.

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Refiguring the Public, Political, and Personal in Current Danish Exclusionary Reasoning

Peter Hervik

INTRODUCTION

The theoretical shift in psychological anthropology that came with the “cultural models” school of thinking grew out of the inadequacies of existing theories of assigning cultural meanings directly to language. Roughly put, earlier traditions reduced the meaning of objects and events to the meaning of the words that label them (Quinn 2011). Cognitive schemas and cultural models, as introduced in the 1980s and early 1990s (D’Andrade 1995; Strauss and Quinn 1997; Quinn 2011), were new ways of thinking about how cultural knowledge was organized. Cultural knowledge, among cognitive anthropologists, at least, came to be regarded as the outcome of “interactional properties” (Lakoff 1987), patterns of accumulated experiences that stuck in memory (Hervik 1999), or the emotionally charged regularities in our understanding that people and groups brought into interaction (Holland and Quinn 1987). Those elements that “stuck” did so because they were repeated, tied to emotional involvement, or to moralizations about what was “right,” “wrong,” or “natural” (Holland 1992; Lutz 1992). Roughly

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overlapping with this development in psychological anthropology, practice theory brought (among other things) a shift from focusing on rules to regularities and schemas, both corporeal and cognitive, and new terms, such as *habitus*, that were close kin of cultural models (Bourdieu 1977, p. 27; Hanks 1990) in that they mostly go unquestioned by their bearers (Quinn and Holland 1987, p. 14). The confluence of cognitive anthropology and social practice theory (e.g., Holland et al. 1998; Holland and Lave 2001) led scholars to emphasize the ongoing formation of the actor in spatially distributed sites of practice interpreted against collectively performed cultural worlds.

In another confluence of practice theory and the study of cultural models, these cognitive anthropologists and many who have come after them have viewed cultural models as often being profoundly political in a manner that shares much with Bourdieu's notion that the field of play is always a space of politics. However, the explosive post-millennial growth and professionalization of political communication, the commercialization of the news media, the mediatization of society, and the ubiquity of the Internet and social media present a challenge to traditional notions of cultural models. The overall aim of this chapter is to (1) refigure the public–private divide in psychological anthropology in light of these structural changes; (2) consider how the post-millennial rise of new media impacts the evolution of public battles about collective meaning; (3) examine how political power can influence cultural models, social memory, and common sense through these public battles; and (4) argue for psychological anthropology's potential to contribute to the study of political subjectivity today. Throughout, I will insist that it is imperative to understand and study the extent to which hegemonic understandings and commonsense reasoning work in the contemporary global media context, particularly since this is where political subjectivity comes into being along with the emergence of a critical sense (Green and Ives 2009).

In a volume on political anthropology, Marc Swartz and collaborators have emphasized one widely noted observation, namely, that a “political process is public rather than private” (Swartz et al. 2002, p. 105) and following from this, that “politics always involves public goals” (ibid.). These goals concern the best management of scarce public resources and the allocation and possession depend upon a group's consenting to a proposed allocation. This implies that the wider sociopolitical field is part of “the political.” However, some fields perceive the political as

primarily being limited to broadly “newsworthy” public state activities and the political culture that supports those activities. In distinction to this state-focused view of the political, “the political” in political anthropology concerns topics such as power, nationalism, resistance, the state, citizenship, forms of exclusion, discursive formations, and controlling mechanisms that not only do not have to be directly tied to state activities, but are also personal and intimate processes that shape the meaning and experience of political being (Spencer 2001). Struggle, then, over the collective meaning and the meaning of signifiers of identities is always a political process (Aronoff and Kubik 2013, p. 24).¹ As Dirks, Eley, and Ortner note: “In effect, politics consists of the effort to domesticate the infinitude of identity. It is the attempt to hegemonize identity, to order it into a strong programmatic statement” (Aronoff and Kubik 2013, p. 24).

To illustrate this approach to understanding politics and political subjectivity formation, we begin by describing Ann—a passionate Danish critic of Islam for the last 15 years. Her story, and the other stories used here, comes from a pool of 18 interviews and 35 major and minor critical media events addressed online, which dealt with issues relating to the presence of refugees, migrants, or Danes with ethnic minority backgrounds.² She told us:

I have been ... well, I do not think it is too much to say: desperate. In despair of what I see is happening to my country. I love Denmark, and right now my country is being undermined by an inward migration of people that for the most part do not fit in our culture. It is that simple (Ann, adult education teacher, 64)

Ann’s political subjectivity has been shaped by a number of active behaviors that she used to cultivate her particular way of being in the world: she had read the Koran, as well as reading prominent critics of Islam; she remains updated on migration statistics; she maintains a web site; she runs a regular copy-paste news entry and link distribution service to like-minded Islam critics; she contributed to the formation of a new political party; she attends countless meetings; she writes articles, op-eds, commentaries, and letters-to-the-editor for newspapers; and she maintains an active presence on social media, through web commentaries, blog entries, and Facebook comments as well as posting, reposting, liking, and using emoticons.

All of these efforts have shaped her particular views of not only herself, but, others, who she feels have not put the “effort” into doing the hard work necessary to understand the threat that she perceives. She explains, a “self-education” is necessary for what she does.

They [most journalists] do not know what they are up against. They have no idea of the destruction that is taking place in Europe at the moment. Because you only know that if you inform yourself in alternative ways.

We interviewed Ann recently but have followed her public interventions for almost 15 years (Hervik 1999, 2002, 2011). Her political awakening and her presence in public political activities are spread over the media landscape and tap into streams and streaming of news, propaganda, and messages. Through this media landscape, she makes her voice and beliefs known wherever she can, both as an ongoing engagement through her own writing and copy-pasting what fits into her scheme of things. She is a new kind of political activist working within a public space that is not what it used to be.

Ann’s case is interesting because it illustrates one of the key aspects of our argument—that personal meaning and public practices in the context of post-millennial new media intersect in critical ways to both create and recreate political subjectivities through the working of scalar processes whereby single instances of Islamic threats become, like a fractal, structural representations of global threats to the Danish nation. For the present purpose, we are interested in the energy and a certain scalarity of Ann’s arguments, which leads her to apply her anti-Islamic ideas in increasingly new, expansive, and generalizable domains. As we will show, the fractal scalarity of her beliefs is a critical part of her political subjectivity, and is central to the political subjectivities of most neonationalist Danes. Specifically, as we will see below, for Ann, it is the headscarf worn by Muslim women that acts as a spearhead of Islamism.

“Fractal scalarity” refers to the replication of categories across scales and spaces. This term encompasses Irvine and Gal’s specific construct of “fractal recursivity” (Irvine and Gal 2000), which is applied to the category of domestic collaborators below. We approach the scalarity in the thinking and behavior of people like Ann by examining what we refer to as “Danish exclusionary reasoning”—a political narrative that has emerged in the last several decades that stresses the gaps in Danish society between those who fit and those who do not fit, local versus national,

dominant, and opposing views. The relationships we examine in our explorative endeavor, operate in a generative and nonconsciously reflective manner. In this way, our approach is partly inspired by Gramsci's analysis of modes of thought and common sense. The latter, he argues, must be identified, analyzed, and critiqued as an elementary phase in the struggle for hegemony. The nonreflective qualities of Danish exclusionary reasoning show a lack of full awareness of the power at work in political subjectivity formation, for this is where we find *hegemonic* representations, those representations of the world that "are so habituated, so deeply inscribed in everyday routine, that they may no longer be seen as forms of control – or seen at all" (Strauss and Quinn 1997, p. 39).

Exclusionary reasoning replicates across scales and spaces and its complex and folded shape softens binaries. It is the scalarity and the move *away* from simple binary oppositions that makes the cultural logic of exclusionary reasoning *fractal* in its structural reproduction of perceived threats, slights, and insults to Denmark. The fractal qualities of this cultural logic of exclusionary reasoning are also useful for characterizing and conceptualizing the relationship between public and personal. We will show that racialized reasoning regarding Muslims in Denmark instantiates the cultural logic found in circulating images, soundbites, visual signs, metaphors, and narratives created in political communication, news media, and everyday conversations. Thus, within a mediatised society, the supposedly private thinking and feeling of the citizens is replete with public circulating conceits. The fractal qualities of the cultural logic of exclusionary reasoning, then, appear in the consumers' own rhetoric and perceptions of foreigners, migrants, refugees, and immigrants' descendants as these are expressed in interviews and semipublic fora at the same time that they become the active tools through which citizens cultivate and express their political subjectivities.

In sum, we explore in this chapter the introduction of the cultural logic of exclusionary reasoning to understand the fractal scaling of arguments, from—as we shall see—the personal level to the global level. We use the logic of Danish exclusionary reasoning to help refigure the relationship between the public, private, and political. We organize the chapter in a set of argumentative steps. In a first short section, "The Public Space Is Not What It Used to Be," we portray some of the structural changes in society that challenge the role and nature of the concept of public space as the space for democratic dialogue and information. Specifically, we find a new type of political activist, which Ann, whom we

introduced earlier, is but one example. In the next section, we draw on 20 years of ongoing research in discourses and reasoning about inclusion and exclusion in Denmark, to argue that one specific Danish exclusionary narrative, which we call “the nation in danger,” can be regarded as one key feature around which most debate and reasoning revolves. In the next two sections, we introduce two media events from our larger research pool to discuss contradictions within the exclusionary reasoning. Finally, we will draw up what we see are the implications for doing psychological anthropology within these new practices and understandings of social media.

THE PUBLIC SPACE IS NOT WHAT IT USED TO BE

For Jürgen Habermas, a public sphere is “a sphere which mediates between society and state, in which the public organizes itself as the bearer of public opinion” (Eley in Aronoff and Kubik 2013). In Habermas’ interpretation of the political philosophy of the day, participants were expected to bracket individual interests and social status in order to understand themselves as acting for the collective good (Cody 2011, p. 39). Habermas wrote 25 years ago that dialogues in a coffee-house or salon were the shaping media in the early bourgeois public sphere, through which the mutual exercise of reason could lead to decisions about the “proper” distribution of collective resources. Later, this face-to-face dialogue was transformed and transcended by “newspapers and periodicals, radio and television” as the public sphere where the general public discussed “objects connected with the practice of the state” (Habermas 1991, p. 398). The public sphere “has since degenerated in industrialized mass-welfare democracies through processes of commoditization, monopolization, and competition among private interests over state-directed resource allocation” (Cody 2011, p. 39). In the early days of the emergence of nations, the sense of belonging to a mass political subject was mediated, says Anderson, through print capitalism that “allowed for a new sense of contemporaneity to arise as the condition of horizontal solidarities among fellow members of a nation” (ibid., p. 39). Today’s equivalent media is quite different than in the periods Anderson describes. Social media provides an illusion of simultaneity and connectedness that offers a sense of being part of public spheres and in direct communication with publicly known actors. Moreover, the direct and largely unfiltered process of publishing forces us to refigure relationships

between public and private worlds. One of our interviewees, Michael, exchanges with high-profile commentators and politicians, surfs news sites, responds swiftly on Facebook and web-news commentary sessions and much more, while he reveals an elaborate, complex analysis of Danish politics and its leading voices. He explained how he wrote longer pieces and letters-to-the-editor to newspapers 20 years ago. They had to be well structured and logical in order to be accepted and included. Today, he noted, you just need to “click” to publish your opinion. However, the ease with which one can express oneself also comes with the risk of having one’s signal lost in the noise. Michael, recognizing this risk, described how the new “hard work” of political communication involves understanding the way that the Internet functions and the ways in which one can create the illusion of a bigger audience: “You can have 30 different names, and sit there debating with yourself, or make it look like there is a whole popular movement.” In the process, then, he has learned that it is most effective when commentator, “Otto is a Rhinoceros,” writes a web comment, to ensure that it will be followed by his friend, “Guy in Red Underwear.” In this manner, Michael seeks to reproduce the coffeehouse-like conversational dialogues described by Habermas—those dialogues that shaped public understandings of the political—without actually engaging with the public.

Michael’s practices are not unique to individuals, but, have become part of the mainstream in political communication. The political communication industry has undergone what some have called a paradigm shift of its own from a belief that “informing the public” of facts will itself alter the perception of consumers, to “audience based” approaches (Curran et al. 2012). In these audience-based approaches, messages are designed on the basis of knowledge about the audience acquired through research using focus groups, national surveys, test frames, ethnographic methods, and scientific knowledge. As such, there is now a general recognition in public engagement approaches that communication is not simply a communication of facts but, rather, a calibration of meaning with an eye toward persuasion (Nisbeth 2010) and producing news that taps into and reproduces the bias and preunderstandings of the audience.

The fluorescence of this audience-based approach to political communication has emerged at a critical moment when the Danish political trajectory and its imprint on popular cultural understandings can be seen as part of a larger set of events and processes underway throughout

Europe. With the mainstreaming of the European radical right (Hervik and Berg 2007; Feischmidt and Hervik 2015; Mondon 2013), the cultivation of a politics of fear (Wodak 2015), the securitization of migration (Kaya 2009), the strengthening of authoritarian values and continuing claims to the moral superiority of Western cultural values (Gingrich 2006; Hervik 2011), vehement battles over collective identity and belonging are raging both in the media and in people's navigations of their emergent political subjectivities. The result of this confluence of new media and the rise of the new political trends in Europe is such that almost any media coverage of issues of migrants will be advantageous for parties with a radical right-wing agenda (Ellinas 2014). We concluded in the wake of the Muhammad Cartoon Crisis in 2005 and 2006 that the contemporary public sphere is not treated as a space for dialogue but an area for serious battle, manipulation, and confrontation. Thus, spinning is a weapon on the battlefield, a field where your enemies are known and attacked, and where you need not fear any standards of truth and veracity (Hervik 2008, 2011, 2012b). There is, in other words, little meaningful dialogue where the Habermasian "logic of reason" could lead people to make "informed decisions" about the future of liberal democracy.

THE NATION IN DANGER: DANISH EXCLUSIONARY REASONING

Neonationalism

A nation can be seen as the imagination of a community of people, real or construed, who consider themselves culturally homogeneous (Anderson 1983), while nationalism consists of actions and arguments based on the claim that this community of people should be given certain special rights within the state (Hervik 2011). In the last two decades, the Nordic countries have witnessed a new populist focus on nationalism, democratic values, common history, ancestry, and descent. This new interest is nourished by a division between a nationalist, positively represented "we-group" and an external "them-group." The "them-group" is, perhaps unsurprisingly, frequently depicted in negative terms; what has been more surprising is the negative depiction of what has become seen as "domestic collaborators." These collaborators are individuals or groups, belonging to the we-group, that, in one way or another, are viewed as supporting the them-group at the expense

of “their own.” Simply put, these “domestic collaborators” have, in the increasingly vitriolic nationalist narrative, been deemed traitorous. Applying Irvine and Gal’s (2000) logic of fractal recursivity, groups that belong to the same category at one level (Danish) are subcategorized at another (really Danish/not really Danish) at another. We have characterized these changes in Danish society as reflecting neonationalism, where the prefix “neo” refers to the development, predominantly since 1989, where migrants, refugees, asylum-seekers, and descendants became the target of antagonistic discourses and policies.³ This neonationalism sees the “migrant” as a hyper visible figure of the enemy “Other.”

The kind of nationalist ideology that has emerged in Denmark relies on a polarization of an in-group and an out-group, where the latter are seen as intruders or temporary guests, and, thus, should have fewer rights and more obligations (van Dijk 1998; Hervik 2011). But, as has been pointed out before, this Other is best understood as a product of the nationalist Self, and, therefore, the Other’s other (Balibar 2005), or the social image of Others with their fixed identities, which is rendered between fact and fantasy (Wexler 2004). The us–them division is an ideology of opposition where social inequalities are embedded, but, for the holder of these nationalist ideologies, it is always viewed as a good, positive, and normal perspective in light of the threatening, evil, deviating, and negative Other (Danesi 2009). Nationalism, then, is an exclusionary ideology with a nation-state that has the power and privilege to decide how a stranger becomes a member and how a member can be expelled (Baumann 1999).

My own research on the Danish situation during the past 20 years has traced the changes and emergences of different enemy Others during this period. While the Danish Culture War of values initiated in 2001 and led to the Danish Muhammad Cartoon Crisis (2005/2006)⁴ (Hervik 2014), the modern history can be traced back to the fallout from the fall of European Communism. Thus, cultural Others went from “Bosnian” refugees in the early 1990s, to “Somali” refugees around 1997, to “Muslims” in 2001, and “Muslims”/“Islamists” in the mid-2000s (Hervik 2011). Morally based simplifying and essentializing divisions have resulted in a number of common tropes, including the idea of the “Good Muslims” and “Bad Muslims” that emerged in the early 2000s (Mamdani 2004)—“Good” Muslims are with “us” (and therefore liked and accepted) and “Bad” Muslims are against “us” (disliked, blamed, and sanctioned). However, while the Good/Bad Muslim might

carry the implication that the threat of the alien Other depends on personal behavior, other tropes have been less open to the possibilities of integrating these them-groups into Danish society. One dominant moralizing generator that has emerged in the last decade can be epitomized by the neoconservative, anti-relativist, neocolonial mantra “There can be no moral equivalency” between *our* Western democratic values and *their* non-Western ones. This narrative leads to the categorical belief that there is a fundamental and irreconcilable “incompatibility” between Danish and Muslim cultural values (Hervik 2008, 2011, 2012a). Research done in the early 2000s on the media representation of Muslims in Denmark included focus-group interviews with a total of 47 people, 19 of whom were Muslims. The outcome showed clearly that the Muslims did not recognize themselves in these representations (Hervik 2002). By examining the narrative of “the nation in danger” in our earlier work, we were able to illustrate the asymmetric relationship over the semiotic machinery that shaped the meaning of “us” and “them.”

Nationalism and Narcissism

Nationalism is—among other things—also a kind of narcissism of minor difference that produces inclusion and exclusion. Michael Ignatieff captures this eloquently in his work on Balkan nationalism in the early 1990s.

A nationalist takes the neutral facts about a people – their language, habitat, culture, tradition, and history – and turns these facts into a narrative, whose purpose is to illuminate the self-consciousness of a group, to enable them to think of themselves as a nation with a claim to self-determination. A nationalist, in other words, takes “minor differences”- indifferent in themselves – and transforms them into major differences. So traditions are invented. (Ignatieff 1997, 50)

The theory goes that, in the pathological gaze of narcissism, small differences between self and others reflect an exaggerated sense of self and distancing from an Other, followed by an attempt to eliminate the difference itself (Ignatieff 1997; Appadurai 2006). Thus, “the root of intolerance lies in our tendency to overvalue our own identities; by overvalue, I mean we insist that we have nothing in common, nothing to share. At the heart of this insistence lurks the fantasy of purity, of boundaries that can never be crossed” (Ignatieff 1997, p. 62).

The focus on minor (and disturbing) differences produces what Arjun Appadurai calls “predatory identities” “whose social construction and mobilization require the extinction of other, proximate social categories, defined as threats to the very existence of some group, defined as a we” (Appadurai 2006, p. 51). Two similar arguments in this predatory endeavor include portraying oneself as a threatened majority, and claiming that “we” could become a minority in our own country (ibid., p. 51ff).

Reflective of these views of nationalism is the fear of “stealth Islamization” (*snigende islamisering*), which originated in Islam-critical thinker, Robert Spencer (Bangstad 2016). Again we can return to Ann, whom we introduced above, to exemplify this fear and the reproduction of this “creeping threat” as embodied in a number of “small differences.” She said:

[...] the big concern: the stealth islamization, which many people do not understand. ‘Ah, it doesn’t matter that we serve only halal-butchered meat in the kindergarten.’ ‘Ah, it doesn’t matter that we do not eat pork in the kindergarten.’ ‘ah, it doesn’t matter that we don’t serve pork in the cafeteria at IKEA.’ ‘Ah, it doesn’t matter that we have gender segregated Swim classes, since the women then do get out and the girls will also be like more integrated and get used to swimming.’ ‘Ah, it is great that we have some little-bit sharia-like courts that can solve family problems.’ And I can go on and on and on. Yes, this is deadly.

Any presence, any initiative and apparently innocent, small-scale instance of the Other is characterized as part of a “slippery slope” of Islamization. What Appadurai calls the “the anxiety of incompleteness” and the “fear of small numbers” arises from the majority’s strong adherence to nationalist thinking, where a single “colored” body will remind it of its incompleteness. This broken reflection causes anxiety and anger, which are expressed in blame. “Fear” follows a similar pattern—feeding the defensiveness and the desire for elimination—of “predatory” reactions.

For Ann, the Muslim headscarf is a symbol that evokes such visceral and emotion-inducing unwanted presences. Ann not only said, “I believe that the headscarf is the spearhead of Islamism,” and that “in the very moment women wear the headscarf they mark the presence of Islam. This is the most visible symbol apart from the very-very bearded men,” but, she went on to say,

I do not want to be hospitalized and served by a woman with a headscarf, because I know what the headscarf means. As long as it is not a free choice on a world-wide level that a Muslim woman wears a headscarf or not, that long it will be a symbol of coercion, regardless of what the individual wearer of the headscarf may say.

The idea of the endangered nation is rethought and rearticulated in actors' discourse of the annoying and threatening presence of migrants. The fractal nature of this cultural logic propels actors discussing specific cases and introducing new ones to locate these as part of a greater threat to Denmark, or Europe more generally. In the context of, and as a constitutive element in, this exclusionary reasoning, an imagined dichotomous division between an "us" and "them" is continuously nourished and produced by generalizing and essentializing through fractal scalarity of a different Other who threatens to irrevocably change the nation.

AN AMUSEMENT PARK CONTROVERSY

In the course of the last two decades, debates concerning certain racial signifiers in Denmark have occurred in many different venues across the country. Examples include objections to the racialized black silhouette of an African woman as a coffee brand and poster in high-quality cafes and elsewhere; the equally racialized image of a Caribbean woman on Vanilla Sugar packaging; and the racialized images on "Haribo Skipper Mix" (a bag of candy). These images appear in contemporary Denmark as residuals of historic racism that justified transatlantic slavery, colonialism, and a view of other "races" as people who were morally and intellectually inferior. Recently, the location of critiques of racially charged signifiers traveled from images on food products to amusement parks.

In the summer of 2015, the Danish Amusement Park *Djurs Sommerland*, situated in central rural Jutland, became the center of attention in a discussion on racism and racial signifiers. The political activist Jin Vilsgaard had publicly contacted Djurs' administration through the company's Facebook site asking them to consider the racist aspects of having a theme park named *Africa-land* with rides called the *Hottentot Carousel* and *Cannibal Pots*. Vilsgaard was subsequently supported by different groups of people identifying themselves as racialized minorities, among others the African Empowerment Centre (AEC). The AEC President, Josef W. Nielsen, for example, described Africa-land as

“extremely dated and with racist caricatures of African tribal people and stereotypes” (Politiken 2015).

Djurs, however, decided to do nothing about their popular, 20-year-old rides, and the company received great support from much of the public. Rather than engaging with the activists, they went on to block the activists from their Facebook site. As a response to a petition started by *Everyday Racism Project DK*, urging the park to reconsider the Africa theme, a counter-petition supporting Djurs was started. Support for the latter, by far, outran the first.⁵ Furthermore, Vilsgaard received a storm of outraged, racist, and threatening comments from offended, angry, confrontational Danes: “Go home!” (Hans); “Damn, they are not racist” (Mikkel); “The racism card you draw in a desperate action must taste bad in your mouth” (Søren); and “So what? Let Djurs Sommerland be racist! WE ARE IN DENMARK!!! GET LOST!” (Christian). These are just some of the examples Vilsgaard posted in a closed Facebook group that I am a member of and which she gave permission to quote.⁶

One of the most elaborate and provocative comments was sent anonymously to Vilsgaard’s personal e-mail address, and she shared it with us:

Listen here Miss Dumb: It is, damn it, because of fools like YOU that there IS racism in Denmark at all. Yes, it is because of idiots like YOU that racism emerge at all anywhere on this planet. Now I shall tell you one thing: Denmark is in no way a racist country and neither are the Danes – as a point of departure. BUT when foolish foreigners like YOU are coming and trying to change OUR things in OUR country, in DENMARK – yeah then this is precisely where racism emerge!! Yes, it may be that you have a nice Danish name, but you ARE really not a Dane, everyone can see that. It is damn tragic that you ever had children, for again ... it is because of people like YOU that children grow up and learn what racism is. You are simply too dumb and foolish and if you have such a big problem with what DANISH rides in DANISH amusement parks are called, well why don’t you disappear to another country? You could just eventually to clear out and go home to the country where you come from, OR, maybe you are too dumb for them to want you there? But find yourself another country to be a guest in, for with your retard brain then there is, damn it, nothing we can use you for here in Denmark.

Away you go – FAR away from OUR country!!!!

Dammit, we call our things exactly what suits US!! (emphasis original)

In the above e-mail, much like in other comments, Vilsgaard is rhetorically excluded from being part of the Danish community. She is reframed as a foreigner and asked to return to the country where she originated.

In fact, she, as a person, is turned into an attacker of Danish culture, thus, the exclusionary narrative outlined earlier is in play. The substance of the criticism of the park was never debated.

How can we understand the link between Djurs and Denmark? With Irvine and Gal (2000) we can theorize the line of argument in the reactions as affected by fractal recursivity, in two ways. First, those in favor of the park call for defending any changes—even the small changes that might be seen as a concession to a more respectful and expansive view of what it means to be a Dane—because they might threaten an idealized, “pure” Danish culture. Such comments, as exemplified in the quote, show fears of a general threat against Denmark. In the lengthy e-mail quoted above the original topic around names of certain rides is scaled out to a general “racism in Denmark.” Second, the author takes a strong position of ownership and entitlement when stressing “OUR” country in a manner that excludes the “YOU” and “YOUR” used to characterize Vilsgaard’s position. Vilsgaard is conceptualized as a domestic collaborator, a foreigner pretending to be Danish. It is really the contention over the perceived subterfuge of Vilsgaard’s Danish name that is most illustrative of the exclusionary logic inherent in contemporary Danish neonationalism. When Vilsgaard, who was adopted from Korea as an infant, is reframed as a foreign intruder, this act of semiotic violence functions to both remove her right to critique the amusement park (specifically) or any aspect of Danish society (generally) as well as entitling the e-mail author to target her in vicious personal attacks in the name of safeguarding “our” Danish cultural space.

This analytical scaling of exclusionary (us vs. them) thought illustrated in this case sheds light on the source of emotion and energy associated with the incident. In characterizing any attack on Danish culture that, simultaneously, appears to respect non-Danish culture as representative of a hidden “foreignness,” Vilsgaard becomes another agent of danger to the nation, and, thus, open to exclusionary attacks. The fractal scalarity of these exclusionary cultural logics permits the author to easily move from the discussion of an amusement park and its rides to Vilsgaard’s national membership (e.g., Vilsgaard is told to leave the country instead of staying away from Djurs Sommerland). What is at stake is a cultural logic that operates at different levels excluding certain people from the Danish nation.

A MISSING HANDSHAKE: FROM GENDER DISCRIMINATION TO RADICAL ISLAM

On June 14, 2013, the Danish news media told the story of a teacher who, in his role as a public examiner, did not shake hands with female students. On the basis of his conservative religious conviction, every year Youssef Manawi would send out e-mails to the teacher at the school where he would be involved in the examinations, and let female students know that he would not be shaking hands with them. In this way he wanted to avoid any confusion. What is interesting about the story is not the case of gender discrimination, as ruled by a Danish authority, but the easy and unnoticed way in which this case was transformed into an issue of radical Islam in Denmark.

Two weeks after intense media coverage had evoked encouragement by politicians to file an official complaint to The Danish Board of Equal Treatment, a student, Michala Mosegaard, filed a complaint. The Board deals with all forms of discrimination laws required by the European Union, and it consists of mostly lawyers. On January 22, 2014, the Board ruled that the school's forwarding of the e-mail to the female students (and not male students) constituted an incident of gender discrimination. The schools involved were to pay a fine of 2500 Danish Kr. (appr. 400\$) plus interests to the complainant.

According to the Board, avoiding the handshake was *not* the issue of discrimination. Rather, they argued that, to meet the nondiscrimination rules, either all students should receive a message about not greeting by shaking hands or no one should. Whether the origin of Manawi's reasoning was cultural, idiosyncratic, political, conservative, religious, or misunderstood, was not the issue. Manawi, the examiner, could hold his belief as he wished; but, the moment he formalized them in an e-mail and the e-mail was forwarded by the teachers to the female students, such an act constituted discrimination (Ligebehandlingsnævnet 2014).

Nevertheless, when the story broke in the media in June 2014, headlines focused predominantly on the examiner's wish not to shake hands and the examiner's religion:

Minister for Equality; It is not ok that the examiner does not want to shake hands with women. (Politiken 2013b)

Examiner refuses to shake hands with female students. (dr.dk 2013a)

S [the Social Democrats]: Equality is more important than freedom of religion at the exam. (politiko.dk 2014)

May an examiner refuse to shake hand with female students? (Information 2013b)

Spokesperson for Integration, and later Minister of Integration, Inger Støjberg, followed the now-common fractal scaling of his rhetoric when she used this single, fairly mundane “scandal” to comment on its place in the struggle over perceived threats to Danish national identity and the Danish nation: “This behavior does not belong at all in Denmark. To shake hands is a common gesture, and if you do not share this value, you should not be a public examiner” (dr.dk 2013b). Støjberg is also quoted as saying: “Imagine that we have come to a point in Danish society, where, for example, examiners do not fully accept common norms and values in Denmark. This is alarming” (Information 2013a). Also reproducing the discourse of “the nation in danger,” but from a different perspective, member of Parliament, Rasmus Horn Langhoff characterized Manawi’s “offense” as being more of a threat to liberal democracy because of its “assault” on “equality” rather than its reflection of the values of freedom of religion: “Even if you, according to your religion, do not feel like shaking hands with women, then paying attention to the students is more important” and “The most important thing that we can do is to send a clear and explicit signal that of course you shake hands with your students, regardless if they are men or women” (politiko.dk 2014).

The verdict from the Board for Equal Treatment came seven months after the event (January 2014). The national news agency, Ritzau’s Bureau, wrote a story that was published by several newspapers with the headline: “HF- student receives compensation after examiner refused to shake hands” (Information 2014). The complainant, Michala Mosegaard, who found herself in shock when she first read the message from the examiner, is quoted as saying that: “I do not think something like this should take place in contemporary Denmark” (Berlingske 2014). A member of the Danish parliament demanded a new law: “DPP [Danish People’s Party] demands a new law on handshakes” (dr.dk 2014), in which, according to Martin Henriksen, DPP’s spokesperson for Foreigners and Integration: “All public employees should be obliged to shake hands with the citizens” (ibid.). Henriksen further asserts that “We see that in different areas, Danish culture and norms are under

pressure – we have institutions for children that ban pork, and here we have an institution of education with an examiner who did not shake hands with female students” (ibid.).

A couple of weeks after the incident, a newspaper brought an article headlined “Hi, hug, or a handshake: How should we greet each other?” (Politiken 2013a) followed by a photograph of Adolph Hitler and Neville Chamberlain shaking hands in Munich in 1938. Responding to the Manawi case and the scandal it has produced, the article draws on cultural experts on greeting, emphasizing that, as a form of greeting the handshake came to Denmark only in the middle of the 1800s and continued as the most common form of greeting until the end of the 1960s, when one began to say “hi” or give a hug (ibid.). One article, written by a Muslim expert, was entitled “Muslim: No religious reason for not shaking hands” (Tønnsen 2013).

The many articles that dealt with the examiner’s story illustrate the workings of fractal scaling—the way that a minor incident viewed as dangerous due to its association with Islamic Others, becomes a threat to the nation. In the process, the nature of the concern shifted. The different articles that deal with the examiner’s story reveal a scaling away from the original dilemma concerning the practice of sending e-mail messages to female students only. Støjberg uses the case as an “example” or “case” of something larger and more comprehensive, reflective of trends that are occurring on the national and global level. Likewise “listing” in the news of prior events “in the same category,” “of the same kind,” and implying a “slippery slope” are important rhetorical features used to rationalize the fractal scaling of Danish exclusionary reasoning to counteract these so-called trends (see Peterson 2007 for an analysis of “listing”). Authorities are called upon to sanction the “annoying difference” (Hervik 2011) before it becomes even more dangerous.

While the Manawi case shows all of the signs of the application of fractal scalarity to Danish exclusionary reasoning, a few days into the coverage, the media began to expand the implications of the unshaken hands by framing the incident as linked to broader “nation in danger” narratives. Specifically, the examiner’s story was linked, in a tabloid newspaper blog, to an article entitled “Radical Islam must be fought by several groups. It would do the debate on Islam good, if left-wingers and feminists would dare to object.”⁷ In this blog entry, Brüchmann brings up two current incidents in Denmark for discussion, which he finds are examples of incidents that are so clear and indisputable that even

“left-wingers” and “feminists” should support them. The first incident was the news coming out about a Danish middle court’s verdict concerning a Somali boy convicted of raping a 10-year-old girl. The story was that the court found that the 18-year-old “Somali” should not be expelled from the country after serving his sentence, a ruling that went against the lower court’s ruling.

The second ongoing case discussed in the blog was the story of the examiner. Perhaps unsurprisingly, critical details were excluded from media coverage in both cases. In the first case, the author and commentators leave out information to make their point simpler. Brüchmann edits out that the boy was 16 years old at the time of the rape, therefore, a minor; that the court found he had no relationship to Somalia; that he was caught up in difficult family conditions that most likely resulted in psychological problems that eventually led to the rape rather than any reason connected to Islam, Somali ethnicity, or “foreign” culture. In the examiner’s case, background articles revealed important details also left out of the blog entries. A single article based on a visit with Manawi, revealed that he *does* greet people (eye contact and right hand on his heart); weeks prior to his specific assignment as external examiner he contacts the teacher of the class to be examined by e-mail informing him or her about his practice, thus establishing contact before the examination (Nabil 2013).

The blog author’s entry evoked 159 comments. The entries about the Somali boy convicted of rape and the Muslim teacher who greets female students in an unconventional way were both discussed under the heading of “Radical Islam,” reflecting a scaling practice that goes unacknowledged by commentators. In other words, the blog author and commentators slip automatically into talking about Radical Islam and the Middle East. At this point, the Somali convict, the teacher, and Muslims in Denmark, the Middle East, and Somalia become conflated categories of the same kinds of people representing “the nation in danger.”

The idea of a slippery slope is the point of Henrik D.’s⁸ comment.

Obviously, there is far between a handshake to the Paedophile Somali rapist from Gullestrup, but everything begins with a detail. (Henrik D., 10 June 2013)

He supports his point by way of exaggeration and distortion (calling the Somali boy/rapist a pedophile), and by being careless or indifferent to the fact that the examiner did not ignore female students, but, rather, greeted them in a different way.

Obviously, Rasmus is not writing specifically about the two stories when he declares:

We are in the process of a destruction of the European culture. (Rasmus, 20 June 2013)

Rather, Rasmus is subscribing to a larger narrative, where not shaking hands and a “foreign” rapist not expelled will lead to the catastrophic decline of a continent.

Thomas H. Rasmussen connects the two men in the stories to Nazism, which is a frequent link made by radical right populists, between Islamism and Nazism.

In 1939 there were also some naïve people who did not take a little man with a moustache seriously. (Thomas H. Rasmussen, 20 June 2013)

Perhaps just as important are the allusions to certain people, who are “naïve,” who in Brüchmann’s blog entry, are represented by the Danish “left-wingers” and “feminists.” Here, we return to the accusations of treachery—the “domestic collaborators” mentioned above, for, when one cannot see the “common sense” (in the multiple uses of the term) that would link an unshaken hand to the collapse of a nation, then, by this logic, that part of the Danish population that disagrees with this exclusionary discourse are either naïve (the target of Thomas H. Rasmussen’s critique) or they are true enemies of the Danish people.

In many ways, the debate is readily transformed into rehearsing generalized cultural narratives, i.e., the exclusionary reasoning of “the nation is in danger.” The vehicles for this transformation are slips from the specific incident to generalizations about radical Islam and the Middle East, the slippery slope argument, and strategies of exaggeration and carelessness about facts. In fact, there is hardly any debate. The messages conveyed in the blog exchanges do not come from a meaningful Habermasian dialogue where participants exchange facts and arguments and respond to them. There is no debate in that sense. There is no opponent. A group forms a community of authors who share the same narratives and there are only a couple of opposing voices.

In the post-millennial media environment, it is increasingly difficult, often, for an actor to exit from their community of shared beliefs or to maintain the capacity to genuinely engage with, and be changed by, information and experiences that might contradict the key pillars

that support their political subjectivities. This, at its heart, is the essential challenge that Gramsci posed in the interaction between “common sense” and hegemony. In the cases we have considered above, the actual dilemma is relegated to the historians’ scrutiny of “what actually happened” and soon loses its significance in the gradual forming of social memory. Stories about the dilemma or, more precisely, stories evoked by categories and signs within the texts, such as “Muslim,” “immigrant,” and “foreigner” are simply latched on to the dilemma. They represent what Tannen called “ritualized opposition”: “Each listens to the opponent’s statements not in order to learn but in order to refute; the goal is not to better understand the other’s position but to win the debate” (Tannen 2002, p. 1655).

CONCLUSION

Fractals appear in nature and in the human body. Anywhere you zoom in or out at a fractal structure, the features are self-similar. With social media, politicians, reporters, and commentators have been able to cultivate the politics of fear around the nation in a way that has generated a widely distributed logic of a Danish nation in danger. Psychological and linguistic anthropologists may hypothesize that some human reasoning also works as fractals so that the same structure appears self-similarly at different levels. While, for many Danes, divisions that may, at the outset, look like a firm line which cleanly divides us from them, when we study this divide more closely, zooming in, it appears not to be so clear-cut but rather wrinkled and complex. In this chapter, we explored the “fractal logic” as a way to explain how scaling takes place in Danish reasoning, in news articles, web commentaries, blogs, and Facebook posts about Muslims. We focus on one particular logic, which we called “nation in danger.” We now argue that the fractal logic is a fragmented one. The fractal appears and is used as a commonsense logic that appears as a rational one that gains its strength from scaling up to higher levels where the stakes are higher.

We believe that this cultural logic is a fragmented one, but, also, that it is mobilized, actualized, and given life through logics of fractal scalarity that allow actors to move from small-scale particularity to generalizable patterns that are understood to threaten the whole of the Danish nation. Exclusionary reasoning thought through the mechanisms of fractal scalarity shapes the political subjectivity of people like Ann because it has

become naturalized as a commonsense logic. From the external examiner to stealth Islamism and the destruction of European culture, the fractal reproduction of “the nation in danger” and exclusionary reasoning work to reinforce the political subjectivity of Danish neonationalism.

In Gramsci’s philosophy “common sense,” such as the cultural logic of Danish exclusionary reasoning, cannot be eliminated, but, rather, is “what is at stake in the struggle for hegemony” (Green and Ives 2009, p. 7). Transformation of this common sense requires a critique, which, again, is the first step of theoretical consciousness. Theoretical consciousness involves the development, through a process of critical self-reflection, consistency, and sociohistorical situatedness. For Gramsci, then, the emergence of a theoretical consciousness is more important than “simple” activism which is not troubled by inconsistency or incoherence (Green and Ives 2009). Psychological anthropologists are positioned to identify the erasures and contradictions at the heart of common sense. If, as Linger (2005) has noted, psychological anthropologists rarely view persons as reduced to effects of discourse or an unthinking mélange of virtual identities, we believe that psychological anthropology is well positioned to study troubling political challenges like the ones facing Denmark. If we wish to supersede commonsense modes of thinking or break the nationalist narcissistic reflection in order to provide a spark for change, psychological anthropology needs to analyze the mechanisms of the dominant hegemonic understandings in order to build a new political subjectivity.

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NOTES

1. In anthropology, these struggles over meaning are referred to as “cultural politics” (Alvarez et al. 1998).
2. The research for this article builds, on the one hand, on several studies of large media events during a nearly 20 year period (Hervik 2011) including a team research project from 1996–1999 on the emergent multiculturalism in Denmark (Hervik 1999); a one-and-a-half-year project on Danish news media coverage of religion and religious minorities 2001–2002 (Hervik 2002); and two international projects on the Danish Muhammad Cartoon Crisis (Hervik 2008, 2012a, b). On the other hand, the article draws from a new ongoing team research project on experiences and resistance to racialization in the Nordic countries. One subproject focus is on social media and forms of racialized exclusion. We carried out repeated individual in-depth interviews and focus-group interviews; attended rallies and meetings; and monitored certain radio shows and exchanges on web-news exchanges, Facebook, and blogs. The project is still in progress. Most of the interviewees were found via their active presences on Facebook, blogs, and web-news commentaries.
3. This can be contrasted with an earlier Danish nationalism associated with the original formation of the nation-state that perceived neighboring countries or hegemonic social groups as its “cultural” Other. Earlier, Danish nationalism was predominantly articulated through social images and stories about Sweden and Germany.
4. The Cartoon Crisis refers to the turmoil associated with the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten*’s publication of 12 cartoons on 30 September 2005 that led to violent global reactions and the deaths of more than 150 people in early 2006.
5. The petition to reconsider the names of the rides was signed by more than 1200 people, whereas the counter-petition supporting Djurs “as it is” was signed by more than 16,000 people (AFP/The Local 2015).
6. The comments were sent to her by people using their own names. Following an interview, Vilsgaard gave permission to use them.
7. <http://blogs.bt.dk/peterbruchmann/2013/06/19/radikal-islam-skalbekaempes-fra-flere-sider/> (March 18, 2015). Part of this blog analysis was first published in Hervik (2015).
8. We are using the original names in these public commentator threads. Commentators provide information to the newspaper and decide at that point, whether they will use pseudonyms or own names.

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Feeling Populist: Navigating Political Subjectivity in Post-socialist Romania

Jack R. Friedman

If there was one moment that shattered the liberatory enthusiasm that accompanied the collapse of Communist Party rule in Eastern Europe in 1989, it was the events of June 1990 in Bucharest, Romania.¹ Romania had already been seen as an exception from much of the rest of Eastern and Central Europe with the bloody battles that occurred in late December 1989 as the then-President Nicolae Ceaușescu sought to bring force against protestors in the Transylvanian city of Timișoara, resulting in the people and the army turning against Ceaușescu and his internal secret police force, culminating in Ceaușescu's capture and eventual execution on Christmas Day, 1989. While the bloody ends of state socialism set Romania apart from the relatively peaceful transitions of its neighbors, it was also the violent suppression of student protestors who were camped in University Square in Bucharest in June 1990 that suggested that the promises of Romania joining the world community of liberal democracies might prove to be more illusory—or, at very least, more difficult—than imagined in the heady days after the fall of the Iron Curtain (and before the more somber and complicated collapse of the Soviet Union).

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The literary journal *Granta*'s Summer 1990 issue (Fig. 5.1) showed the bloodied image of a Romanian protestor beaten during the June violence, calling this "the first chilling account of the darker side of Europe's Revolution of 1989," all of which accompanied William McPherson's article, simply entitled "What Went Wrong?" And, at the center of that illiberal reactionary response to those student protestors was one group embodying the weighty history of state repression and antidemocratic tendencies that had marked the state socialist period—the coal miners of Romania's Jiu Valley region.

The stories and interpretations of these miners' strike actions—in Romanian known as *mineriade* (*mineriada*, singular)—have been rehearsed by many. The miners were enticed into Bucharest to break up mass protests against the governing body that had seized power following the execution of Ceaușescu (a party led by the future-elected leader of the Social Democratic Party, Ion Iliescu). Trains and trucks had been secretly provided to bring miners in to act as a seemingly organic, popular counter-revolutionary response to anti-government protestors. The miners, in return for this support, were allegedly promised that their jobs and their relatively privileged position in the working class would be protected from what most expected would be a profoundly painful transition from state ownership of the means of production to the introduction of market economics. The *mineriada* of June 1990 (which was followed by another in 1991 that, effectively, led to the forced resignation of opposition Prime Minister Petre Roman) cowed popular opposition to the state, leading to years of passive acceptance of corruption and ineffective governance. These events, in the dying embers of state socialism, seemed to cement the Romanian public's views of the miners of the Jiu Valley as the shock troops that could be mobilized to prevent "true democracy" and a real movement away from control of the government by a series of former-Communist Party power brokers and Big Men.

By the end of the decade, though, the story was very different.

A cold, sunny day in 1999, I found myself sitting across a small wooden table in a spare room at the Lupeni coal mining complex in Romania's Jiu Valley. The walls of the room, painted grey and stained with decades of tobacco smoke, the floor—a worn, wooden parquet, the blocks of wood loosened from years of heavy treading across them—dusty and speckled with the mud that seemed to be ever-present on the boots of the workers in the mines, seemed to frame Laszlo,² the mining engineer who sat across the table from me. We had been talking for



Fig. 5.1 Photograph Cover of *Granta* 33 (1990)

almost three hours—he was telling me about his life; about the challenges that the miners in the region were facing as the state put into action the first coal mine closures in the region since the end of communism almost a decade prior. We talked about what few possibilities still remained for these workers who were seen by many in Romania as being among those who were most complicit in the antidemocratic and anti-reform orientation that had slowed change after 1989. We talked about how the state, while promising severance payout packages to miners who voluntarily quit their job, was, at that very moment, also renegeing on its promises regarding labor contracts with the miners who were still working.

This conversation with Laszlo, while being a familiar example of interviews that I had conducted and would go on to conduct in the region, also had a peculiarly stressful quality to it. Throughout our chat, there was a palpable tension outside and around the mines and throughout the region. This was February 16, 1999, a date that marked the beginning of the sixth of the Jiu Valley coal miners' *mineriada*. On this February day, the then-leader of the miners' union, Miron Cozma, had been indicted for his role in the *mineriada* that had occurred a month prior—in January 1999—which had seen over 10,000 miners marching on the capital city of Bucharest, involved in violent running battles with state security forces, generally beating the police and *jandarmarie* back, threatening to bring the “fist of the working class” [as Vasi (2004) referred to them] to bear on the terrified urban population just as they had done in June 1990. However, unlike the *mineriada* a month prior, this February 1999 *mineriada* did not seem to unite the miners throughout the Valley. In January 1999, miners had gathered in public squares throughout the small cities that ran the length of the region, coming together to hear union leaders condemn “the government,” “*Bucureșteni*” (people from Bucharest), and the “IMF” for their role in threatening to close the coal mines. The government saw the risks from the miners and quickly moved to isolate the region—shutting down rail traffic to and through the region, stopping buses and monitoring traffic on the highways, preventing newspapers from being delivered to the region. The miners responded with a massive march and a unified front against the state.

On the other hand, a month later, at the moment when I was meeting with Laszlo, most of the Jiu Valley miners were generally ambivalent about whether or not to participate in the February 1999 *mineriada*.

Instead of viewing this strike as defending their interests and resisting a threat to their livelihoods, only about 2500 miners participated in the February strike. The general impression that I received from most people who I talked to in the area was that people in the region saw this February strike as being a political “manipulation” by Miron Cozma as he tried to “save his own neck.” The February *mineriada* wasn’t about the workers or the miners, as they told it, but, rather, was about Cozma’s belief that he could mobilize a cult of personality—could mobilize miners to defend him against the charges that had been leveled against him by the state prosecutors—to intimidate the state into giving up its case against him. Few miners actually bought into the so-called Cozma cult of personality, despite the fact that the national media tended to portray the miners as being unthinking, animalistic followers of various populist leaders, easily manipulated into picking up clubs to strike out at cosmopolitans, reformers, and those who sought to bring Romania out of the communist “dark ages.” Indeed, it was the lack of support for Cozma’s attempt to personally mobilize the miners—against their own best interest, simply in support of his personal goal of staying out of jail—that seemed to be an underlying theme, an unacknowledged and spectral interlocutor, throughout my conversation with Laszlo that day.

* * *

This chapter will not focus on the story of the *mineriade*, but, rather, will consider how understandings of politics and political subjectivity among the people in the Jiu Valley reflects “history in person” (Holland and Lave 2001), as well as the emergence of new political subjectivities that seek to evade history by reaching out to imagined futures and dreams of populist breaks from the historical narratives that have shaped the dialogic of Jiu Valley personhood. I approach this topic by examining how the increasingly marginalized, forgotten, disempowered, and abjected miners attempted to reconstruct their political subjectivities in the political vacuum that existed for them by the *fin de siècle*. Changes in Romania’s political economy and the global context in which Romanian political economics existed impacted the coal miners of the Jiu Valley, combining, by the early 2000s, to lead to a profound decline in the political power of the region. In the years following the final *mineriade* (1999), the political power of the miners was abruptly and dramatically diminished. David Kideckel argues that the

miners have been largely politically pacified. That is, they live without the possibility of resistance and with little likelihood of ever again establishing a critical mass in regional politics. [...] From a central zone of periodic political unrest that punctuated the transformation of global operating rules, the Jiu Valley has become a backwater, going about its business with increasingly few paying attention to its particular needs. (2011, p. 141)

While, from a strictly political economic standpoint, Kideckel's characterization of the changes that have taken place in the Jiu Valley is correct, his story seems to sidestep the question of what form of political subjectivity either remains or has replaced that which was central to the miners' active, occasionally violent, political resistance during the decade from 1989 to 1999. And, it is here, perhaps at the "End of Politics" in the region (as Kideckel characterizes it) where one can find the (re)emergence of a populist political subjectivity.

Specifically, I will show that, as the new millennium approached and "established" political parties increasingly withdrew from and rejected any association or compact with the increasingly downwardly mobile, disorganized, demoralized, and fragmented industrial working class, the Romanian working class increasingly experienced their political subjectivities as a function of populist "chains of equivalence," seeing and feeling even small personal indignities and everyday challenges as being linked to their broader alienation from traditional politics. This sense of alienation, in turn, led increasingly to people in the Jiu Valley being confronted with emergent cultural models and topographies of feeling that reflected the changing face of political subjectivity formation.

One of the challenges that this posed was to understand how (relatively) quickly political subjectivity can be unmoored from the discourses that have historically shaped it, to be cast upon a sea of uncertainties and the rough waters of immediate experience unchained to histories in person. Similar to Westermeyer (see Chapter 3, this volume), I will argue that approaches that emphasize the role of traditional political movements in the shaping of political subjectivities—often based on established organizational and institutional structure, relatively fixed hierarchies and leadership structures, and fairly robust ideological foundations—often fail to capture the unique dynamics that shape political subjectivities arising from populist movements. At the same time, most studies only attend to populist feelings once a populist movement has gained enough coherence that it can challenge traditional political organizations.

What is ironic about this, then, is that, despite the interest in understanding the often surprising rise of populist movements, it is only *after* those movements have started to be “formalized”—and, long after the seeds of these movements have been planted—that most scholars begin to empirically study these movements. What I am considering in this chapter is the *fin de siècle* emergence of a populist subjectivity among the Jiu Valley coal miners that, in the end, never resulted in a populist political movement. Unlike Westermeyer’s American Tea Party members who uncomfortably navigate their own discomfort with some of the racialized aspects of the Tea Party Movement but still remain part of the Tea Party, the people of the Jiu Valley rejected established political parties with explicit irredentist agendas, despite the fact that their populist discourses appealed to them in many other ways. As I will show, unlike Westermeyer’s Tea Partyists, many in the Jiu Valley have chosen to walk away from politics—or to weakly support middling Social Democrats—rather than investing their identities in political parties to which they are ambivalent.

THE TROUBLE WITH POPULISM ...

Most scholars of populism either implicitly or explicitly acknowledge that populism depends on emotions—fanning the flames of emotions, flattering/pandering to emotions, taking advantage of emotions (Panizza 2005, p. 15). Don Kalb (2009), in writing on populism in Poland, has referred to the rise of “populist, neonationalist sensibilities” in response to neoliberalism and competition from globalization, arguing that (cf. Verdery 1995) the nature of the “unruly coalition” that comprises political life in post-socialist Eastern Europe “not only channels and exploits such emotions as anger, fear and distrust, but does so with an unarticulated promise that the ‘ethic of responsibility’ will be turned into a popular ‘ethic of conviction’ rooted in absolute and ultimate ends” (Kalb and Tak 2006, p. 211).

Fieschi and Heywood (2004) provide, perhaps, the strongest statement on the connection between populism and emotions, saying:

populism relies, above all else, on an emotional appeal. It plays on a variety of emotions: anger, outrage, disgust, a sense of betrayal, a sense of loyalty. While the same may be true of other mobilisational devices, populism does so in a manner that is more direct and thus more strident. It appeals to what some Americans would call ‘gut’ politics, and does so unashamedly.

In fact, populism defines itself in part by accepting this emotional, non-intellectual characterisation, which helps it remain on the outside of mainstream politics. (p. 291)

Linking emotions and populism, though, is not without its challenges. For instance, while it is important to understand the relationship between “emotions” and “populism,” there are significant differences between how both of these terms are defined or conceived. For instance, the conflation of many activation terms—“*provoke* emotions,” “*evoke* emotions,” “*appeal to* emotions,” “*play on* emotions,” “*channel* emotions,” “*exploit* emotions,” etc.—can result in very different, and often incompatible, comparisons of the relation between emotions and populism. Different activation terms imply different relations to agency, to psychology, to power, to knowledge, to culture, and to subjectivity. For instance, to say that populism “*appeals to* emotions” might be to suggest that a chain of cultural knowledge, positionality within a political economic assemblage, and neurocognitive connections between perception, knowledge, and information processing has been *activated* due to the conscious (and strategic) communication of stimuli meant to evoke that particular cluster of psycho-emotional-linguistic-cultural responses. From a phenomenological standpoint, populism that “*plays on* emotions” could, in fact, appear the same as one that “*appeals to* emotions;” but, the implicature of these two ways of characterizing the relationship between populism and emotions is dramatically different. In an “*appeal to* emotions,” the populist politician might be understood to believe deeply in a shared worldview with the people to whom the appeal has been presented. On the other hand, what is implied in the term “*play on* emotions” in this context is that the populist politician is, in fact, practicing “cynical politics”—presenting appeals that the politician does not, in fact, personally believe, but that are meant to manipulate the emotions (or, the chain of reasoning and associations that trigger emotions) of the target audience. Alternatively, if one thinks about populism as “*evoking* emotions,” one might imagine a preexisting affective stance that is part of an interlocutor’s subjectivity that, in terms similar to the classic Althusserian (1971) formulation, also functions to create one’s subjectivity through interpellation. In “*evoking* emotions,” then, the politician interpellates the individual through activation of some cluster of psycho-emotional-linguistic-cultural responses, thus shaping political subjectivity into a malleable, populist form.

There is also significant ambiguity regarding what is meant by the term “populism” in the first place (see the discussion of populism in the Introduction of this volume). My approach to studying populism shares much with Canovan’s call to action (1982) that would prioritize a phenomenological approach to the study of populism. Specifically, Canovan argues for this approach because, in her terms, it would “enable us to construct a descriptive typology which clarifies the ways in which the term is used while being spacious enough to do justice to the diversity of the movements and ideas concerned” (Canovan 1982, p. 550). For my interests, this phenomenological approach will help to offset speculations about what emotions populist parties and populist rhetoric are *trying* to mobilize, allowing one to qualify and distinguish the bluster and grandly incendiary rhetoric of some radical populist movements from *how people actually experience emotions in the context of cultural models of political identity*. In essence, the approach to populism (and emotions) that I am advocating here would directly address what I see as the most common, “pernicious postulate” that hobbles studies that attempt to link emotions and politics: the idea that “collective emotions lack analytical autonomy from other socio-economic-political explanations” (Emirbayer and Goldberg 2005). There have been many ways in which emotions have been dismissed in the study of contentious politics, according to Emirbayer and Goldberg, but this pernicious postulate treats emotions as epiphenomenal—that the emotions that are relevant in the study of politics are those that can be directly accounted for as a function of other socioeconomic-political conditions—in other words, one pays attention to anger in populist movements because people are angry because they are marginalized, poor, or feel they are unrepresented.

In my work, I avoid this pernicious postulate by beginning with the meaning of emotions in people’s daily lives—the rich web of cultural meanings and associations that compose the experience of an emotion—only *then* considering the contexts (the who, why, how, and when) that activate these emotions. In this way, I suggest that a useful consideration of the role of emotions in populism—in fact, emotions in politics in general—*must* treat emotions as analytically autonomous (though never disconnected from) the socioeconomic-political explanations that *also* give shape to people’s lived experiences and the broader ethnographic research. It is this approach to populism and emotions that also aligns well with my use of person-centered methods, theories, and analytics. Person-centered research is grounded in methods, like the

psychoanalytic traditions from which it originated, that seek to reshape much of the facework and interactional image-management that often conceals a person's closely held beliefs and knowledge system—beliefs and knowledge systems that are usually only shared (if shared at all) with one's closest social circles. The fact that much of political life and political communication is highly ritualized and formulaic in many societies—including Romania—means that the challenge facing the psychological anthropologist is, often, how to simultaneously account for the public culture of politics (media representations, slogans, the “party line,” etc.) and the personal beliefs, knowledge systems, cultural models, and complex web of psychodynamic processes that shape a person's political subjectivity. When discussing “formal politics” in Romania, the topic immediately influences and guides an interviewee toward a formulaic set of cultural tropes involving political parties, political personalities, and the media controversy of the day. The nature of person-centered interviewing tends to circumvent predictable and formulaic tropes, instead encouraging the interlocutor to talk about those things that are most personally and experientially relevant—one might say, visceral and emotional—about the political. This is critical not only because of the close connection between populism and emotions but also because, as we will see next, populism is closely tied to personal experiences that are often composed of “chains” of small slights and humiliations that, in most cultures, would hardly rise to the level of the political. Person-centered approaches help to unveil those foundational experiences that define populist political subjectivity.

* * *

Laclau's formulation of populism is one that is both profoundly amenable to psychological reinterpretation *and* not explicitly psychological in the least. Laclau, continuing a tradition first explored in his partnership with Chantal Mouffe in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985), eschews any notion of political identity tied to primitive, a priori, or structurally-predetermined clusters of political actors.³ Instead, Laclau argues that political subjectivity emerges from clusters of experiences, some of which are shared by “traditional” partners (people living in a particular neighborhood, members of a specific ethnic minority in a country where that minority is being oppressed, workers who are being exploited at specific industrial plants, etc.), while other experiences might be different than those of one's “traditional” partners. As a way of providing an

overview of his theory of populism, Laclau lays out three “theoretical propositions”:

1) that to think the specificity of populism requires starting the analysis from units smaller than the group (whether at the political or at the ideological level); 2) that populism is an ontological and not an ontic category – i.e., its meaning is not to be found in any political or ideological content entering into the description of the practices of any particular group, but in a particular *mode of articulation* of whatever social, political, or ideological contents; 3) that that articulating form, apart from its contents, produces structuring effects which primarily manifest themselves at the level of the modes of representation. (Laclau 2005, p. 34)

In order to understand political subjectivity, Laclau insists that one must understand not only the “logic of difference” that allows a group of people to come together in a unified block with a shared set of demands against some outside political opposition but also what he terms the “logic of equivalence” that allows individual, discrete experiences to be seen as “equivalent” instances of a larger social, economic, legal, political, or basic human rights challenge. The logic of equivalence allows for a chain of discrete experiences—from everyday experiences of marginalization to extraordinary experiences of violence or oppression, from everyday experiences of spatial segregation to popular cultural representations that are perceived as denigration, from a personal slight by a member of another social group to a misappropriation of cultural values by another social group, from political disenfranchisement to massive unemployment or exploitative employment—to become links in an “equivalential chain” that shapes the demands of the political subject, bringing that subject into line with others to make claims based on an emergent (not autochthonous) sense of shared subjectivity. That, for Laclau, is the essence of populism. Populism is not, as has been claimed by many, some discrete set of descriptors—anti-elite, peasant-focused, socialist-oriented, reactionary, etc.—but, rather, an emergent subject position that depends on the particular and peculiar logic of equivalence (“equivalential chain”) that develops in any particular sociocultural context.

As such, Laclau’s populism rejects the idea that populism is ever *primarily* about ideology. Ideology might emerge as or be mobilized (if preexisting) as a force that gives voice to the demands of a group of

people who share experiences in an equivalential chain; but, ideology cannot function as the origin of populism. In fact, for Laclau, any political movement that is primarily organized, shaped, and motivated by a well-established ideology would not meet his “organic definition” of populism. At the same time, at the risk of repeating myself, if a group of people have shared experiences in an equivalential chain and they, then, label their suffering, cause, etc., as something that would best be represented by an ideological label—“Tea Party Libertarians,” “Occupy Wall Street 99%ers,” “Luddites,” “Progressives,” “Democrats,” “Republicans,” etc.—then, for Laclau, that might meet the criteria of a “populist movement,” with or without the ideological buttressing.

ROMANIAN COAL MINERS OF THE JIU VALLEY

Between 1995 and 2007, as part of 48 months of fieldwork in Romania, I conducted research in the Jiu Valley coal mining region examining experiences of stress, decline, and downward mobility. Two months after I arrived in the Jiu Valley and settled into what, at the time, was the beginning of almost two years of constant fieldwork, the state announced that it would begin the process of shutting down some of the state-owned coal mines in the region. Whether or not this was actually a surprise—or a “shock,” as I have explored elsewhere (Friedman 2007b)—to most miners in the region is a point of debate, but, there is no denying that processes had been put in motion that had made it almost inevitable to many people in the region.

The *mineriade* that had occurred during the first half of the 1990s saw the miners involved in violent political action in support of the then-ruling (social democrat/socialist) political party because they saw those governments as supporting their interests because their platform would limit the transition away from state ownership in the economy and, by extension, limit the impacts of the transition to a market economy on the working class. However, by the late 1990s, the Romanian government’s desire to respond to neoliberal pressures to reduce the role of the state in Romania’s economy resulted in a different call to action for the miners—they no longer saw themselves as striking to “support the state” (cf. Gledhill 2005), but, rather, saw themselves as taking a rearguard action *against* the state and *against* almost every national political party⁴ in the country. The logic for this transformation was captured in the

words of Mircea Ciumara, the then-Minister of Industry and Commerce, who, in 1998, retorted to an angry group of coal miners:

[t]he production did not drop when we laid off 18,000 miners which means that the productivity went up. This means that there were people who earned money without working. As such, the hidden unemployed have become the real unemployed. (*Ziua* 1998, p. 7)

The naked economic rationality that the miners faced in the late 1990s was a direct result of the Romanian state's attempts to secure and renew international loans (especially from the IMF) in order to pursue a transition away from heavily subsidized (and unsustainable) state ownership of industries and to pursue a macroeconomic model that would better align with the state's desire to join the European Union.

The result of the apparent abandonment of the compact between the working class and the state that had been forged during the state socialist period had a dramatic impact on the miners (and other working class people). Most miners felt that this was a profound betrayal not only of the compact that was forged during state socialism but also one that had been buttressed and continued for almost a full decade after the end of socialism. This feeling of betrayal was reflected in changes in their political subjectivities. In turn, this transition in their political subjectivities was reflected in a clear *narrative* transition in interviews that I conducted with miners (and others) throughout the region between 1998 and 2007. During the first year of my research in the region and, in particular, during a period that overlapped with the 1999 *mineriade*, miners tended to describe their political subjectivities in terms of *demands* that focused on the close association between exchange and the intrinsic value of labor. During this early period, narratives were marked by the insistence that, given the arduous and skilled labor involved in mining, the daily dangers and long-term risks associated with working in conditions that regularly saw injuries and deaths and little-acknowledged chronic health conditions (esp. respiratory conditions) (Kideckel 2008) their political demands were based on a logic of economic exchange value—they provided a valuable commodity that helped the nation, so they should be recognized with job security, safer working conditions, and wages/benefits that reflected their labor and the value of the product of their labor. This narrative shared much with discourses from the state socialist era that valorized labor (e.g., Lampland 1995)—particularly, the kind

of blue-collar, heavy industrial, and extractive labor best represented by the miners in the Jiu Valley—and provided a key set of cognitive models in which and through which miners would often negotiate self and the relationship between self and other. In essence, miners insisted that they provided, through their labor, a valuable commodity to Romanian society and, as such, they were entitled to certain political, economic, and social rewards.

Consider the nature of the sense of betrayal and populist tropes in the words of Dan, an older section chief at the Lupeni coal processing plant. Dan had talked about the panoply of problems associated with mine closures, and that he and his wife and three children were in a particularly vulnerable position since he lacked the training and skills necessary to get a job in another industry. These comments were made in reference to the betrayal that he felt in light of the promises of the Romanian government. The government was portrayed as having promised to provide retraining and economic initiatives that would create jobs if the miners would quit the coal industry and take severance pay (the so-called *disponibilizare* program) packages. Dan discusses this sense of betrayal by saying that

[...] if there could have been assurances for tomorrow, for example, for us to do something else, to put aside mining and to go somewhere else ... We could even do other things; so [ultimately] we are, we are in complete agreement [with the government's policies], but we need to **have** [stressed] that alternative, especially [now that] people talk about it and the media makes all sorts of statements about it and the rulers who have the power now to ... But the trust of the population of the majority of the people from the Jiu Valley is completely lost. So we no longer have trust in politics, politics cannot be trusted any longer. Because [no change] has been seen, after '90 [no change] has been seen except that everything has been wiped out, everything was sold, everything went away, they didn't create anything so we could [achieve] a decent life, maybe, like what we see of the West only on television, so ... we just don't know.

The betrayal that Dan expresses in this fragment was palpable throughout the Jiu Valley at the time I conducted this interview because it was only a few weeks after the 1999 *mineriade*, and many people in the region were asking themselves whether anything would come of all of the promises that the government had made to the miners in order to stop the marches on Bucharest. Dan starts and ends this fragment by

talking about “assurances” to a better future—at the start of the interview he frames his narrative from the standpoint of the present, while at the end of the interview fragment he shifts his narrative to a betrayal of the promise that people had felt after the execution of the Ceaușescu—that Romania would now be on a path that would converge with the “decent life” seen in Western television programs. These comments about the future frame the rest of the interview fragment in which he discusses the fact that “we” agree with the direction in which the government promised it would go, only to find that the promises have all been broken, that there are no new jobs or “alternatives,” and that this betrayal by the government has meant that the people in the Jiu Valley can no longer trust the government. Thus, Dan’s discourse illustrates well the interplay between the promise of an imagined future and a profound feeling of betrayal that is pervasive among the people of the Jiu Valley (cf. Muehlebach and Shoshan 2012).

Miners’ feelings of righteous anger resulted in complex negotiations of the self and subjectivity positions (Ewing 1990). Constantin was an older worker at the mine—in his mid-forties—and he held a position as a work team leader. Constantin’s position—as both one of the workers *and* as a superior in the work hierarchy—put him in a position where he had to mediate and directly experience the dangers of having to rationalize the feelings of anger that the workers who worked under him might express. Constantin expressed the problematic nature of the danger of de-entitling workers to their anger by discussing the difficulty he had experienced as a “minor functionary” in the trade union during the 1999 strikes:

Everything that exists, everything that remains is only [used] for getting by, so, it’s to survive, from one day to the next. That is how we live, from one day to the next. We don’t ... now ... now it destroys [you] more psychologically than physically. And that is worse. Before ’89 it destroyed [you] physically! ... there were the stupid laws you had to deal with But [now] we don’t have anything to do. We have to sit and wait, to see what will happen. I don’t know what will happen later. You don’t have an explanation; because, [though] there are some who are prone to ponder on things, to calculate things [(referring to intellectuals and engineers)], but how can you explain this to the people? There are others who will come and ask you “What will happen tomorrow?” What can you say? This is about trade unions or ... I have a small function in the trade union, but ... so, what can you say to them if you’re not sure about **yourself**

[stressed] tomorrow? You explain to people “Be patient, mind your own business”, [but] you can’t, because by the second day [of this] everything breaks down. Up until now we were calm, that is to say after this strike took place. You [JRF] know that there was this strike. We were calm as everything started to go a little better ... Things were getting a bit better. Now we found out that again a strike needs to start because the collective work contract wasn’t signed. The unsigned collective work contract: that means work thrown away on nothing until now. So, we worked for close to 2 weeks for nothing. Because if you don’t have a legal basis, then, you have done the work, except [you’re] paid nothing. And I don’t know what will happen [with all of this] a little later. I think that the people will react, that they will dive in headlong, that they will do something. I tell you [JRF]: the worst thing is hunger. When you are hungry, you don’t know how you will react....

Constantin insists that the workers—he includes himself in this category—are entitled to be extremely angry about the way that their position in society is being eroded by politicians and the nature of the “transition.” He argues that it is the psychological stress of not knowing what will happen in the future and that things have degenerated so far from the certainties of the state socialist period that leaves the people of the Jiu Valley constantly in fear of “hunger.” At the same time, though, Constantin finds himself in an ambiguous position, liminally stuck between the necessity of maintaining an experience-distant, unemotional objectivity in his role as a union representative and the immediacy of the *feelings* of righteous anger that confront him in his personal situatedness. His ambivalence toward the union’s experience-distant utilitarianism is clear in his use of the distancing second person singular in discussing his role in trying to calm the emotional volatility of concerned workers. Constantin does not frame his discussion in his own voice, instead relying on a distancing voice (“You explain to people ‘Be patient, mind your own business,’ [but] you can’t, because by the second day [of this] everything breaks down.”).

Still, Constantin is only capable of maintaining this distancing voice momentarily. Immediately after talking of the futility of having to tell workers to “Be patient, mind your own business,” he transitions into a positionality that more closely situates him within the experience-nearness of righteous anger by framing the most dangerous part of this fragment—the “warning” that comes at the end of the fragment—in terms of his inclusiveness—“we,” the second person plural—with the

rest of the workers. As Constantin shifts his position in his talk to the second person plural—*we* were calm, *we* might have to strike again, *we* were betrayed by the unsigned work contract, etc.—he begins to speak to the force of a cultural model of righteous anger emerging among the Jiu Valley coal miners. He *feels* the threat to established ways of being-in-the-world and responds to this threat because he *feels* entitled to be righteously angry about this threat.

LASZLO'S STORY: LAW, RIGHTS, SUFFERING, AND SUBJECTIVITY

While narratives regarding the current political conditions and the sense that *outsiders* had betrayed and were actively seeking to destroy the people of the Jiu Valley were common, many also recognized that their downward mobility and the erosion of the possibility of imagining a better future for themselves or their children also was changing who *they* were. Laszlo, the mining engineer who I described in the introduction to this chapter, described the changes he had seen in people in the region. Laszlo had been born in 1962, so had come of working age during the last decade of Ceaușescu's rule, when Romanians faced increasingly authoritarian state control and surveillance, increased demands to work harder, and declining standards of living as Ceaușescu increasingly sought to shift capital toward exports in order to pay off international trade debts. The family Laszlo grew up in was, as he described them, "poor," and he was one of the miners who had come to the Jiu Valley during the 1980s chasing the promise of well-remunerated and respected work during the late socialist period. His parents had faced great difficulty ensuring that there was enough food for him and his three sisters, as well as the resources that they needed to ensure that the children would be able to continue at school. Laszlo described his relationship with his parents as being one that faced a great divide between the provincial backwardness of his parents who grew up before the industrialized modernization that accompanied state socialism and those who embraced the new potential of modernity and technology. Driving this generational gap home, Laszlo told me the story of his father's fear of electricity. It was, then, a substantial break from his father's "backwardness" when Laszlo was chosen, in school, to pursue electrical engineering for a career.

Laszlo's (and my) awareness of the *mineriada* occurring the day we conducted our interview demanded a certain discursive deftness on his part that would both acknowledge the extraordinary events while,

simultaneously, managing the meaning of those events. Indeed, Laszlo used a narrative trope I heard regularly in the region to justify a certain righteous lawlessness by arguing that people cannot be left to “die of hunger” or to be without the most basic requirements of life. He volunteered to me a list of “what you need” in life. He included a place to live, food, and clothing, but he explicitly eschewed things like a washing machine or car. He went on to acknowledge that the coal mining industry needed to be “restructured” because, as he said, “I understand that there is no longer a need for coal because there aren’t as many [heavy industrial] firms now.” But, in the next breath, Laszlo shifted his reformist narrative, and identified a fundamental problem with this “rational” approach to the economy, by saying:

But, in the first place, they don’t [understand] what the masses will do. Those in the upper [class] assume that [the lower class] will have self-control, but, it doesn’t work that way if you can’t do things for yourself, when you’re pushed by hunger, then, you go beyond the law that says that you don’t have the right to steal bread. It is not ... it doesn’t need to be too ... you need to have bread, but not *cozonac*,⁵ not pastries, not fancy food, just bread. So, that’s what’s needed. You might need to remove something [unnecessary or luxurious], so you can do something else. If not, then we’ll struggle in an animal world here, struggle for existence, hunting like animals, and ... that’s it! Someone has to do it and I’m convinced that we will succeed, though I don’t know when. [Then, referring to the government’s reneging on its contract agreements with the miners and the *mineriada* occurring at that very moment ...] But, this is revenge! Revenge!, but, that has no place here. No, no, that is childish, kids’ stuff, where two children fight, when they knock each other about, where he gave first, then he gave in return. It doesn’t make sense that that is happening at this point.

Laszlo’s narrative contains much that illustrates his struggle over how he sees himself in light of the events that were occurring at the time: He begins with a nod toward the government’s (and, the “upper class”) lack of understanding of the working class, then quickly moves into a justification for righteous lawlessness (stealing bread); he works to distinguish a fight for survival from a fight for luxury items or a life of leisure; he even acknowledges that there would need to be difficult cuts (“removing something” in order to “do something else”) in order to get things back to being productive in the region. But, it is the lack of a clear agent

provocateur at the end—the lack of a clear statement about *who* is acting based on “revenge,” about *who* is to be blamed for acting “childish” like two kids fighting on a playground—that illustrates Laszlo’s ambivalence about not only the *mineriada* that raged as we talked but also his identification with some of the other miners in the region.

Speaking of the context of the *mineriada* on the day I interviewed him, he described how the legislative betrayal of the state could trigger, in “*some* people” in the region, a reaction that both reflected their rational understanding of justice, but, also, their underlying fearful and bestial nature. He said:

As long as I can work and live off of my work [I will be okay], but, the legislation [that allowed the mines to close and the voiding of labor contracts] has not only imprisoned us in our jobs, but, then, has made it so we are not being recognized by the law. That is the view from the Jiu Valley. Not mine. I’m not even “here” anymore. I mean, I’ve started a little business repairing electronics, making money from repairing things like TVs, so, I think that I can survive this moment. But, the mob does what it wants, while the law doesn’t tolerate the rabble. Provided that the law respects people, then they won’t become animals. They won’t act like an animal, reacting with fear. [If the law respects people] we can get past this. It could work, it could. This is my opinion.

Laszlo’s narrative style has much in common with many other coal miners with whom I talked. Most notably, he performed a double-move during this conversation to, at first, describe himself and how his own identity was closely enmeshed with the legitimate labor claims of the miners; but, then, he goes on to characterize “other” miners as being part of a mob, as acting “like an animal,” and as “reacting with fear” when their rights are not acknowledged by the state. This kind of a double-move of identifying with the downtrodden followed, immediately, by an attempt to distance and distinguish oneself from the problematic aspects of the downtrodden (e.g., a lack of agency, a violent mob mentality, and an inability to provide for one’s family) was a common discursive device I have found in my work (Friedman 2007a, b, 2011).

Laszlo’s attempts to distance himself—to distinguish himself—from “the mob,” signaled his willingness to reimagine himself as part of the “new generation” rather than the “lost” or “sacrificed generation” (terms often used to describe people who were in their late 30s or 40s

when the Romanian Revolution occurred in 1989). He was still relatively young—only 27—when the revolution that overthrew Communism occurred, and he viewed himself as being more willing to remake his personality into an entrepreneur rather than reducing his future possibilities to what he saw as the failing and collapsing heavy industrial working class. By emphasizing his television repair business—often spending long periods of our conversation talking about changes in new technologies and avoiding discussing the strikes and violence that simmered and boiled over in the region—he sought to reimagine himself outside of the industrial working class.

At the same time, though, when he spoke of his two children, he found himself falling back on critiques of a new generation of Romanians who were growing up without the work ethic of those who labored under state socialism and who had easy access to consumer goods—especially, the very communication and entertainment technologies that Laszlo’s business relied on. It was when talking about his children that his general sense of optimism and his narrative of difference and hopefulness—that he was different from others in the Jiu Valley and that he felt like he had greater possibilities for the future—both came out most strongly *and* were most frequently undermined by the humiliating realities of *fin de siècle* Romanian working-class lives. For instance, in one breath he noted that his mining job was like “the work of a dog” because

in order to achieve something, to do something, to see yourself making it through life, with the way that things are, it is impossible to achieve anything material ... but, if my children are able to make a better life than mine, if it is better than mine, then I would be satisfied by that ... to be able to pass something on to them ... enough of that, though! That’s just the way that it is! I have a “natural” obligation to the children, to show the children, it is an obligation, and there is no way of getting around it. The more I realize that only God knows how much I can achieve for them. But, I try as desperately as I can, as much I can, to achieve something, regardless of the obstacles that you place in front of me ...

Laszlo, however, was not so naïve that he didn’t also recognize, in his children’s desire for consumer goods, some of his own desires from his childhood. He said that he had wanted a car more than anything when he was growing up, but, that even his parents who worked their whole lives could not afford to buy a car, especially during the state socialist

period when it was not uncommon for people to be on a waiting list for ten years for a car. But, even as he could sympathize with his children's desires, what haunted him throughout our conversation was the fact that he was incapable of providing for his children, especially as advancement in Romania's increasingly competitive social hierarchy increasingly demanded that his children have a computer, access to private tutoring, fashionable clothing (so that they would not be confused with "the mob"), and other things that were prohibitively expensive.

Much of his life story seemed to focus on hoping for the possibilities of "pulling himself up" through hard work. His early life was one of grinding poverty, but he had succeeded in school, gone to university, become an engineer, and had a, until quite recently, relatively well-remunerated job in the coal mining industry as a "qualified engineer." He said that that was possible because of the peculiar qualities of state socialism that benefited the working class by promising them the possibility of upward mobility.

During the communist period, when I first became an engineer it was, even though I didn't have much, I did not have to accept that I was lower [class], rather, I just needed to keep climbing those stairs. The lower [class] see themselves the way that they are thought of by the upper [class], but, no, for me, that was a problem. So, the student is under the teacher, why would it be otherwise? The student is under the teacher, but everybody knows that maybe tomorrow it might be different than that. [...] maybe tomorrow it will be otherwise, but, at this moment, no. [...] On the other hand, during communism, the lower [class], because things were equal, they were equal, it was possible to criticize the activities of the upper [class], it was possible to have a [different] idea about how things should be, and it was possible to visualize how you could accomplish something. [...] That's the problem for my children at school today, because they need to be *better* than something. I don't know ... they need to be better than others. Otherwise, they don't have a chance to be good at something, otherwise you can't get anywhere and you won't achieve anything ... communism was only bad, of that I can assure you, but, then, when I talk about my profession, my professional achievements, that leaves a bitter taste in my mouth because my little girl would have had the possibilities to do something very different at that time...

Laszlo's political subjectivity is marked by great ambivalence regarding his connection to two worlds—one that gave him the opportunity to pull

himself out of a life of poverty and backwardness, to pull himself out of the “lower class,” and toward “professional achievements,” and a better life than his own parents. At the same time, he did not valorize communism—in his view, it “was only bad, of that I can assure you”—but simply saw in it possibilities for the poorest in society. But, it was clear that Laszlo was also not comfortable with the new, mercenary, competitive nature of post-state socialist Romania where his children had to compete mercilessly, where there would always need to be a “loser” for there to be a winner. Yet, isn’t his own insistence on distinguishing himself from “the mob,” from “the animals,” and from those “children” who are so intent on fighting that they end up “knocking each other about” just another way of forming his own competitive identity—his own understanding of self—that can carve out its own piece of the post-socialist pie?

2000–2007

With the threat of imminent mine closures beginning in 1998, the miners were faced with a new reality—the reality that Romanian society no longer recognized the value of the miners. This forced a profound—and relatively rapid—reevaluation of their position within Romanian society and, by extension, their position within the realpolitik of a Romania that was facing up to a delayed transformation of its economy (Ibrahim and Galt 2002) as it belatedly attempted to align its political economy with global neoliberalism. It was during this latter period that, rather than relying upon what might be called a *socialist era-informed* set of cognitive models underlying political subjectivity, *new reality* cognitive models reflected sociocultural values that no longer valorized labor. Rather, by the early and mid-2000s, their demands shifted to a logic of equivalence that grounded political subjectivities to claims to populist themes of *citizenship* (“the hard-working, little guy being heard” as part of a representative democracy), *patriotism* (“rejecting corruption” and the “threats of outsiders” as part of being Romanian), and *basic shared humanity* (“our suffering” as a call to action based in a populist understanding of the “regular people” being victimized by “elites” or “those politicians in Bucharest”).

This transition from understanding the world through the lens of cognitive models based on a narrative of the “proud, hard-working proletariat, valorized by the nation for its contribution to state socialism and Romania” to the “poor, suffering, victimized unemployed miner who has sacrificed everything for a nation that has forgotten them” had a

powerful impact on political subjectivity. This was particularly the case given how (relatively) quickly the miners of the Jiu Valley went from being secure in their positions in society to being dramatically unmoored and adrift on the rough political economic waters of late-transition Romania and its new-found embracing of global neoliberal goals. Many in the region experienced this dramatic reversal of fortunes as a profound “shock” to their subjectivities (Friedman 2007b). However, as I will stress, this did not just result in a different way of thinking about politics but also has resulted in a different way of *thinking about* the self and a different way of *thinking through* the political implications of personal experiences of degradation, shame, marginalization, downward mobility, and the shock of decline.

The stories and narratives of the miners who I knew reflected concerns about, what I have described elsewhere as the “misrecognition of the self” (Friedman 2007a, pp. 255–258)—the misrecognition of the self as something “bestial” or like an “animal.” This is a powerful narrative trope perpetuated by the media and commonly repeated by the urbane and cosmopolitan in Bucharest against which the miners in the Jiu Valley have fought. Laszlo used his discussion of his own entrepreneurial efforts and, by extension, his own possibilities to move from a proletarian identity to that of a proto-neo-capitalist—as a “New Romanian” unbound to the communist mentality of the past—to distance himself from “the mob.” Even so, his sympathies with those workers who continued to rely on the state for the recognition of their value to society and their continued employment meant that he did not see himself so far removed from that “mob mentality.”

By the mid-2000s, interviews with miners reflected a predictably populist critique of the corruption within politics and the collapse of the compact between *poporul* (the people) and representative democracy. At the same time, many miners continued to attempt to maintain their own sense of dignity—a carved out space to protect some sense of an uncorrupted and hopeful self-image—despite describing a world of experiences shot through with corruption and hopelessness. For instance, in order to shift the narrative implications away from themselves, many would describe an Other who represented the corrupted and lost relationship between state and society:

That is the way it is with a peasant who waits for things to get better ... in a word, even if you can't help him, you can send him a little bit of politics

... but he says that what you really want is to build a hotel [to encourage tourism, rather than relying on mining or other work] ... Well, what the hell is that?!? After that he [the politician] demands that he [the peasant] vote for him! So, that's the job that he does on you! It flies in the face of what he promises!

The iterative process of moving between political corruption that has abandoned them and the cycle of promises-and-betrayed-promises that they have experienced since the late 1990s also reflected their navigation of the self and how they see their own dismissal from the national conversation reflected as part of a chain of equivalence. Illustrative is this interview with Cornel, where he refutes the possibilities of and promises that had been part of the narrative of the “future of the Jiu Valley” that imagined the miners embracing entrepreneurial enterprises—farming the land, starting up small kiosks or shops, investing in or working for a salvational, imaginary tourist industry.

So, all of the bosses who came here, the majority of whom came here to invest, they weren't serious about it. They were coming here to launder money. So, nothing came of it. They didn't leave [create] anything here, except creating a local mafia. No laws exist to create stability, nor is there any will to bring changes to the law. You don't see anyone working for the Constitution, do you? That's the problem ... if it could be how it is in America, two parties, Republican and Democrat, one in power, one in the opposition position, then ... But, if you have 3 or 4 parties who are trying to lead but who aren't meant [qualified] for those jobs, then this creates political instability. ... This area was declared a deprived area [*zonă defavorizată*] where the population had been suffering, so, they implemented a 10-year tax-exempt status for businesses that invested here. Then, people wanted to come, but they had to deal with the tradition of the state bureaucracy blocking them. And, that is bad because they could come to manufacture furniture because there is wood [timber] here, right? So, why don't they come? Why don't they invest money? Actually, they only come to transport the wood out of the area and to other places ...

Cornel, capturing experiences of decline and hopelessness, described a chain of equivalence as a series of seeming non sequiturs that, in fact, described a reality marked by deception, duplicity, and rapacious capitalism—supposed foreign investment concealing money laundering, the rise of a local “mafia,” the experience of the world as increasing lawlessness,

the chaos of Romanian politics, the failure of the development plans for the region, a culture of obstructionist bureaucracy, the broken promise of new manufacturing in the region, and a shockingly familiar and disappointing return to an extractive industry—timber—from which the majority of the population is excluded. Each of these might be seen as discrete problems, concerns, or complaints, but, it is the experience of these as links in a chain of equivalence—of discrete and individual harm that are shared among people in the region and taken, together, as a broader political failing—that has contributed to populist political subjectivities in the Jiu Valley. Despite the fact that, as Kideckel has argued, the miners of the Jiu Valley have lost political power and lost almost any voice in national politics since the beginning of the 2000s, and despite the fact that they have been profoundly victimized and feel a loss of political agency, this is not to say that they lack political subjectivities. In fact, as I have shown here, the experiences of denigration, betrayal, and marginalization have resulted in equivalential chains that have led to profoundly populist feelings and growing support for seeking populist political solutions to their emergent sense of being “the people.”

NOTES

1. This research was supported by the U.S. Fulbright program, IREX, and ACLS. In addition, this chapter benefited from the helpful feedback from the participants of the Culture and Political Subjectivity workshop and the comments of Claudia Strauss, Alex Hinton, and Peter Stromberg.
2. All names and some details of interviewees have been changed to protect subject confidentiality.
3. I focus here on Laclau’s later writings on populism—works that postdate his collaboration with Mouffe—because his earlier works (esp. Laclau 1977) relied on a more essentialist reading of social identity.
4. While it is true, as Vasi (2004) points out, that the hyper-nationalist, irredentist *Partidul România Mare* (PRM), or Greater Romania Party, supported the miners, most miners who I knew were either ambivalent or actively opposed to the PRM. While PRM actively sought buy in from the working class in Romania by espousing the continuation of state-supported industry throughout the country and appeals to older symbolic narratives that bound proletarian identities to Romanian national identity, miners were often less enthusiastic about PRM’s anti-Hungarian and anti-Rroma platforms.
5. A “fancy,” sweet bread served on special holidays and occasions.

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Sensory Politics and War: Affective Anchoring and Vitality in Nigeria and Kuwait

Conerly Casey

Media coverage of the US Wars on Terrorism and in Iraq created affectively charged images, movements and sounds of war, sensoria of violence that amass and circulate. Such sensoria, in predominantly Muslim northern Nigeria and Kuwait, elicited emotional memories of other wars, and moral appraisals of war that collapsed times and spaces of “danger.” Musa and Dahlia, living in Nigeria and Kuwait, respectively, shared common interests in global Islam and piety movements, and with the post-9/11 wars, intensified anxieties about potential harm to themselves and to other Muslims. Sensations of “danger” in war stories and sensoria, differently coded in registers of affect, accumulated in and across their bodies in lives both anchored in political conflict, and tending toward situational escape. As sensory affects overcame their bodies, Musa and Dahlia became hyperaware of sensations in their bodies, and they began to dwell on particular sensations, while critically suppressing

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others. Musa and Dahlia censored themselves, withdrawing from media, and became ill, but these processes also increased self-consciousness, amplifying emotional and ethical representations of “danger” and new forms of political-religious intersubjectivity. Importantly, their lives shed light on the mutual inclusion of micro- and macro-political sensoria and consciousness—in which there is an excess of affect and emotion with tendencies to conform socially or to escape political-religious societal norms. Today, saturating global media are continual reports on the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria, and the recruitment of young Muslims into violent forms of extremism. The lives of Musa and Dahlia, by contrast, enable us to consider how young Muslims living in very different societies may perceive and experience sensoria of danger, in mutuality and intimacy, but also in felt historical contexts of colonization, occupation, and war.

My ethnographic work with Musa and Dahlia spanned periods of several years in Nigeria (1991–2005) and in Kuwait (2006–2009), during which I was able to take note of self-reflexive, substantive states, tied to contexts and situations in which sensory affects evoked strong emotion, and more transient states, less emotionally significant, or grooved into memory, but that nonetheless affected their social relations. Both Musa and Dahlia spoke about dangers associated with traumatic contexts and situations in their lives, transgenerational trauma, and, in relation to media, convergences of past and present memories. Equally significant in their self-narratives were dreams and desires for worldly experiences and knowledge, and the affects of such global knowledge on their health and safety. They situated meaningful personal experiences of help and harm, in relations with family members and friends, but also with media characters and strangers they met on social media—fictive or living people with whom they shared vivid dreams and desires, or encountered strong emotional conflict.

Most troubling to Musa and Dahlia were states of heightened affect that they could not articulate into emotion, and severe states of emotion that they could not contain, which overflowed into conflict with others. It seemed to be *at the moment of conscious perception about indeterminate affects* that emotion came into play as the narration of these affects converged with (or diverged from) more widely shared emotional stances and attributions. Musa and Dahlia described processes that I refer to as “dis/sociating,” marked by gaps in awareness, disorientation, feelings of being outside of reality, and losing a sense of self and others,

as sensory affects, memories, emotions, and perceptions of self, other, and environment began to shift, and states of consciousness changed, to impact intersubjectivities and political-spiritual belonging. My intention is not to explain dis/sociating as “pathology” nor a healthy withdrawal from toxic or dangerous others, common ideas in Western Europe and North America. Instead, I want to trace sensory affects and emotions that come into being as people, dis/sociating, find ontological relations, epistemological meanings, rationales and intentions to act.

For clarity, I am using Brian Massumi’s (2014) concepts of “vital affect” or the manners or qualities of affect such as magnitude, intensity, frequency and force, and “categorical affect” or the content of emotions, their meanings and significance.¹ Massumi does not suggest a bodily detangling of “affect” and “emotion,” form and content, but rather that, conceptually, “affect” is in excess of “emotion,” as consciousness reduces the complexity of multiple indeterminate affects in the narration of them, limiting the fields of our exposure. My research in Nigeria and Kuwait is made legible with these conceptual distinctions, and their relations to self-reflexivity in information/communication feedback loops that extend beyond the body.² But, my research differs from most studies of affect, including Massumi’s, which are rarely grounded in the unique pools of sensory affects, epistemologies, and ontologies that operate in societies outside of Western Europe and North America. My research involves long-term ethnographic research and close studies of archiving “affect” and “emotion” in bodies, societies and media in northern Nigeria and Kuwait, and attention to circulations of media stories, sensoria and perceptions of “danger” that may amplify or suppress emotion and states of consciousness.

The mutual imbrications of macro- and micro-political processes associated with “danger” require careful attention to what Douglas Hollan (2005a) refers to as “self-scapes,” the particularities of individuality and situatedness in the self’s constant evaluation of itself relative to its own body, and to other people and objects in the world. My analysis hinges upon circulations and representations of affect in the media, expressive arts, and social relations of northern Nigeria and Kuwait, of how and why Musa and Dahlia select and attend to particular affectivities and not others, but also of how and why durations and magnitudes, intensities or frequencies of affect produce sensory and emotional overloads, variably internalized or externalized, as ill health or danger. I am interested in the lived immediacy of consciousness, in for instance, feedback loops

of sensory affect, emotion, memory and perception, as they alter individual micro-political activities, and macro-political or trans-individual and trans-situational ones. What forms of convergence in these feedback loops elicited dis/sociations from oneself and others, as Musa and Dahlia navigated religious-political communities and affective state politics during the periods of conflict they encountered?

AFFECTS OF DANGER

My ethnographic research with young Muslims in northern Nigeria and Kuwait combined multiple methods—person-centered, semi-structured and informal interviews, participant-observations, a review of print and Internet media, diaries, popular art, poetry, music and literature—to understand affective sensorial attunements to “danger.” I looked for experiential constellations of sensoria and narrations of danger that found emotional resonance with other forms, such as self-reports of ill health and changing dynamics of self-, self-other, and self-society referencing or activity. Central to this multi-method approach were diary entries, phenomenological narrations, and person-centered interviews in which the autopoietic, recursive processes of feeling, self-awareness, and action unfolded over time, within relationships, and between persons (Csordas 2002, 2003, 2009; Hollan 2005a, b, 2012; Throop 2009, 2012, 2014). Such psychocultural approaches help us to understand how a person may feel and experience living in the world, as the person relates awareness and action in the present with traces of the past and future.

My research with Musa began in the 1990s in years preceding the 2000 implementation of shari’a criminal codes in twelve states of northern Nigeria, and it extended beyond the post-9/11 US Wars on Terrorism and in Iraq, while my work with Dahlia in Kuwait took place after the 2003 US War in Iraq had begun. Musa’s diary entries and phenomenal consciousness of media sensoria in the years of sectarian conflict preceding the US War on Terrorism differs from Dahlia’s affective remembrances of war, offering unique temporal and geopolitical perspectives on the development of self-consciousness and reasoning about war and other potential dangers. From different vantage points, Musa and Dahlia paid close attention to similar media stories about violence against Palestinian Muslims in Israeli occupied territories and against Muslims in Iraq and Afghanistan. These heavily mediated macro-political processes had temporal depth and immediacy for Musa and Dahlia, in

remembrances of British colonialism, US and Israeli occupations, and multinational corporate impacts, in the lucrative petroleum industries of Nigeria, Kuwait, and Iraq. In the post-9/11 period, reformist Muslims revived the past in the present, using new media to mobilize affect and emotion, in narrative reports of past exploitations of Muslims, and violence against Muslims in colonizations, occupations, and war.

Young Muslims in Nigeria and Kuwait also responded affectively to media stories and sensoria associated with past and present insults and forms of humiliation. For instance, in 2001, when then-President George W. Bush infamously quipped, “Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists,” Muslims in Nigeria assumed Bush referred to them as “terrorists,” evoking public anger, hostility, and resentments about US military violence, which resonated with Muslims across the globe (Casey 2008, 2009, 2010, 2014). Bush’s polarizing language in globally broadcasted media reports, alongside violent sensoria such as images of tortured and humiliated Muslims imprisoned at Abu Ghraib, produced trans-individual responses in Nigeria and Kuwait that further affected social sentiments about the nexus of identity, morality, and security. These processes mobilized global anti-colonial and anti-imperial sentiments.³ But, they simultaneously evoked moral appraisals and identity-based antagonisms associated with national and regional conflicts, especially shaped by the 2000 implementation of shari’a criminal codes in northern Nigeria, and divergent remembrances of the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Heavily mediated confluences of identity, morality and security, and the political conflicts that accompanied them were contextual and particular to Nigerians and Kuwaitis, and situational and singular in the lives of Musa and Dahlia, operating across experiential domains.

My essay, thus, points to considerations of the imbrications of micro- and macro-political processes that, as Massumi (2014, 45) suggests, are “not one of scale, but of qualitatively different modes of activity, or contrasting tendencies.” How do media war stories and sensoria affect Musa and Dahlia’s “self-scapes” as they navigate felt dangers, Islamic piety movements, and global knowledge? How do such navigations contribute to sensory overloads that affect health and political-religious subjectivities and intersubjectivities? What attempts do Musa and Dahlia make to regulate or modulate felt danger in mediated or face-to-face exposures to dangers, to improve their own health, and also the spiritual-political communal health of Muslims in the affective politics of state?

SENSORY POLITICS AND RELIGION

Similar to Pentecostal Christian evangelists, Salafi Muslim reformers in Nigeria and Kuwait tend to hold individuals personally responsible for locating “evil” within the self and exorcizing it. Moral aesthetics of danger, and the power of their typifications, were strengthened by the inseparability of what is seen from what is unseen, in human-spirit encounters. While condemning sensoria that signified breaches in the demarcation between the worlds of humans and spirits, Muslim reformers reinforced the power of human-spirit relationships; they employed realist interpretations of Qur’anic scripture as “truth,” to project spiritual-material profiles of unacceptable sensory and emotive forms into popular consciousness.

In Nigeria, Malam Aminu (pseudonym) who self-identified as a member of a Salafi *da’wah* or missionary movement told me:

During the time of the Prophet, there was no computer and nowadays everything is changing. People are going away from the way of life of the Prophet. So that is why we are getting problems. If we are on the right path, we will get whatever we like...Before there were certain areas that were covered by spirits but now due to industries and civilization, human beings are now occupying these places. Now, for example, you look at the B.U.K. (Bayero University, Kano) new site. Before the place wasn’t like that. Now, the place is completely taken over by the human beings, but in the past, it was a place that was occupied by the spirits. If you went there at that time, something would happen to you. So now, some industries are built there and the industries use to pollute the air with some smells that are not desirable for the spirits. So they move to another place. And even if we don’t follow the way of Allah, but we don’t cheat ourselves and we are keeping to our own business, Allah will build a demarcation between us and the spirits. But nowadays, everything is changed. We cheat ourselves. We interact with many problems that don’t concern us. That is why we are destroying the demarcation Allah built between us and the spirits. We disobeyed Allah so much that he took away all the demarcation between us and the *jinn*s.⁴

Qur’anic scholars in Nigeria and Kuwait referenced the scholarship of Ibn Taymiyyah, a medieval Sunni theologian, jurist, and reformer, who wrote about the importance of maintaining bodily boundaries between humans and spirits. Ibn Taymiyyah is regarded as the source of the eighteenth century Wahhabiyyah movement within Islam, which has inspired

fundamentalist, reformist and jihadist movements across the globe. Led by Saudi Arabian Wahhabi clerics, anti-sorcery campaigns in Kuwaiti shopping malls similarly drew upon Ibn Taymiyyah to emphasize a protective bodily boundary, maintained by recitation of the Qur'an and vigilant prayers. Religious media such as cassette tapes of "pure" Qur'anic sura and Internet blog Qur'anic recitations became significant vehicles, in Nigeria and Kuwait, through which to protect oneself from dangerous others—humans, but also spirits, witches, and sorcerers. These mobile, self-directing media forms facilitated choice, and ways to safeguard oneself and one's political-religious community through constant access to Qur'anic recitations and education, but they also increased communal expectations that young Muslims would attend to and select media that was consonant with societal norms for political-spiritual development.

Working with young Muslims in Egypt who listened to cassette sermons, Charles Hirschkind (2001, pp. 13–14) found a well-crafted sermon "to evoke in the listener the affective dispositions that underlie ethical conduct and reasoning, and which through repeated listening, may become sediment in the listener's character." Cassette-sermons, circulating outside of mosques and other prescribed places of ritual practice, created new contexts for public deliberation about ethics and civic virtue that cut across national, generational, and gendered lines of communication. In Nigeria and Kuwait, cassette and CD sermons and Internet-based media had similar effects of breaking down national, generational, and gendered communications, but also had strong effects on perceived spirit-human relations and expressive participation (Casey 2008, 2009). Cassette taped, CD and Internet-based Qur'anic sura became popular forms of self-help, in religious education, expelling spirits or maintaining human/spirit boundaries. Listeners and viewers began to cultivate new perceptual capacities of the body with the use of technologies that allowed mobility, replay, and discontinuous listening and viewing in reforming public and private settings of political-spiritual endeavor.

Since the 1990s, the Internet and new media and communications technologies have significantly shifted what Abdoulaye Sounaye (2014) refers to as the "religion-media complex." The interactions and dynamics of media and religion create audiences and build publics (Hirschkind and Larkin 2008; Hirschkind 2006; Soares 2005); mediation shapes the contours of religion and religiosity and may constitute religion (Ginsburg et al. 2002; Larkin 2008; Hirschkind 2006; Schulz 2012). Critical to these contributions is the idea that media do not just

represent the experience and expression of religion, but they engage religion, and offer diverse platforms for interaction, sociability and new forms of religiosity (Larkin 2004, 2009; Meyer 2009; Hirschkind 2006; Schulz 2012; Sounaye 2014). Hirschkind and Larkin (2008, p. 2) suggest that religions are constituted through an architecture of circulation and representation that, in turn, creates the pragmatic contexts for modes of practice and worship. But, young Muslims also use media to channel and repeat affective sensoria that articulate with and escape the contexts of piety, producing emotions that reconfigure the contours of religion, religiosity, and political ethics. I am suggesting that, in the predominantly Muslim contexts of northern Nigeria and Kuwait, the agentive uses of mobile media—forms that allow choice, immediate play and replay, impact political-religious intersubjectivity differently than Nigerian or Kuwaiti broadcast media, or common satellite broadcasts from, for instance, the British BBC, the American CNN, or the Qatari al-Jazeera. Musa and Dahlia developed political-religious subjectivities as they modulated media sensoria and narratives, amplifying particular sensory affects and emotional representations of them, while suppressing others (Casey 2008, 2009, 2014, 2015).

MUSA AND MEDIATED ISLAM IN NORTHERN NIGERIA

In the mid- to late 1990s, burgeoning media industries coincided with the growing dominance of Salafism in northern Nigerian politics. Led by Sheik Abubakar Gumi, former Grand Kadi (Paramount Islamic Judge), and Mallam Isma'il Idris, former military *imam*, a Muslim sect popularly known as Izala took as its central purpose *tajdid* (reform and rejuvenation).⁵ Members of Izala found inspiration in Sheik Shehu Usman dan Fodio's nineteenth jihad against "infidels," as well as Wahhabism and Salafism, attempting to realize Islamic reforms through a day-to-day struggle against what they perceived as the *bid'ah* (unlawful innovation) of *Bori* and the Sufi brotherhoods (Brigaglia 2012; Ben Amara 2011; Casey 2008, 2009, 2014; Gumi and Ibrahim 1992; Kane 2003; Last 2005; Loimeier 1997, 2012; Sounaye 2012; Umar 2012). Conflicts ensued between Sufis of the Tijaniyya and Qadariyya orders and members of *Izala* over the ritual use of music, dance, perfumes, and amulets, visiting the tombs of Sufi saints, and excessive feasting and celebrations. *Izala* and reformist Sufis claimed that these practices were unlawful forms of *bid'ah* that drew spirits to humans in order to change human destiny (Casey 2008).

During this time, Musa, a medical student at Bayero University in Kano, wrote personal diary entries about internal conflicts that he was experiencing:

I have the Devil's alter-nature in front of me now...I don't think one can reach spiritual alrightness in this world of today... I am going to listen to the music I like, hoping that it will not be a source of my ruin. It seems to be a paradox, but for the meantime, it seems, I can't help it. Yes, I stopped watching TV, reading some novels. But some of these things give one more experience in life. There is no point in stopping these when the inner self yearns for them. Yes, I will watch the TV to a reasonable extent. Because of *zuhudu gudun duniya* (running from unnecessary materialism) by the false self, I became apparently disconnected from my surroundings—externally. I did not realize what was happening around me. I don't care what is happening in the country—who is who, or where is where... I must come back to life. I must unveil my ignorance and open my eyes and learn things about this world to some extent...I must overcome my identity problem. I must not feel ashamed of my origin and language. It is going to be difficult, but it has to be done. My relations with people have to be truthful and not casual and deceptive. No one is an enemy. I should be generous with people as best as I can.⁶

Musa had been reading the Qur'an and Hadiths, the words and deeds of the Prophet Mohammed, alongside *The Divided Self* (1960) by R. D. Laing, an existential-phenomenological account of psychosis. Laing contrasted the experiences of "ontologically secure" persons, with those who, engulfed by reality, aliveness, identity, and autonomy, felt they would "lose themselves," even to the point of psychosis. Though Musa did not write his diary with the intention to share it, he gave me 100 pages of his diary with the hope that it would enable me to understand and write about some of the problems young Muslims faced. I was teaching at Bayero University in the Department of Psychiatry and conducting research on mental, emotional, and spiritual forms of ill health. Musa felt anxious about global media as an important "source of knowledge" but also a potential "path to hell" that might divert him from his spiritual path, an internal conflict that he felt he shared with other age-mates.

What drew Musa's attention were potentially dangerous affects circulating in global media that found resonance with the "sensory politics" of religion in northern Nigeria. This led to a kind of dis/sociative experience that Musa attempted in his diary to understand and solve.

Musa experienced gaps in awareness and he felt detached from people and from emotional and physical things in his environment, at one point questioning whether he was becoming psychotic, losing a sense of reality altogether. He began to question the impact on his psyche of watching foreign T.V. and movies, or listening to music, concerns that articulated with Salafi “training” of apperception in educational and healthcare settings. Qur’anic scholar-healers explicitly associated non-Muslim education, media and mediated sensory affects such as “indecipherable” sounds with “danger.” This sensory politics is an important context for Musa, who while a medical student, shared normative ideas that meta-physical interactions with spirits or witches have sensory and material consequences that may cause *rashin lafiya* (ill health). For instance, Musa told me, “I know all about what happens in the brain with schizophrenic illnesses. Biomedicine tells you what happens, but witchcraft and spirit possession tell you why.”

The intellectualism of the *Izala* leadership, along with vast funding from Wahhabi and Salafi groups in England, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iraq, contributed to a rapid explosion of *Izala* publications, radio and television programs, and cassette tapes, particularly of “pure” Qur’anic sura to use as “self-help.” *Izala* used mobile media to “affectively” sharpen distinctions between *Izala* adherents and other Muslims by forbidding media that they said encouraged unlawful spirit-human relations (Casey 2008, 2009). Reformist Sufis joined *Izala* in designating Bollywood a “danger” after a mass spirit possession of over 600 secondary school girls, marked by spontaneous Bollywood dancing co-evolved with one of the most serious cerebrospinal meningitis epidemics in Nigerian history. These events brought heightened concern with sensations in the body, new modes of perceiving media, and of engaging and narrating the political and religious structures of authority and power.

Spontaneous dancing resembling that performed in Bollywood film was a new “sign,” never before witnessed in northern Nigeria. The involuntary, contagious quality of the girls’ symptoms emerged alongside the meningitis epidemic as it swept through northern Nigeria in the dusty Harmattan winds, with over a hundred thousand cases, and reported deaths ranging from 11,717 to 15,800 (Mohammed et al. 2000; Stephens 2000). Qur’anic scholar-healers, reformist Salafi and Sufi, and leaders of Bori⁷ considered Sumbuka, a local spirit known to admonish young women for immoral behavior, and spirits from distant lands, like India, or new configurations of known spirits and witches as likely causes

of both devastating crises. This linking of foreign culture, spirits, and biological pathogens had not emerged so powerfully since the early colonial period when so-called “mass hysterias” were common.

These regional contexts of mass spirit possession and meningitis played into anticolonial, anti-globalization discussions and media stories, in which reformist Muslims used “globalization” as a synonym for “neocolonialism.” Affective antiglobalization politics heightened with the Pfizer Corporation’s meningitis drug trial that left eleven Nigerian children dead and others with severely disabling injuries, including paralysis, brain damage, deafness, muteness, and loss of sight.⁸ The concurrency of mass spirit possessions and the meningitis epidemic prompted a reevaluation among Qur’anic scholar-healers of the spiritual, communal security of Nigerian Muslims. Reformist Sufi and Salafi began to consider many forms of cultural contamination and danger through the sounds of Bollywood films and iterations of Bollywood, in for instance, Bandiri music, in which praises to the Prophet Mohammed are set to Bollywood film music (Adamu 2010; Casey 2008, 2009; Larkin 2008). There was also concern with the sensory affects of Western European and American cultural forms, particularly in education and media (Brigaglia 2012; Casey 2008, 2009; Loimeier 2012; Umar 2001, 2012; Woodward et al. 2013).

Izala adherents focused on non-Muslim education and media with regard to *bid’ah* (innovation) and *shirk* (associating partners such as spirits or humans with the work of Allah). They suggested that innovations in modern music and film were responsible for attracting spirits. With Ibn Taymiyyah’s essay *The Jinn: Demons* (Palmer 1988) as a reference, Izala Qur’anic scholars claimed that Allah gave Prophet Mohammed the power to dispel spirits from humans, antedating, and thus supplanting, the power of the Prophet Sulayman to “tie or bind” spirits to humans. Mediated relations, through sounds, smells, sights, and movement, became focal points in conflicts over *bid’ah* and *shirk*, entanglements that affected theological approaches to *shari’a* implementation, but also the “sensory politics” in northern Nigeria of Islamic piety, authenticity, and security. Qur’anic scholar-healers associated with Izala *da’wah* movements set out to convert humans *and* spirits to Salafi forms of Islam, expelling non-Muslim spirits who refused conversion with forceful recitations of the Qur’an.⁹

I worked closely with Malams Amar and Aminu who read about the use of *Rukkiyya* to cast out evil spirits in Ibn Taymiyyah’s *The Jinn*,

an essay also widely read and cited by Qur'anic scholars in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. They felt "called to the way of Allah" and compelled to help people "oppressed by spirits." Malam Amar said:

So we as the people who are following the way of God, find this way (performing *Rukkiyya*) as the easiest way to propagate the power of Allah, Islam and the miracles of the Holy Qur'an. And this is an opportunity for us *da'wa* (which they translated as "legal claim") people to show to others that the Holy Qur'an is very powerful because it even cures...this *Rukkiyya* is not our ability nor our power that is used to cure a person, it is the verses of the Holy Qur'an that we recite and the will of God that causes the spirits to leave the body of the patient...Before people understood this, they used to go to *'yan Bori* and these *'yan Bori* would take away their beliefs, collect their money and cheat them without them getting well... And also *'yan Bori* used to sacrifice to the spirits and we learned from our Prophet that this is outside of the teachings of Islam. So it is very necessary for us to come out and show the people that this is the correct way.¹⁰

Malam Amar and Aminu exorcized many of the possessed secondary school girls who had begun "dancing like they do in Indian film," but said they were a small proportion of the people who were affected by changing spirit-human relations. Malam Amar said:

Because the spirits cannot always be trusted, we must follow the teachings of the Holy Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet if we want to escape from the evil of the spirits. Make sure you read the Qur'an every day and before you sleep in the night, perform your ablutions. Then recite *Ayathul kursiyya* once, and *kul-huv allahu* once and *faruqui* and *nasi* three times and rub it into your body. This will prevent spirits from touching you and it will prevent you from having nightmares. Every morning after you say your prayers, recite, *La ilaha, illa-llahu wahdahu la sharika lahu wa ashadu mulku wa labul hamdu yubhi wa yumitu wa huwa alaa kulli shayin kadir*. God will prevent the evil of the spirits and many evil things. You must take care of all these things. If you don't, they might come back. Do not listen to sounds like music or any sound that is not important because the spirits are always where sound or music is...¹¹

Reformist Salafi and Sufi scholar-healers made explicit links between normative ideas about spirit and witch induced ill health and non-Muslim media suggesting that "unauthorized" visuals like nudity, or "sounds" and "voices"—those, difficult to comprehend, and therefore, dangerous—require personalized one on one tutoring with a Qur'anic

scholar to reveal underlying meanings. Musa sought advice about engaging media from Sheik Dalha and he fervently read the Qur'an and Hadiths, but he also scoured Western psychology and psychiatry texts. Worrying that he might be psychotic, Musa again delved into Laing's *The Divided Self*. In his diary, he wrote:

I have never really enjoyed this life from my own point of view; I have been dead. I have not realized these things fully until I read "false self" in *The Divided Self*...The task now ahead is to allow my inner self, which has never been expressed to express itself. When I have ascertained my true identity (it is really difficult), when I have revived my dead self, then I can build on from there and perfect it. That's the only way I can acquire "true imam"¹²... One thing that my inner self has definitely agreed with the outer self is that there is a divine power controlling the forces in the world...I will now make sure that each act of worship I do has conformed with my inner self.¹³

Musa narrated the effects of his sensory experiences—their magnitudes, intensities, and frequencies—in terms of an emotional ethics of apprehension and religious authenticity. Musa began to carefully regulate his interactions with media, and to document *bid'ah* (unlawful innovation) in sensory experiences, affect, emotion, thoughts, and interactions, fervently attempting to harmonize inner experiences (affect, emotion, thoughts, and so on) with outer behaviors (speech, activities, and so on). Qur'anic scholar-healers also used this harmonizing of inner and outer experiences in educational and health settings to inculcate Islamic piety and "purity," associating the politics of education, health, and religion with state security. Though members of Salafi sects such as Izala and the Muslim Brotherhood, and some Sufis started to identify themselves as "Nigerian Orthodox Muslims," joining together in their goal to implement shari'a criminal codes, sectarian differences emerged in their policing of interactions with non-Muslims and foreign cultural forms such as secular education, Bollywood or Western media (Casey 2008, 2009). Musa's diary entries reveal a constant struggle of trying to avoid foreign music and movies, for his own sake, and for the health and well-being of other Muslims, even though he enjoyed their vital affects:

I have suppressed some of my favorite habits in the course of my "Muslim Brotherhood", not because I came to hate them, no, but because they are "bad", without actually assimilating their badness. Some vital habits which are actually the source of refreshing my mind, my source of apparent

happiness. The result is that my life became flat, dead, without any enjoyment. No doubt, some of the habits are not good spiritually, but then unless I have developed spiritually enough to leave these things naturally, convincingly, all apparent stoppage of these habits are just detrimental to my self. It makes me lose the essence of life. The habits are burning in the inner self and the false self is suppressing them. Yes, when I develop spiritually with the true self, I shall leave some of these things, i.e. music, movies. *In sha Allah*.¹⁴

Musa did not identify with a particular Sunni sect, but similar to many other young Muslims, he attempted to understand Salafi perspectives from Izala and the Muslim Brotherhood, as more and more people converted from Sufism to Salafism.¹⁵ Musa began to suppress habits to harmonize his inner and outer lives and to find belonging in an unstable political-spiritual environment. Political censorship with the implementation of shari'a criminal codes and self-censorship began to erode Musa's desire for intensity and passion for life, making him feel increasingly depressed. But, he was also striving to make himself healthy as part of his "Muslim Brotherhood," to effect the political-spiritual health of Muslims and Muslim state politics as well.

Musa attempted to avoid Western media, worrying especially about watching a British television show called "Dr. Who." In an episode called "Head in the Clouds," Musa wrote about a house fire that left Clara, the lead female character, physically injured, and the Doctor, the male lead, with no memory of the past. Musa identified with "the Doctor who found himself with no memory of who he is, where he is, or who the beautiful girl in the short brown dress was." This woman, Clara, and the Doctor developed forbidden feelings for one another, which Musa said preoccupied him. Musa wrote that he fantasized about being the Doctor, professionally, but also about his emotional, sensual relationship with Clara, and that these daydreams made it difficult for him to remain religiously "pure."

Musa dreamt of a Zionist psychiatrist who appeared to him, telling him:

The different types of people you see are not the same. Some are more sensible than others. Some think very deeply and contemplate before they do something whereas others are shallow thinkers. (I thought I was among the shallow thinkers.) Such shallow thinkers are foolish. Actually, if

all people are the same and intelligent, then, the Zionist could not dominate the earth, some people could not dominate others. It is because the Zionists are very intelligent that they dominate and exploit others. If we were all wise, then no one would exploit the other.¹⁶

The ambivalence Musa felt about engaging British and Zionist doctors in fantasies and dreams propelled him into greater vigilance about *bid'ah* (innovation), his “Muslim Brotherhood” and dominant Salafi political-spiritual perspectives. Hollan (2005a, 91) refers to such “self-scape dreams” as “emotionally and imaginably vivid dreams that appear to reflect back to the dreamer how his or her current organization of self relates various parts of itself to itself, its body, and to other people and objects in the world.” This dream prompted Musa to seek spiritual guidance from Sheik Dalha, after which he wrote:

...even to remain a ‘religious’ person, you need your autonomy and original self, otherwise, soon you will begin to be influenced by others. Soon you find yourself doing something you are not supposed to be doing. I soon realized that I was in another stage of false self. The picture I have created for myself of being a very religious man is actually false in the inner self.¹⁷

Musa described a swinging from affective excess to a flatness and lack of bodily enthusiasm in the confluence of his feelings and social relationships. He became hyperaware of a range of sensory affects in media and paid close attention to emotional responses to national and global media sensoria. In northern Nigeria, health or wellness (in Hausa, *lafiya*), is a balance and rhythm of life in all realms—psychical, social, spiritual, and corporeal. In contexts of social conflict and uncertainty, vigilance is self-protection and a way to maintain balance. Health is not easy to maintain in the face of affective excess, with profusions of incommensurable physiological sensations such as fear *and* desire. Health cannot be understood without temporal, spatial references to morality, to flows of people, money and goods, rhythm as recurring cycles of beats, heartbeats, intuition, and shared experience.

In social situations, Muslims in northern Nigeria tend to minimize expressions of ill health (*rashin lafiya*), but the distressful sensations and perceptions that they have, may differ from those they express, so a belief in predestiny cannot be assumed, nor can it be seen as an emotional

shield that modulates distress unilaterally, nor necessarily, internally. Religious concepts such as fate, confronted by novel or amplified sensations, whether colonial or military violence or televised romance, generate new feelings and modes of valuing. In these instances, self-transformations occur, including (un) conscious self- and other censorship and (un) conscious bodily responses. This may account for some of the vigilant verbalizations of affective sensorial apprehension along with perceptions not expressed in Hausa speech, but through the body, and for the use of embodied emotion terms such as *bak'in ciki* (depression, literally, black stomach) or *cin basira* (eating insight) when speaking of sorrows and other more severe forms of suffering.

Musa's ambivalence developed into what he described as depression, intensifying with the implementation of shari'a criminal codes in 1999–2000 and the 2001 U.S. War on Terrorism. Musa wrote:

I read about George Bush in a newspaper. Bush is said to have found himself always taking orders rather than taking charge. Most extraordinarily, his career is said to be nothing but a failure to fashion an agenda of his own, to display a broad set of principles, to show imagination or initiative. Immediately when I read this, I knew it is a 100% description of myself and my condition plus a lot of other things.¹⁸

Musa felt that he lacked social confidence, and he described his ambivalence about major life issues as “cowardice in life” and “spiritual disarray” which, he wrote, were part of his “I don’t care attitude.” Musa’s combination of Islamic and Western educations draws upon competing ideas of autonomy, morality, and security and this combination is highly contested in northern Nigeria, rooted as it is within experiences of colonial occupation when members of the Muslim Fulani ruling class received Western education as part of their participation in indirect colonial rule (see Paden 1973, 1986). Because of ideological-religious tensions and associations with colonialism, only a small percentage of all school-aged children attend Western schools (see Callaway and Creevey 1993). Children such as Musa who do attend Western schools feel exceptional and excluded, remembering songs and taunts from Islamiyya students that they were “going to hell” as they walked to school. In Musa’s self-analysis, he wrote:

... I wanted to go back, identify my real self and tread the path slowly. But it is too great a thing to do because of the picture I have created for

myself. What will people say? So I remained in a dilemma, of where exactly do I belong? How can I reconcile the contradictions? etc. No answers - except to go elsewhere.¹⁹

These contradictions made it difficult for Musa to study and he maintained an “inconstant way of life” where he “keeps swinging from A to B.” But, Musa attempted to tackle this with what he described as a dual approach, one “spiritual” and the other “non-spiritual.” He wrote:

For the spiritual solution, I got it mainly from Sheikh Dalha this morning. I asked him how to safeguard one’s religion and which knowledge of the Din (path which will help him comply with shari’a law) is most necessary for people like me. He followed by knowledge of how to perform worships. For Tawhid (doctrine of the oneness of God) he suggested the book “Ummul Brahim”. For Fiqh (deep knowledge and understanding of Islam; Islamic jurisprudence) there are many books. He said that God says, “Know me before you worship me”.²⁰

For the non-spiritual aspects, Musa employed motivation and self-control, with an emphasis on autonomy. He wrote:

- 1) Try to have an agenda for myself and confidence in myself in thought and action. I will try to analyse everything before doing and not wait on others to do that for me.
- 2) As part of 1) above, I will try my best to be like the letter “I”. Most of the time, it stands alone. Yes, I will try to be alone always, do my things alone, so that if I make a mistake, I know it is from myself, not as it will be when We always do things together...I will relate any action I take to my human conscience, not only to religion.
- 3) For Boko (Western) studies, I know I have been doing so bad that I have made alot of deficits. I will not worry, and will be serious from next time.²¹

DAHLIA, MEDIATING CONFLICT IN KUWAIT

In Kuwait, Sheik Ibn Taymiyyah’s scholarship also played a central role in Salafi reform and critiques of colonialism, global capitalism and secular Western forms such as education and media. These critiques have become more prominent in Gulf countries with the recent shift from petrol economies to so-called “knowledge based economies.” In Kuwait,

private universities and schools based primarily in the US, England, and Australia partner with locally owned Kuwait campuses to offer education in English rather than the Arabic of government schools. Since the 2003 US War in Iraq, there have been increased sectarian tensions, political conflicts between conservatives and liberals that have resulted in physical fights between political party members, and the Emir has disbanded Parliament on several occasions. There has also been a rise in conservative displays of religious identity through styles of dress, the separation of genders in schools, and in events such as anti-sorcery campaigns put on by Salafi preachers from Saudi Arabia in Kuwaiti shopping malls.²² Similar to Salafi preaching in Nigeria, these political conflicts, social separations and Islamist anti-sorcery campaigns suggest that Muslim individuals are responsible for maintaining social and bodily boundaries. And, similar to the contexts of northern Nigeria, influential social, political leaders began to explicitly link Islamist politics, education and health, implying that ignorance or ill health among Kuwaitis was related to religious lapses at personal and political levels. Deborah Wheeler (2006) reports that women and Islamists were the most active users of social media in the post-war period.

In 2006, I moved to Kuwait to teach in the anthropology and psychology programs at the American University of Kuwait. I immediately became alarmed at the number of students and their age-mates, employed in government and private businesses, who spoke of having tumors, gastrointestinal and reproductive problems, tension and severe headaches—a constellation of symptoms associated with transgenerational trauma, societal conflict and exposure to toxins. Young Kuwaitis spoke of memories of war in topographical, collaborative, and mediated forms of remembering, through ill health and distress, bombed and bullet-ridden homes left standing, talk of families and neighborhoods blown apart by war, or of Failaka, a former resort, left abandoned to war artillery and war tours. Bodily memories and reenactments of liberation brought forth in parades or by structures such as the Liberation Tower and War Museum converged with discussions of war in *divanias* and families, and in the real-virtual interfaces of the invasion and occupation with contemporary mediated accounts of it. Remembering the 1990 Iraqi invasion and occupation of Kuwait *became* increasingly traumatic for young adults in their teenage years, after the start of the 2003 US War in Iraq, with dramatic changes in their self-perceived health and health statuses during this period (Casey 2015).

Dahlia was among the young adults who narrated the deterioration of her health as a result of sensory overload associated with the 2003 US War in Iraq. Dahlia said broadcast media sensoria of war—the sights, sounds, and movements of war—as well as social media conflicts with regional Muslim youths who blamed Kuwaitis for both the 1990 Iraqi invasion and the 2003 US War in Iraq, made her feel emotionally overwhelmed. The affective, bodily distress of such media sensoria and interactions, alongside conflicts with family members and friends in Kuwait over the morality of the 2003 US War in Iraq, was so debilitating that Dahlia fluctuated between obsession with broadcast and Internet-based media, or completely withdrawing from it.

While I interviewed a few child witnesses of the 1990 Iraqi invasion who had direct experiences of violence, particularly young men actively resisting occupation, Dahlia, and the majority of others, did not witness violent events or any interactions they considered traumatic. Dahlia never experienced childhood symptoms of PTSD—the main form of trauma assessment in Kuwait—nor other trauma syndromes, or depression²³; her parents did not express concern about her behavior, nor did she seek treatment for health or mental ill health until her teenage years. In her self-assessment, Dahlia felt moderate to severe affective bodily distress after the 2003 US War in Iraq, and she reported a combination of tension, headaches, low mood, gastrointestinal problems, and benign tumors.

Dahlia, then living with her father, mother and younger brother as her older siblings had married, watched televised news reports of the US attack. As she narrated this period, Dahlia made frequent references to war sensoria—the sights, sounds, and movements of war—changing the tone and urgency of her communication. She started to worry, she said, “we are close;” “war can get into our country;” “everybody is against us.” Similar narratives circulated among Kuwaiti young adults and regional neighbors in social media and blogs, and in response to Kuwaiti air siren drills. Dahlia said her father was “ok” with the war; “Kuwaitis after the invasion don’t like Iraqis and they’re ok with the war.” But, Dahlia “did not like this way of thinking,” and she began to turn to religion for help with the growing conflicts inside her. Similar to Musa, Dahlia attempted to harmonize “inner” experiences with “outer” behaviors. She veiled and prayed more frequently. Dahlia felt she could not express herself in public, whether at home or outside the home, and she became increasingly quiet, with alternating bursts of anger. Dahlia

developed “tension,” “headaches,” and “problems with her colon,” and she went to a general practitioner who prescribed medication, but she did not feel better. Dahlia then thought it might be a problem with her ovaries. She went to another doctor who found a tumor, which he diagnosed as benign.

Dahlia described herself as increasingly “emotional.” She was living in the family home where she had experienced the 1990 Iraqi invasion and occupation. Televised depictions of US tanks destroying other tanks, and the sounds of bombs, made Dahlia increasingly tense. She stopped watching television and turned to the Internet for information, but responded again to age-mates in neighboring countries. Dahlia found “everyone against us,” or “against the invasion” and US occupation of Iraq. Dahlia began having trouble with sleep, waking throughout the night, feeling depressed, crying easily to “anything that has sensitivity or emotion.” Dahlia felt she used to be stronger. She wanted to “catch her emotions,” but felt very angry, sometimes “saying angry things” to an older sister she very much admired. Dahlia emailed “professionals” to “get their advice,” but she never made an appointment to see anyone, nor did she consult her mother, citing stigma against “depression” as the main reason. Eventually, Dahlia stopped watching news of Iraq, but began fervently watching news of Iran, worrying that “Americans and Iranians would start fighting.” Dahlia consulted online Western biomedical doctors and psychologists and religious Sheiks about her ill health and she read biomedical texts, and the Qur’an and Hadiths, in attempts to modulate the affects of war sensoria, human-spirit relations and social conflict. But, she felt herself becoming increasingly isolated.

DIS/SOCIATING

For Musa and Dahlia, the dangers and potential violence of evil from humans, sorcerers or spirits, felt spiritual-political insecurities, ambiguities about what was helpful, even expansive, or dangerous, and the realities of danger, converged in sensorial apprehensions of associated dangers. Ontologies and epistemologies matter and, in their cases, perceptions of sensory affects in human-spirit relations amplified feelings of vulnerability. Musa and Dahlia felt overwhelmed by accumulations of potential dangers and they dis/sociated, withdrawing from themselves and others, while regulating the media they consumed, in attempts to harmonize inner (affect, emotion, thoughts, and so on) and outer (speech, activities, and so on) experiences. Both young adults developed ethical

apprehensions of “dangers” and political-spiritual self-consciousness that engendered fear and anxiety, and in Dahlia’s case empathy for Muslims in Iraq, even though her family members did not share these sentiments. Musa, despite his traumatic dis/sociation, attempted to redirect his fears and desires, and the depressive anxiety this generated, toward self-improvement, even if this entailed self-censorship. He sacrificed some of life’s vitality and global knowledge in his search for spirituality and consonance between inner and outer realities, to belong and to conform to increasingly Salafi political-religious societal norms. Dahlia was less able to redirect her fears, desires, and anxiety in these ways, and the dis/sociation she experienced was emotionally debilitating, making her increasingly isolated from family members and friends, and distanced from Kuwaiti political-religious communal life. She felt deeply traumatized by conflicts with family members and friends over the ethics of the US Wars in the region, and by accusations of Kuwaiti blame for the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the 2003 US War in Iraq. Dahlia also felt imminent danger by US aggression in the Middle East, as antagonisms between the US and Iran worsened.

Both Musa and Dahlia paid close attention to broadcast mediated violence against Muslims in Afghanistan, Iraq, and the Israeli occupied Palestinian territories, choosing and avoiding mobile media such as Internet-based social media, films or blogs, religious and otherwise, to regulate sensory affects and emotions. The associative sensorial references to “danger” that Musa and Dahlia experienced, produced intensities, magnitudes, and frequencies of affect that were overwhelming at times, and difficult to understand, yet once narrated into emotion produced unique articulations with local political-religious narratives and power. Musa and Dahlia vacillated between tendencies to conform socially, and/or to escape political-religious intersubjectivity, even to the point of estrangement and ill health. But, it was in their attempts to harmonize these vacillating inner and outer experiences of spiritual life that Musa and Dahlia gained political consciousness and an ethics of apprehension, yet with strong differences in feelings of agency, security, and belonging.

NOTES

1. For simplicity and clarity, I use “affect” to refer to Massumi’s concept of “vital affect” and “emotion” to refer to his notion of “categorical affect,” which he suggests is a synonym for “emotion.”

2. See Clough (2007), Deleuze and Guattari (1987), Gregg and Seigworth (2010), Massumi (2010), and Thrift (2007).
3. Christian Nigerians also told me that Bush's polarizing language was offensive, and common reactions were "well I guess we're terrorists then, because we're not with him."
4. This is taken from an interview with two *malams* (Qur'anic scholars) in Kano, Nigeria, on August 12, 1996. These malams participated in Da'wah, a proselytizing movement associated with Izala.
5. Izala is the popular name for The Society for the Eradication of Innovation and the Establishment of the Sunna. Adherents of Izala cite Salafi and Wahhabi sources of inspiration, but often claim to be "Nigerian Orthodox Muslims." See: Abubakar Gumi with Ismaila Tsiga, *Where I Stand* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1992).
6. Musa wrote this excerpt in his personal diary in 1994 while living in Kano city.
7. Bori is widely referred to as animism, a spirit-possession cult that predated Islam, or a syncretism of animism and Islam (Besmer 1983; Masquelier 2001, 2007, 2009; O'Brien 2006; Onwuegeogwu 1969; Wall 1988). Scholars describe the *Bori* spirit-possession rituals, practiced in Kano State, as religious opposition to Islam, an alternative form of Islam, or oppositional gender experience and expression. See Besmer (1983), O'Brien (2006), Onwuegeogwu (1969), and Wall (1988). Through my work with Bori *sarakuna* (leaders, kings) and *malamai* (Qur'anic scholar-healers), I have found a link between the beliefs and practices of Bori and a sect of Islam that diverged during the 1400s over the use of magic or *shirk* (polytheism; associating partners such as humans or jinn with the work of Allah). This sect believed that Allah gave the Prophet Sulayman the power to tie or bind spirits to humans, thus legitimating Bori spirit-possession practices. In contemporary writings about Bori, the jinn Sulayman is the spirit king or leader of spirits, but Bori adherents also say that Sulayman took over leadership from Danko, a snake spirit. I am not attempting to address the origin of Bori, but rather the historical power and contentiousness of contemporary narrations about Bori adherents and practices.
8. In 2000, Washington Post Staff Writer Joe Stephens helped to break the story of a 1996 Pfizer Corporation drug trial in Kano, Nigeria, which left eleven children dead and others severely injured. Pfizer researchers selected 200 children with meningitis, and gave half an oral version of the antibiotic Trovan, and the other half low doses of a comparison drug made by one of Pfizer's competitors. In 2007, Nigerian officials brought criminal and civil charges against Pfizer in a multibillion dollar lawsuit.

9. These malams also communicated with spirits in places such as Lebanon and the Sudan to ascertain the identities of foreign spirits they did not know.
10. This is taken from an interview with two *malams* (Qur'anic scholars) in Kano, Nigeria, on August 12, 1996. These malams participated in Da'wah, a proselytizing movement associated with Izala.
11. Ibid.
12. Imam is Arabic for an Islamic leader, commonly used to denote the prayer leader of a mosque.
13. Musa wrote this excerpt in his personal diary in 1996, while living in Kano city.
14. Ibid.
15. It is not uncommon in northern Nigeria for Muslims to change religious affiliations or sects. Most Sufis are Sunni, and reformist Sufis and Salafis worked together on the implementation of shari'a criminal codes to change state politics and law.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid.
18. Musa wrote this excerpt in his personal diary in 2001, while reading media reports about the former US President George W. Bush and the War on Terrorism. He was living in Kano city.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. A recent edition, translated and abridged by Dr. Abu Ameenah Bilal Philips (2010) includes writings about spirit possession and exorcism by a prominent scholar from Saudi Arabia, Shaykh Ibn Baz, and his refutation to Muslims who deny spirit possession.
23. For studies of child witnesses of war and trauma in the aftermath of the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, please see Abdel-Khalek (1997), Al-Naser et al. (2000), Al-Qadiri and Al-Garaballi (2012), Hadi and Liabre (1998), Hammadi et al. (1994), Llabre and Hadi (1997), and Nader et al. (1993). Figley et al. (2010) describe increased religiosity as a coping mechanism after the war. Mai Al-Nakib's *The Hidden Light of Objects* (2014) contains a fictionalized account of a young Kuwaiti girl, named Amerika to honor the U.S. role in the liberation of Kuwait, but who, after the 2003 U.S. War in Iraq, becomes ill at ease with this name as new restraints under an increasingly conservative public come into play.

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The Ungendered Self: Sex Reassignment, the Third Gender, and Gender Fluidity in India

Katherine Pratt Ewing and Baishakhi Banerjee Taylor

LGBTQ rights discourse rests on the premise that society is composed of individuals who are motivated by desires and gender identities¹ that arise from within. These individuals should be autonomous and free to pursue their desires and embody their private, authentic selves by making choices unconstrained by tradition or biology. Activism around sexual and transgender rights has become a transnational movement promoting a universalized vision of this modern bourgeois individual. This movement is shaping public discourse in India as in much of the rest of the world.²

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It is also reshaping how men and women in India experience their own desires and gendered sense of self as people take up identities articulated through the rubric of LGBTQ categories. But this rights-based movement, which in the case of transgendered individuals has emphasized the possibility of changing from one side of the gender binary to the other through surgery, stands in tension with alternative ways of experiencing and identifying the embodied, desiring self that draw on different possibilities for understanding and experiencing gender.

One approach to political subjectivities is to query the relationship between publicly expressed political discourses and personal experiences, aligning the public, political, articulated, collective, and discursive/symbolic on one side and the private, personal, intimate, suppressed, affective, and experiential on the other and examining the possibility of disjunctures or gaps between them. While it is important to explore tensions between political selves and individual experiences, this essay takes a somewhat different tack, exploring the tensions among political selves experienced and articulated by the individual. Instead of trying to foreground the inadequacy of normative or even of liberatory discourses linked with social movements for expressing the experiences of individuals, we begin by disrupting this dichotomy between public and private and reconfiguring the presumed “gap” between them by questioning the assumption that desire and gender identity arise from within the individual. A focus on “private” experiences is historically specific and arises from modernity’s concern with an authentic, interior self that must be discovered and freed to express itself and its agency (Foucault 1979). Not only are these private selves constituted by modern citizenship itself, but also, as Jürgen Habermas has stressed, the privacy of the bourgeois individual is “always already oriented to an audience” (1989, p. 49). This is certainly true of identities that have been articulated through LGBTQ activism: there is an inextricable link among citizenship, rights, and the recognition through an imagined audience of a supposedly private desire that constitutes the self.

By emphasizing the historical particularity of the autonomous individual as we have just done, there might seem to be a danger of repeating a Eurocentric perspective of anthropologists and psychologists in the 1960s and 70s who distinguished the Western autonomous self from the “interdependent” selves of traditional societies. This earlier distinction was usually embedded within a developmentalist perspective that located the autonomous individual as a more advanced stage in

human development, both psychologically and politically. Subsequent anthropological research has disrupted this Western-centric bias by seeking out and discovering agency and, by implication, the individual, in life histories, indigenous manifestations of distress, and psychological disorder (see e.g., Mines 1988; Comaroff 1985; Ong 2010), in which symptoms are goal-directed behaviors that “aim to alleviate distressing circumstances” (Marrow 2013, p. 348). We, instead, stress here an intellectual tradition that recognizes the autonomous self as a political and cultural ideology which renders possible specific values and choices at the expense of others, as articulated by Michel Foucault in his discussions of the discursive constitution of the subject in his first volume of *The History of Sexuality* (Foucault 1979). Furthermore, such political ideologies of the self and self-understandings do not necessarily reflect an accurate characterization of interdependence in interpersonal relationships and their intrapsychic significance (Ewing 1991). Thus, in this complex discursive environment, it is not sufficient to simply accept Foucault’s earlier argument that the subject or self is discursively constituted. Rather, as Foucault recognized in his later volumes of the *History of Sexuality* and his turn to ethics, these people, who (like all of us) find themselves thrown into the world in particular subject positions, react to their situations by engaging in an ethical and often political process of constituting themselves.

The primacy of the private, autonomous self accompanied the importation into India of modern psychiatry and other institutions in the colonial and postcolonial eras as part of this political process. Yet scholars working in India have noted challenges to this ideology of the autonomous self that go back to the colonial period and the beginnings of nationalist resistance. For example, Dipesh Chakrabarty has shown how nineteenth-century Indian nationalists promoted the preservation of the woman’s place within the extended family by challenging the Western enlightenment assumption that civilization and progress must rest on the cultivation of a society of individuals with internalized private selves as a universal value (Chakrabarty 1992, p. 9). A recent manifestation of the resistance to modern psychiatry can be seen in Jean Langford’s research on modern Ayurvedic psychotherapy, which disrupts the assumption of an interiorized self. She has argued that this Hindu-based psychotherapeutic process downplays the appearance of the self in Indian patients’ narratives, passing over allusions to the self as one of many ephemeral moments in a string of narratives (Langford 1998, p. 85).

Following a different strand of resistance to colonial ideology of the self, political psychologist Ashis Nandy has described how in the early twentieth century India's first psychoanalyst Girindrasekhar Bose challenged colonial pathologizations of the Indian self by proposing a model of the normative psyche that was different from Freud's Oedipus complex (Nandy 1995). As a justification of colonial rule, the British had contrasted their own dominant masculinity with what they perceived as the effeminate qualities of the Bengali *bhadralok* (middle class) (Sinha 1995). In this colonial environment, Bose, though inspired by Freud's writings, proposed a model of the Indian male psyche that had at its core the desire to be a woman (Bose 1999, p. 35). Nandy's analysis of Bose drew linkages between Bose's model of the secret, feminized self and the Bengali political self that became a basis for resistance to colonial ideologies. The inner, feminine self of the Bengali middle-class man was associated with Indian spirituality, which was to be valued above Western materiality. This spiritual, anti-masculine resistance framed in opposition to colonial ideology was manifest in figures such as the spiritual leader Ramakrishna, many of whose followers were involved in the development of the nationalist movement, and Mahatma Gandhi. These cultural and political forces continue to shape the historical memory and modern identity of Bengal's *bhadralok*, usually translated as the "middle class." In this case, the middle class refers to the Brahmin educated elite, who stood in the middle between the British colonial administration and the lower castes. Though regarded as the intellectual elite, they are not the financial elite of modern Kolkata.

We focus on members of the Bengali middle class (*bhadralok*) who have gone through sex reassignment surgery (SRS) to transition from the status of "man" to "woman." Given the complex history of gender among the *bhadralok* intimated above and the rigorous disciplinary practices associated with the diagnostic routines of modern medicine, these women live at the intersection of very different discourses regarding the embodiment of gender. We examine a tension among three different ways of understanding gender and its relationship to the self. These three understandings of gender are linked to the concepts of transsexual/transgender, the third gender, and gender fluidity. We focus particularly on middle-class transitions because of the ways that the *bhadralok* as a class were shaped by colonial ideologies of power and gender and, more recently, the ways that middle-class men who become women must negotiate a transnational medical discourse that generates

a rationale for SRS in terms of a rigid gender binary. We trace how middle-class transsexual women who are politically involved in promoting the rights of the transgender in India articulate identities and selves as individuals. Specifically, we are concerned with how they use the categories of “third gender” and “transgender,” which have emerged in India in recent decades, and what role the idea of gender fluidity plays in their self narratives. Modern medical diagnosis focuses on the need to bring the body into line with an inner, essential feminine self. In keeping with a psychiatric diagnostic procedure that is compulsory, most of these middle-class subjects identify themselves as “women,” rather than as a “third gender.” But conversations with these women also reveal tensions and inconsistencies in their articulation of their own experiences of self and transformation in ways that are not always consistent with a logic of transformation associated with SRS.

Our research is based in part on actor- or person-centered interviewing, an approach that aims to strike a balance between allowing the person being interviewed to control the direction of the conversation and guiding the conversation in specific directions by listening for and following up on points of particular interest to the interviewer. The interviewer initially sets up this balance by telling the potential interviewee the general subject of the interview but then beginning with a very open-ended question that will allow the interviewee to take the lead and demonstrate what is most important to them. As interviewers, we also listen closely to how things are said, attending to silences, hesitations, inconsistencies, self-interruptions, word choices, and emotional tone, all of which can be signs of feelings and internal conflict that are further clues about the meaning of what has been said.

The third gender is a gender identity and a legal category that was embraced and legalized in several South Asian countries even before the legalization of the transgender in Europe and the United States. It is particularly associated with *hijras*, one of the terms commonly used to designate a tightly knit, marginalized community of people, mostly from lower castes, who are visibly neither man nor woman but something in between.³ Though some *hijras* also undergo genital surgery,⁴ most do not seek to become “real” women indistinguishable from those identified as female at birth.

But even the term “third gender” does not capture the idea of gender fluidity as a discursive stance. The concept of fluidity appears in certain Hindu devotional practices and is a theme that appears in Hindu textual

traditions (Doniger 1999). We show how some activists and publically visible figures, such as the prominent filmmaker Rituparno Ghosh, are operating today at the frontiers of gender in Kolkata, reimagining gender as being fluid and not tightly bound to the “self.” Ghosh, who very publically considered but did not choose to go through SRS, sought to reclaim gender fluidity from Kolkata’s complex gendered colonial history in order to create new self-expectations and affective orientations toward an imagined future (Tambar 2016). Though some activists appear to be reproducing the identity categories of transnational sexual and gender activism, some are also reimagining an Indian past in order to challenge gender norms that were imposed during the colonial period and continue to shape India’s gendered order today. Some, such as Rituparno Ghosh, are using their own bodies to inhabit new selves and new futures as they struggle with political and ethical tensions among incompatible ways of imagining gender. However, they are presented with alternative and often inconsistent ways of becoming gendered selves. Furthermore, caught in these complex webs of significance, they demonstrate inconsistencies and shifts in their own ways of describing themselves as they negotiate these different discourses of gender. Let us examine how their political projects involve the negotiation of these three inconsistent understandings of gender as they choose and promote specific imagined futures and selves.

THE RISE OF THE TRANSGENDER AND SRS IN THE GLOBAL NORTH

Popular and scholarly literature on the transgender and SRS⁵ problematizes the gendered self in ways that have very recently become part of the mainstream public discourse in the United States and Europe, where gender reassignment through hormones and surgery has grown in visibility and popularity. In his ethnography of the “transgender,” David Valentine considered the social effects of this category since its emergence in the early 1990s (2007). He argued that it has become popular because it makes sense within the current prevailing paradigm of gender and sexuality, which sharply distinguishes sexual orientation and gender. This distinction has been important for the gay rights movement as a way of asserting that one could be gay and still be a “real man” or a “real woman” and has been virtually unquestioned in scholarly understandings of gender and sexuality.⁶ But most transgendered individuals that

Valentine observed did not usually make this distinction when describing themselves, suggesting that distinguishing between sexual orientation and gender identity is a learned, political process, even for those who apply these categories to themselves. This kind of public recognition involves a process of naming one's "sexuality" and "gender" by giving shape to one's desire and identifying it as one's true self.

Such essentializations are typically a part of the very structure of "coming out" stories, as in the narrative of one young man published in an underground Pakistani Gay magazine, translated from Urdu by the blogger who posted it on the internet. The young man wrote, "It's been almost ten years when I first realized that I am gay, it was early nineties...but in those days many people had difficulties to understand the difference between gay and transsexuals."⁷ The blogger asserted that "Gays" have been "robbed of their very existence" because they have not been publicly recognized with a labeled identity that expresses this essential quality of homosexuality and distinguishes it from gender orientation as male or female. This process of naming is a logical extension of nineteenth-century classification techniques and is important for the contemporary way that social movements engage in identity politics by trafficking in essentialized identities.⁸

Part of this learning an identity occurs within the medical context of SRS. The globalized narrative "I felt like a woman trapped in a man's body" has been standardized through medical diagnosis, a process in which candidates for SRS learn to articulate their self-experience in a way that will allow a psychiatrist to make the diagnosis of Gender Identity Disorder (GID),⁹ thereby making the transgender eligible for this medical procedure. This commonly reiterated statement suggests an authentic self recovered through surgery, implying that there is a single self that has been more authentically revealed through a change of gender. This is a historically specific concept of self that is enacted in the surgical practice of SRS. The psychiatric diagnosis takes literally the idea that the candidate for surgery is a woman trapped in a man's body or a man trapped in a woman's body. The diagnosis of GID presumes a separation of gender and sex and of self and body—or perhaps "a girl brain in a boy body" as the transgendered American Jazz Jennings, who became an activist in her early teens, learned to articulate her situation when she was eight years old. The surgeon removes the dissonant body parts, allowing the release of this more authentic self. But there is also violence associated with

this surgery (as Cohen [1995] reminds us), a violence that is obscured by the process of diagnosis and the presumption that the reassignment is a “treatment choice,” made to alleviate suffering. The process of diagnosis obscures the fact that in SRS, there is also a self that is obliterated through the act of surgery. It is this self that family, friends, and, often in a disavowed way, the transformed person herself, cannot help mourning as they struggle to adjust to the newly born postsurgical self.

Far from undoing gender, the naturalization of this practice of excising the dissonant self reinforces a strict gender binary that obliterates other possibilities such as a self that is experienced as fluid or shifting. Sex reassignment reproduces a sharp dichotomy between male and female. Though transsexuals have often served as exemplars for the project of “undoing gender” (to quote Butler’s 2004 book title), the logic behind the diagnosis and the surgery reinforces authentic gender as a fixed subjectivity, rather than fluid and contestable.

Anthropologists challenged the limitations of a two-gender framework through the introduction of the term “third gender” to argue that some cultures have more than two gender categories.¹⁰ It has been used to describe the *hijras* of South Asia as being “neither man nor woman,” to quote the title of Serena Nanda’s ethnography of *hijras* in India (Nanda 1990). Evan Towle and Lynn Morgan have suggested that cultural categories that point to a third gender must be understood in relation to their specific cultural contexts and are not always liberatory, as transgender activists have liked to imagine: “In several cases, this means upholding a rigid gender system by formalizing variations” (Towle and Morgan 2002, p. 487).

This “third gender” category has also functioned, in the West, to support the struggle for LGBTQ rights by offering an alternative to the polarized political narratives through which this struggle has often been articulated. In essence, in Euro-American contexts, gender and sexuality have, at times, been characterized as being about choice and freedom, while, at other times, being about innate, unalterable essences. Perhaps ironically, the latter discourse has worked politically for LGBTQ activists in the West (“I can’t help who I am”) whereas the former is more often used by their socially conservative opponents. (“You’re just making a lifestyle choice, and you could choose differently.”) Either way, this political struggle pushed many LGBTQ activists and theorists into claims about sexual and gender identity that were deeply essentialist and thus

ultimately confining. The idea of a “third gender” seemed to allow a way out of this impasse.

Just as the category “transgender” has become easy to think with, so has the “third gender.” However, it has become yet another identity category, rather than pointing to a process that operates by an alternative logic. In the Euro-American setting, the transgender and the third gender are embraced by a logic similar to the LGBTQIA rubric, which appears to be infinitely expandable and capacious enough to encompass both the transgender and a third gender (who might be subsumed under the “T” as “trans,” “a person who is a member of a gender other than that expected based on anatomical sex,” or perhaps as “I,” “someone whose physical sex characteristics are not categorized as exclusively male or exclusively female” [Tahoe Safe Alliance n.d.].) This expanding alphabet of choices (and some of the letters stand for different terms or identities, depending on whom you ask) is founded on an ideology of tolerance that emphasizes choice, giving each designation apparently equal weight, like letters in an alphabet soup. Freedom and choice have moved beyond the realm of consumer goods and the racks of clothing stores to the body itself, in the form of sex or gender reassignment surgery.

This logic promotes a proliferation of identities in a manner resembling “style” as formed in youth subcultures, taking the stance of resistance to the dominant culture (Hebdige 1979). Dick Hebdige pointed out that working-class youth subcultures in Britain used style—in clothing, music, hair—to resist dominant national cultural forms in ways that became crucial to their personal identities. He argued that, as elements of these radical subcultures become mainstream, their subversiveness is tamed and the subculture ceases to be the basis of a distinct identity. For many youth today, style continues to evolve through similar mechanisms but has expanded to include ways of being gendered and sexual and ways of disrupting gender norms, as some observers of changing sexual and gender practices have noted.¹¹ Yet in the arena of gender and sexuality, such choices are more often understood in essentialized terms as identities that reflect an inner self linked to innate proclivities, despite efforts of queer theorists and some youth to disrupt such essentializations of gender and sexuality.¹² The roots of the term “transgender” reflect this slippage. Early usage emerged from the transsexual, linked to genital alteration, grounded in the idea that there was an inner essence that did not fit the gender assigned at birth, which was based on inspection of the material body. It was later broadened to

include a diffuse array of “others” (Valentine 2007, pp. 37–38). As the varieties proliferate, they come to include stylistic variants.

Yet in the world of gender activists, there has been a strong bias toward choosing to be either male or female, and, for Americans, even contemplating gender fluidity can be quite disorienting though this has begun to change. Jungian feminist therapist Susan McKenzie has articulated this disorientation: “Gender experiences in the world of the transgendered and transsexual are destabilizing. I have experienced the discomfort of feeling my own queer gender position starting to slide around under my feet as I listened deeply to the experiences of transgendered individuals, those people who do not fit neatly into the two categories of sex, male/masculinity and female/femininity” (McKenzie 2006, pp. 404–405). Perhaps it is her immersion in the teachings of Carl Jung that has allowed McKenzie to contemplate this instability. Jung’s concept of animus/anima was a gender theory that, though reproducing stereotypes of male and female, did encourage the recognition of an inner self of the opposite gender as an important antidote to the distortions produced by the constraints of masculinity and femininity (Jung 1991).

Bias against gender fluidity is a matter of cultural unintelligibility arising from a historically rooted gender ideology that posits an experiential gulf between male and female (Butler 1990; Stone 1991). In a world based on the assumption that one is either male or female, someone in-between has been unthinkable, even for a world that is learning to accept people who change from one sex to the other, as the transgender does. This bias against in-betweenness of any sort is evident in the discussion by Patrick Califia, an American transgender author, of third gender identities, “I believe that if hormones and surgery were made available to third-gender people in traditional societies, the great majority of them would opt for a sex change” (Califia 1997, p. 149; quoted in Valentine 2007, p. 155).¹³ Even when the term “third gender” is used, it tends to be collapsed into the “transgender,” as a way station in the transition from one gender to the other.

THE THIRD GENDER IN INDIA

In contrast to the rise of the transgender and a focus on transitioning from one gender to the other in the Global North, the “third gender” has been a more politically salient category in India, despite the North’s perception of India as backwards with respect to LGBTQ rights, given

the reaffirmation of the anti-sodomy law in 2013 (Harris 2013). Like the category “transgender” in the United States, “third gender” has been taken up with remarkable rapidity in South Asia. Several South Asian countries, including Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India have been among the first in the world to offer legal status for individuals who identify as “third gender.” The political context of those who identify as third gender or transgender includes an active movement which has successfully pushed for legal rights such as identity cards for a “third gender” and draws much of its justification from representations of the historically marginalized but publicly visible *hijra* community (see e.g., Khan 2016). New futures for the “third gender” are being imagined on the basis of appeals to the history of *hijras* and other aspects of Indian, especially Hindu, traditions. “Third gender” activism among stigmatized *hijras* has become increasingly visible and focused on issues of identity and class-based discrimination (Dutta 2012; Reddy 2005). Third gender activists have mined the idea of the *hijra* from old ethnographic accounts and scholarly representations of gender ambiguity in Hindu textual traditions (O’Flaherty 1980) in order to disrupt the dominant American gender binary by romantically invoking ideas of a primordial “third gender.”¹⁴ Among third gender activists in India, “third gender” and “transgender” are often used interchangeably.

Yet many imagine themselves and their “third gender” colleagues in terms of the familiar gender binary in ways that can generate bitter political and interpersonal dynamics. For example, in Kolkata, there are several people who have been publically visible inhabitants of the frontiers of gender,¹⁵ yet they disagree about what transgenders or third genders should be doing politically and how they should imagine themselves. Here is an example from our research among members of the Kolkata middle class who have contemplated or gone through gender reassignment surgery and do not fall within the category of “*hijra*.” The speaker is a person who has been through gender reassignment surgery and presents publically as a middle-class woman (and NOT as a *hijra*). She is discussing a friend’s criticism of filmmaker Rituparno Ghosh: “Why wouldn’t Rituparno change his sex? Well he didn’t because Rituparno didn’t want to—nobody’s business. Not everyone has to do sex change—she, S, talks like an idiot sometimes” (personal communication, 26 June 2011).

Given that many of the people we talked with aim to become fully middle-class women, this increasingly visible third gender politics, including a blurring of the line between *hijras* and the middle class, poses

significant dilemmas for members of the middle class who have gone through SRS, at times generating instabilities in their self-understandings.

THE INNER FEMININE

We have described how in modern India a transnational discourse of gender as a set of proliferating identity categories has turned the *hijra* into a third gender. At the same time, the middle-class subject of SRS has been turned into a woman who is ideally indiscernible from any other normal woman, a goal which had been achieved by two women we interviewed.¹⁶ But there is another powerful current that shapes the Indian—especially Hindu—gender frontier and its possibilities in ways that are incommensurable with this transnational discourse. This is an idea of gender fluidity in which gender is not anchored to identity or self. On the basis of her study of the Sanskrit textual tradition, Wendy Doniger has presented a Hindu view “that does not seem to regard sex or gender as an intrinsic part of human identity” (Doniger 1999, p. 298). We would like to explore how an understanding of gender that is reflected in Doniger’s statement is being recuperated and reimagined by some of those who inhabit a gender frontier in Kolkata.

Gender identity has an unstable history in Kolkata. As we discussed above, it is closely intertwined with the colonial politics of domination, which generated images of an effeminate male Bengali elite (Sinha 1995; Nandy 1983), despite the British colonizers’ production of rigid categories of gender and sexuality (Foucault 1979; Stoler 1989). It was in Bengal that resistance to the hypermasculinity projected by the British took the form of a celebration of feminized maleness. Colonial policies and politics stimulated modes of resistance to becoming fully colonial subjects in which a man’s inner woman was recognized and even cultivated in religious practices associated with the nineteenth-century Hindu saint Ramakrishna (Nikhilananda 1942). Ramakrishna, in a manner associated with the Vaisnava *bhakti* devotional tradition, often adopted a devotional stance or *bhava*¹⁷ in which he experienced himself as the female lover Radha in relation to the god Krishna.¹⁸ Instead of simply forming the taken-for-granted ground on which gender is reproduced, devotional play (*lila*) at the boundary of gender has been a focus of reflection and a basis of devotional practice.

As an illustration of this devotional practice, here is a dialogue between another teacher Sri Veerabhadra Rao (1901–2003) and a devotee (the narrator) focused on the *stri* (feminine) *bhava*. Rao carefully differentiates the *stri bhava* and the woman as a material, bodily form:

“This morning, surprisingly, I attained complete ‘stri bhav’ (the feminine bhav). It is only bhav. I am sharing with you what the Mother has given me.

Nanna, since long, there exists the form of a little girl within you. How then suddenly this new concept...” I was asking.

Interrupting my question, Nanna continued:

“This girl still exists. I am explaining that bhav. Bhav and form are different. Only today, I attained complete bhav. No more questions. The form of a girl is visible. We must penetrate deeper for bhav.” “Meditation on the form of a woman and experiencing the bhav of a woman are two different and unrelated aspects altogether. Several meditate on the form of a woman. However they lack the experience of bhav. The Ashta sakhis (Eight sakhis [companions] of Radha) actually attained this stri bhav. A woman is different from woman’s bhav. A woman is a material form made up of organs. In Mother’s world, the concept of woman does not exist. The difference between a man and a woman does not exist. That is strange. Hence the religious scriptures also proclaim, “Naiva stri...” [neither woman]. Human being is none of the three genders—masculine, feminine or neuter. (Rasamani 2004)

In this devotional discourse, the self is thus not gendered. One does not get in touch with one’s inner “real” self as man or woman but rather strives to achieve enlightenment or emancipation of the self by experiencing a range of human possibilities first hand, articulated as specific *bhavas*.

The idea of a genderless self is expressed in the Sanskrit term *atman* [the self, eternal core of the personality]. Ruth Vanita has described a debate in the ancient epic *Mahabharata* that supports the assumption of a genderless self: The female ascetic Sulabha wins a debate with King Jalaba about whether a woman can be autonomous and equal to a man. Though Vanita’s concern is with demonstrating evidence in the Hindu tradition supporting women’s equality, her analysis, like Sulabha’s within the epic, rests on the relationship between gender and the self: “Sulabha declares

her body different from Janaka's but there is no difference between her Self or Spirit (*atman*) and his Self or any other person's Self.... A wise person knows that the Self has no real connection with his/her own body let alone with the bodies of others" (Vanita 2003, p. 86).

Rosalind Morris has considered the relationship among gender, the self, and the body for the *kathoys* of Thailand (a category that includes male transsexuals and transvestites), in order to articulate the local sex/gender system in which the category "*kathoy*" is meaningful (1994). She traced the system's roots to a legacy of Theravada Buddhism and its doctrine of rebirth and the transitoriness of form resulting in "a kind of personhood in which the body and the person are radically independent entities.... In this schema, every being goes through countless births as both males and females until reaching that level of the cosmos in which gender is no longer a dimension of form" (Morris 1994, p. 25). This Buddhist scheme shares roots with Hindu notions of *karma* and rebirth.

Ramakrishna in late nineteenth-century Bengal also stressed the mutability of both gender and bodily form. Many of his sayings were recorded during his lifetime by his disciples (Gupta 1961). Here are a few examples of his reflections on gender and form that give us a feel for the fluidity and even the undecidability of gender:

Is the primal energy man or woman? Once at Kāmārpukar I saw the worship of Kāli in the house of the Lahas. They put a sacred thread on the image of the Divine Mother [the sacred thread is worn by high caste men]. One man asked, "Why have they put the sacred thread on the Mother's person?" The master of the house said, "Brother, I see that you have rightly understood the Mother. But I do not yet know whether the Divine Mother is male or female." (Nikhilananda 1942, p. 291)

(speaking to a young man): "A man can change his nature by imitating another's character. He can get rid of a passion like lust by assuming the feminine mood. He gradually comes to act exactly like a woman." (Nikhilananda 1942, p. 176)

This cannot be taken to mean that Ramakrishna assumes that women lack passion, since a basic aspect of Bhakti devotionalism is the passionate love of the cowherd maiden Radha for the god Krishna. Rather, through taking the devotional stance of a *bhava*, the devotee becomes detached from the passions arising directly from his (or her) own body.

LIVING AND NEGOTIATING INCONSISTENT LOGICS OF GENDER

Devotion to Ramakrishna was closely linked to the nineteenth century rise of the Bengali middle class (Chatterjee 1992) and continues to be important in Kolkata today. Most middle-class households we visited have an altar in the living room that includes photos of Ramakrishna, his wife Sarada Devi, and his successor Vivekananda. Though Vivekananda downplayed Ramakrishna's feminine devotional position as he established the international Ramakrishna Mission, this side of Ramakrishna is particularly important to *bhadralok* men who have become women.

Ranjit Sinha has become a woman. Changing her name to Ranjita, she runs an NGO for transgenders and is a public figure in Kolkata who is an active advocate of third gender rights. BBT and KPE's daughter¹⁹ visited Ranjita's flat in South Kolkata. As in many middle-class living rooms in Kolkata, an area has been set aside for puja. Ranjita's altar is more elaborate than most. It is filled with figures of the gods and goddesses Durga, Kali, Laxmi, Ganesh, Siva, and Jagannath, as well as photos of the human trio of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, and Ramakrishna's wife Sarada Devi. A Barbie doll is tucked behind a Nataraj (Siva as the cosmic dancer). For many middle-class transgendered individuals, Ramakrishna is a model of the inner feminine. Perhaps the Barbie doll is a model of the bodily feminine. Ranjita offered a brief description of her transition to becoming a woman to a newspaper reporter who had interviewed her about her life and activism for what she calls the LGBTHQ cause.²⁰ It begins: "A resident of South Calcutta, Ranjita, 38, was recently just a man with female qualities or bhavas (*meli bhav jhukto purus*), but, because within her she had so much feminine self (*nari mann shokta*) within her, about five years ago, she did SRS treatment to become a woman, claims Ranjita."²¹ She thus not only participates in a medical discourse of bodily gender transition but also labels her femininity as a devotional position or *bhava*. Describing her self-experience in a Facebook post following her school reunion at the Christian boys school she had attended as a child, Ranjita wrote: "Born with a transgender soul, I was always effeminate and my passion was not to become a state-level cricketer or a national-level tennis player, but I was always comfortable in dance and singing—these were actually my passion. But my school days were never a nightmare which is so true for many transgenders like me who have been reported to be abused and teased by their co-students for being feminine." Ranjita thus identifies herself as transgender in rather stereotypical terms, associating sports with men and dancing and singing with

women. Her sense of self is shaped by two seemingly incompatible discourses about the relationship between the body and gender, an incompatibility suggested by the dissonant, juxtaposed figures of Barbie and Ramakrishna.

In the following post Ranjita suggested the existence of her “Barbie” side and the tension between this side and the self or public image she projects as a political activist [the original is in English]:

I am getting mixed comments from my friends and followers on a few recent photo posts in FB which I did during my short stay at Delhi to attend a Public Hearing on Section 377. Yes I admit that the photos are not the usual ones which people have got habituated to see. I also admit that I have been pretty bold in my attires and I may be looking a bit voluptuous. But the photos were taken during one of my private sessions with my friends with whom I was heading for a party after our hectic day long session.

We, the community activists, are mostly concentrating on our agenda for community development and in this rat race we mostly forget to give space to ourselves and spent some time the way I like. Exactly this is what has happened where my friends wanted me to wear something which goes with the mood or spirit of the party. Even though, there were initial hesitations and I was in two minds whether to go for it or not, but once I made up my mind and went for that, I was sure that I shall be able to carry myself and I was also sure that this adventure will not make a dent in my personality of public image because my friends and co community workers know me in and out. I know that I have been quite transparent so far and so a party dress, how seductive be it will not leave a negative impression in the minds of people who know me.

In the photos which generated negative comments on her Facebook page, Ranjita was wearing a long black sweater or dress with a deeply scooped neck that dipped below an exposed patterned bra. In most other photos, taken both at home and in public settings, she is usually wearing typical and tasteful women’s clothing—either a sari or shalwar-kamiz with dupatta. The kind of tension she expressed in the above post is quite different from the tension between a devotional approach to gender as *bhava* and gender as Barbie. It is little different from the dilemma that faces most of us when trying to manage Facebook: the blurring of contextually specific identities or self-images on a single Facebook page, analogous to wearing a bathing suit to a lecture hall. For a political

activist like Ranjita, the problem is exacerbated by the fact that her Facebook page is publically accessible.

The image of Ramakrishna is also important for Manabi Bandyopadhyay, another publicly visible and active middle-class transgender who has undergone SRS and become a woman. In one of our conversations with her, several years before she became internationally known for her appointment as a principal of a women's college near Kolkata in 2015, she was talking about how she understood Ramakrishna:

Ramakrishna Deb—again it's just me who thinks this way—I am only telling you this—I always felt that he was very effeminate—he was in love with Krishna like Radha was in love with him—he was a lover of Krishna just like Radha was. It is similar to Lord Chaitanya of the Bhakti movement—he was in love with Krishna too—Chaitanya was such a handsome man—so big and tall but he was always crying for Krishna—how does that happen? He cannot just get into such devotion: Maybe he developed such an identity in his later life—I feel the same about Ramakrishna Deb—that he developed such an identity also in his love for Krishna. (Fieldnotes 20 April 2011)

Manabi is certainly not alone in perceiving feminine qualities in Ramakrishna, though the hedges in her first sentence (“again it's just me who thinks this way—I am only telling you this”) probably reflect in part the charged politics surrounding any suggestion that Ramakrishna might have been anything other than a normal heterosexual male, a suggestion that Manabi might be making even by identifying with Ramakrishna. The intensely political nature of any suggestion that Ramakrishna's sexual orientation or gender might be nonnormative exploded two decades ago when scholar Jeffrey Kripal published a book arguing that Ramakrishna had had unrecognized homosexual tendencies (Kripal 1995). The powerful Ramakrishna Mission, which devotes much of its efforts to promoting middle-class family values, vehemently denounced the book and it generated so much controversy that Kripal was barred from the country. Unlike Kripal, Manabi is suggesting that it was devotional practice itself, involving intense love for the masculine Krishna, that might have led both Chaitanya and Ramakrishna to experience themselves as feminine, rather than any innate orientation.

Manabi says that the devotion that Chaitanya and Ramakrishna each felt for God Krishna involved not just devotion to Krishna but also identification with Radha, a woman. By using the word “identity,” she

suggests something more stable, more fully a part of the self than the term *bhava* would imply. Manabi used the language of gender identity in a manner that echoes the identity categories of psychiatric medical diagnosis and identity politics. However, Manabi undermines fixed identity categories even as she invokes them. Why would Manabi speculate that Chaitanya developed this identity as a female later in life? The most obvious contrast is with the standard narrative that justifies SRS (“I have always felt that I was a woman trapped in a man’s body”), the narrative that Manabi uses to justify her own surgery. Manabi is thus drawing a contrast between her own situation and that of these spiritual leaders, who did not become women. Manabi seemed to express anxiety about her identification with Ramakrishna because her current identity as a woman must be read in terms of a diagnostic system that first pathologizes the experience of being a woman trapped in a man’s body before creating a new normal as “third gender” or “transwoman.” She did not want to pathologize Chaitanya or Ramakrishna and thus distinguished their experiences from her own. Her concern thus suggests a tension between a gender system based on fluidity that is experienced in many aspects of Hindu devotionalism and the dichotomous divide between male and female that the idea of SRS rests on.

Not only do individuals such as Manabi and Ranjita move between these two different ways of experiencing gender; so do professionals such as psychoanalytically trained psychiatrists and psychologists in Kolkata.²² Most seem to slide easily between one system and the other, not noticing inconsistencies between them. The Indian psychoanalytic tradition has explored what some would call the transgendered dimensions of the Indian psyche, beginning with the work of psychoanalyst Girindrasekhar Bose, who was inspired by elements of Sanskritic tradition (Bose 1933; Nandy 1995). Through Freud’s psychoanalytic technique, Bose drew on two thousand years of Indian introspection as a way of subverting colonial denigrations of Indian culture (Nandy 1995). Freud’s idea of the inner self as the sexual id, which many saw as a rather disreputable view of human nature—and which understandably triggered such hostile reactions from the Ramakrishna Mission when applied by Jeffrey Kripal to Ramakrishna—became something quite different in Bose’s work. Where Freud focused on sexual desire at the core of the unconscious, Bose found gender: “Whenever the analysis [of a man] is pushed deeper, the desire to be a woman is found to

be the central element of the castration situation” (Bose 1999, p. 35). Here, too, we have gender, not as an identity but as a fluid, desiring element of the psyche. This is quite different from the practice associated with SRS, in which a discrepancy between gender as identity and the body is highlighted. Bose suggested that a man’s desire to be a woman is general, at least among Indian men. Bose did not view it as a pathology, though this kind of approach became the grounds for early psychoanalysts to pathologize whole cultures. When talking with psychoanalytically oriented psychiatrists and psychologists in Kolkata who had treated patients going through SRS, we heard several emphasize that Bose had recognized the inner feminine in men, linking up Bose’s recognition with their own involvement in diagnosing candidates for SRS. For instance, when Ewing was interviewing a psychoanalyst and asked her how to think about this process of diagnosis in terms of psychoanalytic theory, the psychoanalyst drew on Bose without considering that Bose’s recognition of the Indian man’s inner woman was, far from a first diagnostic step toward turning one’s patient into a woman, instead a way of unsettling gender binaries, going even further than Freud had done in disrupting the idea of a stable gender identity. Yet when thinking about SRS, these psychiatrists and psychoanalysts tended to fall into the gender binary that characterizes the modern middle class in India as well as the global North.

REIMAGINING GENDER FLUIDITY

Bengali filmmaker Rituparno Ghosh’s recent imagining of SRS through Bengali literary and religious histories offers a window into the post-colonial politics and paradoxes of transforming oneself from a man into a middle-class woman in Kolkata. Ghosh sought to destabilize assumptions about a cohesive gendered self by exploring the problem of in-betweenness itself. In the last film released before his death,²³ *Chitrangada: The Crowning Wish* (2012), Ghosh played the role of Rudi, a choreographer about to undergo gender reassignment surgery as he stages a production of Rabindranath Tagore’s late nineteenth-century play *Chitrangada* (Ghosh 2012; Tagore 2007), which addressed women’s equality through a story of a princess raised as a man. Tagore’s play was itself a reinterpretation of a story from the ancient Sanskrit epic *Mahabharata*.

Rituparno Ghosh presented and challenged the unthinkability of gender ambiguity and in-betweenness to a general Bengali public by enacting indecision and personifying undecidability in his acting roles, and being the first Bengali director to come out publically not only as gay but also dressed in feminine clothing (Ganguly 2010; Ghosh 2012; Nag 2010) (Fig. 7.1).

In the film *Just Another Love Story*, directed by Kaushik Ganguly (2010), Rituparno is described as playing a “cross dressing homosexual” (*India Today* 2011). His character corrects others who call him “Madam” or otherwise assign him to one gender or the other. In an interview with a *Times of India* reporter after the release of this film, Rituparno embraced the concept of third gender, not as a fixed gender category to be entered in a passport or identity card (a category that a 2014 Indian Supreme Court Decision has created),²⁴ but as a way of pointing to both in-betweenness and gender fluidity. Like the idea of shifts in experience associated with the *bhava*, Ghosh suggested that gender need not be part of a person’s identity, echoing the theme that the self is ungendered:



Fig. 7.1 Photograph of Rituparno Ghosh (Sanjib Ghosh 2014)

So much is said about the way you advocate the third gender...

Yes. I enjoy being in the third gender. I am not a ‘man-man’. Neither am I a woman. I’ve heard people asking if I’m now going to wear a sari. My answer is no. The whole concept of being unisex has been usurped by women. If a woman wears a pair of jeans, nobody questions her. But if a man wears a necklace, he is never called regal. I have not worn anything that Indian men have never worn traditionally. Indian men have neither worn a sari nor a ghagra choli [long skirt with short blouse]. Hence, I don’t see myself doing that either. There was so much speculation over whether I had a sex-change operation. I haven’t done that. To reduce my waistline, I have only done an abdominoplasty for “Just Another Love Story”. I don’t want to be a woman. If I ever consider it, I would not be secretive about it. After all, there is no shame in it.

In this passage, he emphasizes that he is not dressing as a woman, thereby inhabiting the point of maximal tension, poised in between.

Are you answerable to your readers/viewers if you ever opt for this operation?

No, I am not. I owe an answer only if there is a change of entity that results in me becoming a different person. However, let me say this, I don’t think the identity of a person is gender-based. (Dasgupta 2010)

This detachment of identity from gender resembles how gender is understood in the devotional traditions.

Though not all transgender activists in Kolkata agree with Ghosh’s approach to gender, his unexpected death in 2013 drew large crowds to his funeral, and the transgender community now sees him as having been an important spokesperson for their cause, thanks to his well-received films on homosexuality and his last complete film, which put SRS at its center.

But Ghosh, while toying with the idea of SRS, portrayed it as a choice that did not stem from an innate discrepancy between gender identity and the body, as the diagnostic discourse of “gender dysphoria” would have it, but emerged as a possible solution to tensions generated by social and legal constraints. When his character Rudi explains to his male lover why he wants to become a woman, he says it’s because he wants to adopt a child, which is only possible for a heterosexual couple. To the viewer, this is clearly not a satisfactory reason for going through such

a life-altering transformation. In the end, Rudi changes his mind and decides not to go through with the surgery. Through a series of images and the mirroring of a therapist who is actually a figment of his own imagination, he comes to realize his own truth, which is not consistent with the constraints of the dominant gender binary as represented by both legal constraints and the process of surgery itself. The film captures his shifting, inconsistent subjectivities and focuses on the mounting conflict generated by his efforts to inhabit a consistent subject position and its associated fantasies of life as a “real” woman with a stable relationship, family, and identity.

In this context Ghosh, who embodies the experience of shifting, inconsistent selves, discursively opts for gender fluidity, an alternative subject position that constantly challenges the gender dichotomy. He does it in part by drawing on and reconstructing narratives and heroes from the Hindu tradition. In addition to his evocation of Chitrangada, he drew on figures such as Ramakrishna and the medieval Bengali saint Chaitanya, who was seen as an embodiment of both Radha and Krishna. At an earlier moment in his career, he had had aspirations to make an epic film of Chaitanya and did extensive research for the project, but it fell through due to lack of funding.²⁵ Like Ranjita Sinha and Manabi Bandyopadhyay, Ghosh drew on historical figures as models for his non-conforming orientation to gender, but instead of living with these two models in uneasy tension, he foregrounded the incompatibility between the idea of gender associated with SRS and the notion of gender fluidity.

CONCLUSION

Kolkata is a site with a complex colonial history of power inflected through gender, religious imaginaries replete with vivid images of gender fluidity, and a local psychoanalytic tradition that recasts the self as both male and female. The historical memory of Hindu traditions of gender fluidity, which was foregrounded as a strategy of resistance to colonial hypermasculinity in the late nineteenth century, is being redeployed today to reimagine gender in ways that are incommensurable with the bounded and proliferating identity categories of gender and sexuality that dominate most transnational public discourse.

By foregrounding an incommensurability between South Asian²⁶ and Euro-American ways of doing gender and sexuality, there is the risk of appearing to reproduce the old Orientalist divide. By touching on issues

of gender and sexuality in relation to an important Hindu figure such as Ramakrishna, one steps into a politically fraught arena where the scholar Jeffrey Kripal found himself embroiled in controversy over his book *Kali's Child*, a psychoanalytic study of Ramakrishna. (Politically powerful followers of Ramakrishna were particularly offended by the psychoanalytic claim to be able to discern the inner self through techniques ostensibly rooted in scientific observation—to identify unconscious homoerotic desire that Ramakrishna himself did not recognize.) As Foucault argued, traditional Western psychoanalysis is a disciplinary technique that constitutes the subject and its interiority through webs of power, as embodied in the analyst. In this discursive system, the self is constituted through gendered desire.

Ramakrishna himself participated in and embodied a very different disciplinary practice, which constituted a different interior, with a different relation to the body. The Bengali middle class has been shaped in complex ways both by a Western discourse of gender and by Bengal's rich discursive tradition, which includes *bhakti* devotionalism and rearticulations of Sanskritic texts. Though transnational movements for LGBTQ rights have introduced gay and transgender identities as social possibilities, emerging public discourse in Kolkata indicates that middle-class subjects might imagine gender in ways that draw on rearticulations of *bhadralok* intellectual and spiritual traditions that may not be available to middle-class subjects in other places.

These traditions are being used to open up new understandings of fluid gender and shifting selves that both resonate with and trouble middle-class publics in Kolkata. Though the legal possibility of identifying as third gender may encourage sociopolitical strategies and self-narratives that are inconsistent with the SRS self-narrative of a fixed inner self that was born in the wrong body, it does little to facilitate alternative ways of experiencing gender. It generates new tensions, as a *Times of India* article, "Who is eligible to be called a transgender in Kolkata?" foregrounds (*Times of India* 2016). In the article Manabi is quoted as saying: "Any transperson who has converted to a woman should get all the facilities that a transgender gets," but she "likes to identify herself as a 'transwoman.'" Ranjita, in contrast, said, "If they have converted themselves into women, why should they want the perks and positions that are reserved for the third gender?" According to the article, Riya Sarkar, another woman who has been through surgery, "gets upset if she is referred to as a transgender. 'I took a lot of financial and physical

trouble to become a woman.” But the possibility of fluidity is encouraged by other frames of reference in India, such as the sort of androgyny advocated by Mahatma Gandhi and Ramakrishna before him as a way of resisting British colonial hypermasculinity. The result of these two different systems for understanding gender is that many of those who inhabit the political frontiers of gender in Kolkata today often experience themselves in inconsistent, even incommensurable ways. Like Ranjita, Manabi, and Rituparno, many men move between essentialized notions of an authentic interior self as woman and a fluid understanding of the feminine or masculine as shifting self experiences that can be cultivated by anyone as devotional practice. These selves may or may not be gendered, but they are certainly shaped by political forces.²⁷

NOTES

1. We use the term “gender” as it has been taken up in feminist theory to mean a social construct based on social practices and cultural representations of sexual identity, in contrast to “sex,” which is based on biological characteristics of the body.
2. Though some scholars are uncomfortable with a developmentalist discourse that seems to recapitulate and expand colonial efforts to create modern subjects (Massad 2007), most are hesitant to critique this socially powerful, liberatory movement. When the editors of *The Transgender Studies Reader* wrote an introduction to Towle and Morgan’s insightful critique of the concept of “third gender,” they chastised the article for being too critical of transgender writers who romanticize their encounters with other cultures, despite Towle and Morgan’s legitimate critique (Stryker and Whittle 2006, p. 666).
3. See Nanda (1990), Reddy (2005), Dutta (2012).
4. A number of *hijras* have described undergoing genital excision rather than sex reassignment surgery (Revathi 2010), though the latter may be increasing in popularity in recent years.
5. We will use “sex reassignment surgery” and “gender reassignment surgery” interchangeably, since most interviewees in India use the latter term. “Sex affirmation surgery” is another term that has become popular in recent years. It articulates a specific theory about the relationship between mind and body with political implications that may not be consistent with the orientations of those who argue for gender fluidity or ambiguity.
6. But see Kaja Silverman’s chapter “A Woman’s Soul Enclosed in a Man’s Body: Femininity in Male Homosexuality” (1992, p. 339). She begins

- the chapter by admitting her hesitation in discussing the place of femininity in male homosexuality because of the prevailing politics of gender and sexuality (1992, p. 339).
7. The magazine is called *Humanjinsparast* (an Urdu translation of the word “Homosexual” according to the blogger who posted this awkward translation of the young man’s story) (sherryx 2008).
 8. See Spivak (1987, p. 205; 1989) on the politics of essentialized identities, which some claim are pragmatically and strategically necessary for promoting one’s political claims. Gamson (1995) discusses tensions between queer politics and identity-based social movements.
 9. This term is used by the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems (ICD-10 CM) (World Health Organization 1992). In the US-based DSM V, this diagnostic category was changed to “gender dysphoria” in 2013 due to pressure from members of the transgender community who challenged the stigmatization associated with the diagnosis of a “disorder” (American Psychiatric Association 2013).
 10. In their critique of this concept of third gender, Towle and Morgan offer a brief history and suggest that the earliest use was by M. Kay Martin and Barbara Voorhies in 1975 (Towle and Morgan 2002, p. 472). Drawing on his ethnographic work in New Guinea, Gilbert Herdt (1994) enthusiastically promoted the concept in the 1990s.
 11. For an NPR news article that points in this direction, see Kott (2014).
 12. The editors of this volume remind us of the ongoing political sensitivity of de-essentializing gender politics by pointing out that some readers may become very angry about comparing gender and sexual identity with style.
 13. A number of anthropologists (Weston 1993; Valentine 2007; Towle and Morgan 2002) have been skeptical of activist-scholars who have argued for the universality of homosexual or “third gender” identities, often based on caricatures of other cultures.
 14. See critique by Towle and Morgan (2002).
 15. Tim Dean (2010), following Susan McKenzie (2006) writes of the “borderlands of gender,” but we prefer frontier, a term that sets aside the idea of borders or boundaries.
 16. It is difficult to find people who were born male and who successfully pass as women, since they hide their past from most people. We accidentally met one such person through a mutual friend who knew of our research and introduced us. The mutual friend had known her before she transitioned. We met the other woman through the doctor who performed the sex reassignment surgery.
 17. *Bhava* or *bhav* is a particular attitude or disposition for perceiving the deity and oneself in relation to the deity.

18. An important model for Ramakrishna and other Hindu devotional leaders was the medieval Bengali saint Chaitanya, who was said to embody both Radha and Krishna (Stewart 2010).
19. KPE's daughter Bethany DiPrete was in Kolkata carrying out her own research on HIV transmission.
20. The "H" in LGBTHQ stands for "hijra".
21. Ujjal Dutta, newspaper article, "Kolkata is not Lagging Behind in Making Homosexuality Legal," reposted on Ranjita's Facebook page.
22. Rosalind Morris has identified analogous tensions between different gender systems in Thailand and noted that "individuals move back and forth between ideological regimes and discursive formations," which involves "movement between different kinds of subjectivity" (1994, p. 38). See also Ewing (1990) on inconsistency and shifting selves.
23. Ghosh subsequently died of a massive heart attack that people said was brought on by the hormone treatments he had undergone, treatments that can be a first step toward SRS.
24. The *National Legal Services Authority v. Union of India* decision gave people the right to self-identification as "third gender," accompanied by the reservation of spaces for them in educational institutions and jobs.
25. Sanjay Nag, personal communication to Ewing, June 25, 2013. Nag directed the film "Memories in March," which was written by Rituparno Ghosh (Nag 2010).
26. Though we have foregrounded Bengal in this essay, many elements of gender ambiguity and fluidity can be found in pan-Indian Hindu traditions (Doniger 1999; O'Flaherty 1980) and in other places where Hindu and Buddhist ideas have shaped local understandings of gender (Morris 1994).
27. In 2015, Sangeeta Datta, Kaustav Bakshi, and Rohit K. Dasgupta published an edited volume on Rituparno Ghosh's films after the present chapter was submitted for publication. Two of the essays, by Aniruddha Dutta and Daisy Hasan, discuss *Chitrangada* (Datta et al. 2015).

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PART II

Becoming a Political Actor

Mediating Moralities: Intersubjectivities in Israeli Soldiers' Narratives of the Occupation

Yehuda C. Goodman

HOW DO PERSONS TRANSFORM POLITICALLY?

This chapter is articulated in light of long conversations I had with young Jewish-Israeli soldiers, mostly in their 20s to mid-30s, who served in the Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since the 1967 war. These soldiers' service was taking place during the so-called second Palestinian uprising (Arabic: *Intifada*) during the 2000s. In those years, thousands of Israeli Jews were injured and killed in suicide bombings and other attacks carried out by Palestinians, and thousands of Palestinians were injured and killed mostly by the Israeli army while trying to fight the Palestinian uprising.

Serving in these territories during that period (also ever since 1987, the time of the first Palestinian uprising)—and trying to provide a subjective narrative representation of that experience—entails complicated moral work by these Jewish-Israeli soldiers. For most of them, the mandatory

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service in the army (for three years between the ages 18 and 21, and then many years for a few weeks per year in the reserve service) is about life in changing places. It is about leaving the place they grew up in right after high school—leaving their family homes and their old friends, meeting new friends from all around Israel, and operating within a strict hierarchic and demanding organization. For combat soldiers, it means tough, challenging training, and then serving on the borders of Israel (with Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon). It is also about changing places in terms of crossing geographical borders and entering a new territory. It is crossing the Green Line, the pre-1967 borders, bringing most of them for the first time in their lives in close proximity to both the Palestinians living in the West Bank (and Gaza Strip) and to the Jewish settlers living in these heavily Palestinian-populated areas. It thus means meeting with the complex realities of the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands.

For most of them, this service in the occupied territories entails unpleasant experiences, like standing very early in freezing-cold mornings at army road blockades, checking the Palestinian workers who are trying to get to their jobs in Israel (that is, to Israel's Jewish areas, within the pre-1967 borders). Army service in the territories also involves entering Palestinian homes in the middle of the night alongside a General-Security-Service (Hebrew: *Shabak*) agent to make an arrest of a Palestinian suspect while his children and wife are screaming or sobbing quietly. And, it requires close, intimate meetings with the Jewish settlers, for example in the city of Hebron, who at times not only embrace the soldiers but also may aggressively curse them on a daily basis for not being tough enough, the settlers argue, toward the Palestinians.

This mandatory service in the army at a young age is, thus, challenging on many levels. It forces these individuals to reaffirm or sort out their subjective position and their political views not only in the face of various troubling new, first-hand experiences—of them dealing with violence or committing violent acts toward civilians, especially Palestinians but also in the face of their fellow Jewish settlers.

In following the soldiers' accounts and narratives, I chose to focus on the issue of change and transformation. While I see this chapter as part of using anthropology as cultural critique (Marcus and Fischer 1986), I try to avoid issues of responsibility, accusation, and evaluation. I do not ask why soldiers act violently (cf. Grassiani 2013). Instead, along with others in this volume, I attempt to answer the question of what leads people to join social movements and form senses of themselves as movement actors. I ask,

in particular, how do their personal experiences, affective commitments, and social networks affect the specific nature of their activism?

In trying to answer these questions, I rephrase them slightly. Instead of asking about the process of joining social movements, I explore, more generally, the interface of subjectivity and politics. I ask how subjects abandon accepted (or dominantly shared or their own previously held) political standpoints, and how they start rethinking their political views, and perhaps start even acting politically in new ways (or in some new politically relevant spaces). Further, instead of asking directly about factors or causes affecting their political involvement, I try to follow the subjective—at times hesitant—interpretations individuals offer to their interlocutors of their own lives.

Politics is not merely about the institutionalized and the public sphere and mass-media coverage. The political resides within the everyday life of individuals. Indeed, anthropologists have long been interested in the ways personal moral work and emotional work are tied up with the politics of social life (e.g., Lutz and Abu-Lughod 1990). Accordingly, I examine, in this chapter, how diverse personal experiences in the army and beyond relate to diverse power struggles or politics in tellers' lives. Still, I am not interested in the politics of social life for its own sake. Rather, in examining the interface of subjectivity and politics, I follow how politics in the narrow sense—politics as nation-state structures and diverse discourses (cf. Collier and Ong 2005) that govern their various operations—evolve for persons (in this case, soldiers). I ask then how *the views they hold concerning what the state should do* or refrain from doing—in matters that have crucial moral and social implications for all citizens—*transform throughout their lives*.

Gradually changing political views, in general, and certainly in relation with the charged experiences in the army, are closely tied to the moral subjectivity of the tellers. Political attitudes and political actions are the outcomes of the subject's ongoing moral work (cf. Zigon 2008), carried out through army service, while back in regular civilian life, and during conversations with me, the anthropologist (and fellow Jewish-Israeli citizen). I examine, then, how the moral work done throughout daily life (in fact, its narrative representation) relates to the “big” political questions. Such questions are anchored in the debate about whether Israel should withdraw from the territories to its pre-1967 borders and thus allow the Palestinians to have a state of their own. It is, more or less, the dividing line between the so-called “right” and “left” in Israel.

Historically, it is the political struggle between supporters of the Likud (and other national parties) who underscore the Jewish right to their ancient homeland in its entirety and the Labor party (and others) who, though Zionist and patriotic, still prefer a (Jewish-democratic) state that does not control another population. It is a debate between hawkish and dovish political attitudes: Between the ones who underscore the *Jewish* in the definition of the state as being Jewish and democratic and the ones who underscore the *democratic*. Further, it is between the ones who are more ethno-nationalists (underscoring the national and Jewish elements) and the ones who are more liberal and support civil rights (cf., Yiftachel 2006). It is, thus, the struggle between those who call the territories “Judea and Samaria” and see them as part of the ancient Jewish promised land, and those who perceive them as part of the shorter history of Israel and Zionism, who call them “the West Bank” or the “Occupied Territories” or simply “the territories” (labels that are in tune with the international community’s reference to these lands). The latter labels are the ones I use throughout this chapter.

In the past twenty years or so, including the period covered in this chapter, governments in Israel were inclined more to the right, but polls indicate that throughout the years, the majority of Israeli Jews still probably support a viable two-state solution, a Jewish state alongside a Palestinian state (e.g., Ragson 2016). In relation to the narratives of soldiers serving in the territories, we should recall that since 1975, when Jews started settling in the territories occupied by Israel during the 1967 war, an intense political contest has developed in Israel whether it should withdraw from the territories and especially stop Jews from settling in them. We should also recall that, although hundreds of thousands of Jews were living in these occupied territories in the 2000s, most Israeli Jews do not reside in the territories.¹ For most Israeli Jews visiting the territories is visiting a foreign land. Retrospective accounts of these soldiers who served or refused to serve in the army in these occupied territories offer, then, rich narratives of the interface of subjectivity and politics, especially of political views and orientation change for individuals.

In light of this background, in exploring the soldiers’ narratives and deliberations, I assume that politics is about controversy and power struggles. As underscored by Talal Asad (2003) and unlike Habermas’s depictions of the public sphere, democratic politics relates to fierce public contests. The question is, then, how subjects join one side or another. Asad hints that these positions are gained through processes that cannot be easily rationalized. Asad assumes that the political is mainly part

of groups' given collective identities as is the case, he argues, with the struggles between the religious and the secular in certain Middle East countries, like Egypt or Turkey. However, scholars should also look at the ways individuals interact with their group identity. Further, people belong to multiple social categories that have an impact on their political convictions (see also Strauss, Chapter 2, this volume). Hence, one place to look for processes of political formations is to start with the group identity (and the groups' political orientation) within which one was born and inquire into the ways individuals draw upon, and change from, such initial belongings and commitments. In Israel, as elsewhere, social categories, like ethnicity, class, or being religious or not, do usually go hand-in-hand with certain political views. Yet, people are not born with a political orientation even if they are born into a group with certain political tendencies. It is interesting to consider how people develop and change their political convictions throughout their lives in the face of their group's convictions.²

How do persons transform, then, from the pre-political to the explicitly political? No less important, how do they change from one political position to another? How do they work out this process? And, how do they describe and represent their discoveries of their own political voice? These questions are relevant for the soldiers despite a well-established discourse on the left that, presumably, they could have appropriated. One should recall the ongoing occupation, many years without any peace process, along with the weakening of the power of the left especially since the 1990s—the failure of the Oslo agreements between the Israelis and the Palestinians in the early 1990s, the assassination of Prime Minister Itzhak Rabin in November 1995, and the rise of the right toward the end of the 1990s, along with the second Palestinian uprising in the early 2000s. Furthermore, and no less important, I should note that the efforts by the state and the army to place the political outside of the army make it very difficult to connect and to articulate soldiers' personal experiences with the larger political debate and concerns. While in the army, they are supposed to act as soldiers—as professionals—and, thus, dissociate both their personal views and, more generally, separate their actions from any moral and political questioning (cf. Ben-Ari 1998).

In exploring soldiers' experiences, I join anthropological inquiries into the margins of the state and politics, for I am interested in the space opened up between the dominance of the state on the one hand and individuals' and groups' counter or marginal positioning (Das and Poole 2004). Further, I adopt a pragmatic approach according to which the political is formed

not via rational and philosophical abstract thinking alone, but also through ongoing experiences and social actions and interactions. This pragmatic approach to moral work and moral reasoning and, in this case, to political formations challenges previous anthropological conceptions of morality as the expression of *established* (perhaps also *fixed*) local habits (and as identical with the cultural). I continue, instead, recent anthropologies of morality that explore the moral as an evolving experience in which subjects face new pressing problems that they grapple with, trying to figure out the very notion of right and wrong. I examine how the subject, the moral, and the political are deeply embedded in complex socially mediated, and intersubjective experiences (cf. Fischer 2003; Ortnor 2006; Zigon 2008).

Exploring *mediations* proved particularly helpful in trying to understand the relation between subjectivity and politics. In developing the concept of mediation, Holland et al. (1998, p. 35) refer, in particular, to “semiotic mediations”—specific symbols that serve as tools of thought. While such linguistic tools are part of what I mean by mediation, I also include in mediation any experience, social structures, and interactions that may have an effect on individuals. Such mediations participate in the ways individuals shape their political views and actions. Hence, by mediation, I refer to the various ways through which persons process their lives, including their political views. As I demonstrate below, soldiers narrate how they acted and processed their political convictions and activities often primarily within larger meaningful frameworks, like army regulations or as part of their group of soldiers, instead of directly facing the political.

Hence, as part of a pragmatic approach, I am interested in the social and discursive actions and interactions that participate in shaping a narrative. I ask how persons relate explicitly and implicitly to the various social actions and contexts within which they operate. How do such social and intersubjective contexts enter (or mediate) their personal narratives of political transformation?

Exploring the behind-the-scene accounts of direct political involvement can help in unraveling the personal experiences, commitments, and intersubjective networks that participate in shaping subjects’ political and moral work. In particular, I examine the ways these are represented—in narratives—and how subjects speak about becoming political subjects. I will outline, then, the ways collective social and cultural understanding of the political for Jewish-Israelis are weaved anew in subjects’ narratives that articulate how their political views evolved in relation to their experiences in army service in the occupied territories.

WORKING AGAINST THE GRAIN: SOLDIERS NARRATING THEIR SERVICE IN THE TERRITORIES

The site I am examining is the narrativized representations of experiences (cf. Garro and Mattingly 2000) of Israeli soldiers who served in the Palestinian-occupied territories. As mentioned above, a central challenge for these soldiers is the ways the power and violence of the army are worked out not during actual war situations, with an enemy and clear-cut moral justifications for acting violently, but during the enforcement of the state's rule in the context of an occupied civil population. This experience is similar, in many respects, to soldiers in other armies in recent decades, like the US army in Iraq where soldiers find themselves in clashes with a hostile civil society (Gutmann and Lutz 2010).

The military is a good site to follow the development of a political consciousness because it is built upon the constant efforts to *depoliticize* the actors' actions. The military in Israel, in particular, is constructed so as to present its operations and work as purely "professional," that is, beyond political debates. Serving in the army is not only mandatory for young men in Israel, but the normative track. It is the expected course of action, naturalized at an early stage. In high schools, students are quite busy in the 11th and 12th grades trying to determine what they will do in the army, and what unit they will find themselves in. Army representatives frequently visit high schools and discuss these matters with the students. Further, the students' teachers often underscore the importance of serving the country through "meaningful" army service, and they encourage their students to contribute their share—while trying to keep at bay deeper political contestations about the ongoing Occupation. Depoliticization is especially salient in the army itself: The soldiers' personal political opinions should be expressed, army commanders (often themselves very young, barely one or two years older than their soldiers) explain, only at the polls, at the Election Day, or during a weekend vacation while the soldiers visit their parents and friends.

The army is an important initiation into adulthood. The Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) is frequently characterized as "the people's army," and it is often described (probably precisely because this is not the case...) as "a melting pot of the Israeli society." In terms of the Jewish-Israeli population, all groups serve in the army, and the state and its representatives often try to instill the notion that army service is a social consensus, while not serving is a social stigma. With the exception of ultra-Orthodox Jews (about 9% of the population)

and Israeli Palestinians (about 18% of the population; these are so-called 1948 Arabs, citizens of Israel, not under the Occupation) who for the most part refrain from serving in the army, most Jews are supposed to serve, at least as the official ideology goes. In reference, then, to the Jewish population, all citizens are expected to serve, regardless of their ethnicity, race, gender, religion, political views, and orientations.³

In many ways, then, questioning service in the military, for example by taking a moral stance built upon a conscientious refusal to serve (cf. Weiss 2014), would be for these young men working against the grain. This is even more so concerning refusal to serve in the territories (which is a selective refusal, not the same as a total refusal to serve in the military). They need to think against the ways they were educated and raised before entering the army, during their service, and afterward. After all, the hegemonic discourse in Israel has been built upon the ideal of depoliticizing, leaving the political outside of the personal experiences in the army. In telling their narratives, soldiers who had troubling experiences in the territories often struggled to find a new language for themselves and for others, to articulate something that, hitherto, has been marginalized but also elusive, suspended, and illicit—something that should be removed from their feelings and thinking.

How, then, do Jewish-Israelis experience the political during their three years of service and thereafter? How does their service disrupt common discourses and partake in constructing or discovering a new political language, either for themselves alone or as part of a larger political project?

A PERSON-CENTERED ETHNOGRAPHY: THE POLITICAL AS A PERSONAL PROCESS

This research has begun with my own experience of growing up as a Jew in Israel within a Modern Orthodox, and national-religious home and community, then later (in my 20s) becoming secular, nonobservant, and active in Peace Now. I served in the army, including some short periods of a few weeks each in the occupied territories, during the mid-1980s and up to the mid-1990s, including during the first Palestinian uprising that broke out in 1987. In addition, I served for a few years during that same period in an army unit that worked to help soldiers to mentally and morally prepare to serve in the occupied territories. Throughout these years, I followed up the issue of service in the army as represented in the media, and in the years 2004–2005 I carried out long conversations

with about 15 soldiers and officers, each lasting a few hours, and at times meeting more than once. These conversations serve as the main source for the analysis presented in this chapter. The tellers of the narratives were all beyond their three years of mandatory service and served in army reserve (Hebrew: *Milvim*) units. I reached out to them with the help of my research assistant, Yoni Cherniavsky, who served in the territories for a while and participated in these conversations as well. During the conversations, Yoni was mostly listening and here and there asking additional questions, and then discussing these conversations with me thereafter. We reached out to these soldiers relying both on my own and Yoni's social networks and then using a snowball process in which the soldiers referred us to their friends or other soldiers who they knew from their service in the territories. Not all the participants questioned the occupation but all talked about the significance of this service in slowly shaping their political views and actions.

Given my own leftist orientation, I was especially drawn to stories of about five of these soldiers who specifically underscored how, following their service in the territories, they gradually tilted toward the left. Even more interesting for me were a few narratives that related how the narrators had become political activists involved in contributing to political initiatives or political movements. A salient example was "Breaking the Silence" (Hebrew: *Shovrim Shtika*; see <http://www.breakingthesilence.org.il/> accessed June 8, 2017), which has been aiming at (as its name indicates) placing the pictures and the concrete implications of the ongoing occupation right in the face of the Israeli public. While the majority of the 15 interlocutors I spoke with were not political activists, some were, including three activists in Breaking the Silence.

I tried to avoid a strict focus on political ideology and views as such. Instead, I aimed at staying as close as possible to more mundane and casual conversations with the interlocutors so that the questions I asked would not turn into efforts to articulate political opinions, and into formal "interviews" (Briggs 1986). In this case, it was a conversation with me, an anthropologist and a Jewish-Israeli who also participated in such service in the army. The soldiers' narratives resonated with my own memories and narratives (cf. Gergen and Gergen 1988). In light of my own (and Yoni's) experiences in the territories, I could probe with the soldiers into troubling experiences, some repeated in many of the stories, like entering a suspect's house in the middle of the night and encountering his frightened wife and children.

There is a methodological dilemma how to represent these stories in this chapter. Presenting some generalizations based on the entire set of interviews will not allow readers to appreciate the nuances and the life trajectory that is part of a personal experience. Hence, my methodological choice is to examine in detail one set of conversations with one soldier, named here Benjamin, and place his narratives within the context of the others (cf. Goodman 2001). Benjamin was telling a story of events that took place during more than twelve years in army service, narrating how he eventually refused to serve in the territories. As explained above, Benjamin's story represents a small group of narratives of those soldiers who quite slowly had become political activists and, in particular, were opposing the occupation. I, thus, exemplify my argument through my conversations with one soldier, Benjamin (pseudonym).

At the time of our conversations, and here I am jumping forward some years after his initial service in the territories, Benjamin was a reserve officer—and he was already an Israeli *Sarban Shtahim*, literally “territories objector,” that is refusing to serve in the territories. This means he was part of a group of hundreds of Israeli soldiers and officers who have been declaring that they refuse to serve in the territories (see: <http://www.seruv.org.il/english/default.asp>, accessed July 5, 2016). This initiative started with a letter signed and published by 51 combat soldiers and officers in January 2002; as of July 2016, 623 persons had signed and about 250 have been jailed for their refusal. This political initiative was a response to the failure of the Oslo agreements and the assassination of Prime Minister Rabin (1995), and it was in direct response to the horrifying second Palestinian uprising (2000s), which were still ongoing when the interviews were conducted, with Palestinian suicide bombers injuring and killing Jewish-Israelis, and Israeli forces injuring and killing Palestinians in response to the uprising. Under the title “Courage to Refuse” (Hebrew: *Ometz Lesarev*), and arguing that the refusal is for the sake of Israel itself and part of the fight for democracy, the writers of the initial letter declared (quoted with some omissions; emphasis in the original):

We, reserve combat officers and soldiers of the Israel Defense Forces, who were raised upon the principles of Zionism, self-sacrifice and giving to the people of Israel and to the State of Israel, who have always served in the front lines, and who were the first to carry out any mission in order to protect the State of Israel and strengthen it (...) who have served the State of Israel for long weeks every year, in spite of the dear cost to

our personal lives, have been on reserve duty in the Occupied Territories, and were issued commands and directives that had nothing to do with the security of our country, and that had the sole purpose of perpetuating our control over the Palestinian people; We, whose eyes have seen the bloody toll this Occupation exacts from both sides; We, who sensed how the commands issued to us in the Occupied Territories destroy all the values that we were raised upon; We, who understand now that the price of Occupation is the loss of IDF's human character and the corruption of the entire Israeli society; We, who know that the Territories are not a part of Israel, and that all settlements are bound to be evacuated; We hereby declare that we shall not continue to fight this War of the Settlements. We shall not continue to fight beyond the 1967 borders in order to dominate, expel, starve and humiliate an entire people. We hereby declare that we shall continue serving the Israel Defense Force in any mission that serves Israel's defense. **The missions of occupation and oppression do not serve this purpose – and we shall take no part in them.**

Joining this initiative meant Benjamin, like the many other signers of this letter, was selectively refusing to serve in these occupied territories. He is a Zionist and believes in the right of Israel to exist and to hold an army to defend itself. He is not a pacifist that would object to any use of force—a designation which the army, at times, is willing to accept as a release from duty (cf. Weiss 2014). Perhaps we should say Benjamin belongs to a special type of pacifism that takes politics, history, and memory into account. He believes that the Israeli army has been misused for many years now; for, while serving in the occupied territories, the soldiers and officers had to issue “commands and directives that had nothing to do with the security of our country, and that had the sole purpose of perpetuating our control over the Palestinian people.” He objects, then, to the use of the army to maintain a military occupation of what he believes to be Palestinian lands.

When we met, in 2004, Benjamin was writing up his doctoral thesis in Jewish Thought and had been active for a while in this political organization (Courage to Refuse). As apparent from the website statement and from various activities the organization has carried out, this initiative was an ongoing and explicit political project that was aimed to raise consciousness in the Israeli public sphere about the price of the Occupation and, thus, to encourage more soldiers to selectively refuse to serve in occupied territories and sign the statement.

In our conversations, carried out together with my research assistant, Yoni Cherniavsky, Benjamin said it took him some ten years after he finished his mandatory army service, and throughout many periods of serving on the reserves, to reach this political view and to take action. Relating this process to Benjamin's age and stage in life are important starting points for understanding the ways the political emerges in Benjamin's narrative.

The time span is relatively long and begins well before his first service, as a young soldier, barely out of high school, in the territories. Telling a narrative with such a timeline and identifying the seeds of his personal political change in this early period, is closely related to the Israeli experience: Serving in the army is, as mentioned above, mandatory and not voluntary, and this service can last three or four years. Furthermore, service starts early, from the age of 18 or 19 if you first study in a yeshiva, religious academy or serve one year in so-called national voluntary service (Hebrew: *shmat sherut*) in various civil society organizations. Soldiers are young people, then, when their independent political views are just starting to be shaped.

Consequently, processing the meanings of serving in the army is, at times, a process that extends for ten, fifteen, and even twenty-five to thirty years, since reserve service continues each year for some thirty days or so, and remains a relevant influence through various life stages, roles, and changes both in the army and in one's civilian life.

Listening to Benjamin talking, it became apparent to me that Benjamin did not offer us a coherent account of finding his political voice. His story seems to be in line with the important distinction between narratives that have a clear teleology and moral stance and those that are less certain or fluid (Ochs and Capp 2001, pp. 156–157). Benjamin struggled to explain to us—and to himself, while articulating matters during the conversation—how he actually came to decide to refuse to serve in the territories; he also explains away and rejects possible reductionist psychological and other explanations (cf. Kirmayer 2000 on “broken narratives”).

In addition, the structure of the story seems to escape the Christian revelatory model (Stromberg 1993) like the one embedded in the conversion of Paul on the road to Damascus. In fact, Benjamin's story seems to break from a Christian tale that has been identified by recent anthropological efforts to understand changes soldiers go through while serving in remote, foreign countries, like Iraq or Afghanistan

(Gutmann and Lutz 2010). Instead, Benjamin's story is much more gradual and nonconclusive. Further, his story blends time periods and various personal and social contexts. In particular, the story includes references to his religious beliefs, a medical condition with his arm (an injury that occurred during birth), his mandatory army service, and his service in the reserve. He elaborates on his various changing cultural and social identities, including being a soldier, a married spouse, a father, and a student at the university.

While I do not have the space to elaborate on this point, I would like to mention that Benjamin also explained to me in detail the importance of diverse ideologies during his life. In particular, Benjamin's narrative was haunted repeatedly by his debating the tension between Israel being a Jewish and a democratic state, and how he struggled to sort out contradictions between these two values.

Benjamin's narrative started from early childhood. He told me that he was raised in a Jewish-Israeli Orthodox family. As mentioned above, some cultural identities in Israel tend to go hand-in-hand with some political views. Being raised in an Orthodox family usually means being more tilted to the political Right, as is apparent from Elections outcomes. Still, in more academic circles, as in Benjamin's home (his father an academician and mother a teacher), the political views were more varied. In any case, his family was not living in a settlement and Benjamin explains that his family was fairly open-minded, modern, and not too strictly Orthodox. His parents were tolerant enough toward their son's rebellions. "It started, I think, at the age of five," says Benjamin,

I told my dad that it [religion] is boring (...). I did not understand why I am not allowed to eat a sandwich with, say, *schnitzel* and cheese... (...) and they [my parents] could not provide a decisive reply to this question (...). I couldn't reach a level of connection with the understanding that there is a compelling system of rules... or I could not connect [these rules] to God. (...). On the social level (...) probably I did not like the social organization, going to synagogue on Sabbath, and on the way cracking seeds [Hebrew: *lefatzebakh gar'inim*, a common habit among Israelis during leisure times, eating sunflower seeds] and talk (...). There is a complete social organization that, probably, I did not find myself in it.

From early in his life, Benjamin had deep and troubling questions about his religious faith and about his social belonging, questions that are expressed in the context of our conversation about serving in the army.

Indeed, it sounds here as if he is setting out a life theme of nonconforming, thus in a way foretelling the rebellion that was to come. He was not sure, he says, where he stood in relation to being an Orthodox Jew—a position that normally entails being observant, keeping the religious commandments (e.g., keeping Kosher), keeping the Sabbath, and refraining from touching his girlfriend (Hebrew: *Shmirat Negia*). Benjamin decided to interrogate these beliefs in more depth, spending a year in a yeshiva prior to military service in his quest to sort things out religiously.

Benjamin started in the army in a unit that is for Yeshiva students and which has a special arrangement with the army according to which the soldiers spend some two and half years in a yeshiva and two years or less in the army (in Hebrew, this agreement and the set of yeshivas associated with it is called *Hesder*, literally “an arrangement”). It means, in practice, that the soldiers are much more bound to their cohort and to being committed to certain views and lifeways. As his heretical views developed, though, Benjamin decided to leave this group. Thus, during his military service, young Benjamin abandoned Orthodox Judaism. He stopped keeping the Halakha (Jewish law) and transferred to a secular army unit. This move was quite a shock to his friends and family, and Benjamin struggled to regain his parents’ and family’s approval.

This movement away from Orthodox Judaism, Benjamin explained, occurred between 1987 and 1989 during the “first intifada,” the first Palestinian uprising, which was a largely unarmed act of resistance. For the most part, Palestinians, including children, used stones and pushed against Israeli soldiers in acts of civil demonstrations. This uprising was a wake-up call for Israeli society. It was some twenty years after the Occupation began and it, thus, became apparent that the Palestinian generation that grew up under the Occupation was not willing to accept Israeli rule. It became apparent that there was no “benevolent occupation,” and Benjamin experienced this upheaval first hand as a young soldier.

Transferring us quickly to Hebron, to Nablus, to Aza [Palestinian cities] was frightening (...) because suddenly a helicopter lands, and suddenly you’re taken away, and suddenly after 15 minutes you find yourself in Aza, at the heart of an event, and you need to get used to it (...). The first Intifada was surreal for the army. We had no clue what is happening there. We used to travel with the Jeeps back and forth, and no one had a

clue, certainly not during the first year, who's against who, and why they throw blocks... and perhaps we should not go there so there'd be no one to throw the block at (...), but, on the other hand, are we losers (Hebrew: *frayerim*)? We won't go to the center of that village on Friday afternoon when they go to the Mosque? Why shouldn't we go, and show them we are the landlord of the neighborhood.

The end of this quote seems to show that Benjamin was not a dove; at least not at that stage in his life. Further, I wondered how much distance he was establishing through his narrative from his earlier self, here and in other places in the conversation. Interestingly, he was not busy in carefully, and reflectively, organizing the narrative so as to clearly and explicitly distinguish his current more established views (at the time of telling) from his views back then. He narrated these occurrences during the first intifada in a way that tried to relate the thoughts he and his friends were having back then—without immediately making sure he is presenting explicitly the way he would think at present about these matters. Thus, he was not explicitly expressing a distance between his “addressing self” of his current moral and political views and the self as protagonist of the past (cf. Goffman 1974, p. 520), the principal of the reported actions during his service. Still, I should also note that he told these last few sentences with a little sarcasm, as if imitating a figure of an arrogant Israeli (“are we losers...?”). It was told, then, in a way that slightly distanced his present addressing self from the person he was back then during the service in the territories. I assumed then, that by the time of telling the narrative, he did not still think they, the soldiers, should show the Palestinians that “we are the landlord.” He was thus conveying, though indirectly, that he was no longer that same person in whose name he was now, at the time of the conversation, narrating.

Benjamin was especially busy conveying to me and Yoni what it meant to suddenly face the angry Palestinians. He says that much of his initial mandatory service was spent in the territories. Each uprising and each period has its own characteristics in terms of the type of violence and counterviolence on the ground. During that period, Benjamin explained, it was, for him and his friends, about serving at regular and random checkpoints, and clearing Palestinian blockades (composed of heavy stones placed in the middle of the night) from the road. It also meant knocking on doors to force Palestinian farmers to clean up the roadblocks—Palestinians who were, at times, elders who tried to resist

or complain, moving around half asleep and mumbling that they had nothing to do with these blockades and that they simply happened to live nearby. It was also about chasing children, some very young, who bravely threw stones at the soldiers and were crying desperately when caught; and then it was about erasing graffiti from walls (all in Arabic the soldiers barely understood), tearing down Palestinian flags (at that time, it was illegal for this flag to be displayed publicly), and then using these very flags, ironically, as soldiers' bedspreads and for decorating the walls of their army residence. It also involved dismantling demonstrations by using tear gas; attacking the demonstrators with special trucks that threw staining paints, liquids with foul odors, or little stones; targeting demonstrators with loud sounds; and using the problematic rubber bullets with iron cores that often seriously injured the Palestinians.

Using force and violence also meant arresting Palestinian suspects in their homes when working with the Israeli Security Service, confronting Benjamin with the anxious eyes of the suspect's close family members. On top of these activities, Benjamin participated in defending his fellow Jews; that is, securing the movement of the Jewish settlers. These experiences were annoying, but they were also confusing, as Benjamin found himself caught up, as a young sergeant and then as a young officer, in a triangle—between the Palestinians; the soldiers, some of whom had to be stopped from acting violently against Palestinians; and his fellow Jews, the settlers.

Long service in the army was terrible in my eyes, I mean I did it but it was terrible... there were those days of endless travelling, and some twenty hours of walking on Samaria-Crossing Road [in the West Bank]... without you really understanding what is happening. Also you don't understand who you're guarding: Are you guarding the soldiers so they won't get wild, or you're guarding the [Jewish] settlers, who are there [and you need to defend them] and yet they often were destroying Palestinian property.

Benjamin was, thus, facing troubling moral experiences in a space that, during his childhood and as he was growing up, was conceived as the promised biblical land of Judea and Samaria. Although, presumably, Jews lived there some 2000 years ago and were back in their homeland, now Benjamin slowly began conceiving this space as a Palestinian land.

I should note that these moral and political realizations were not experienced and were not expressed in nicely articulated ideological formulations.

Rather, Benjamin tried to convey in his narrative that he felt that all these activities, which he and other soldiers were carrying out, were, so he says, in vain. You erase graffiti, he says, without even understanding it; you take down one flag, a new one will be flown high, later on. Soldiers, he said, childishly competed who would have the most beautiful Palestinian flag to decorate their rooms and be used as bedspreads. All of these activities involved much violence, confusion, conflict, and deep frustration on all sides.

We saw harsh things, beating up, murderous beating, and threats and shouting, and secured entering into houses, only to discover it was the wrong houses. Go enter house number 3 in the [refugees] camp in this or that street in Balata. No one in the world knows where is house number 3, nor does anyone knows the one living in house number 3 [...]. And the Shaback [General Security Service] shows you here, go in, and afterwards it turns out that that guy is not Yussuff Hassan but Hassan Yussuff, and they got mixed up... and... now go and explain to the soldiers. And soldiers are different. Some say “Fuck all the Arabs. Let them die. Who cares? So we fucked up another Arab,” and some soldiers say, “What’s the matter? What did we do now? We need to go and apologize.” These are very complicated situations.

This quote is important to my argument for, narratively, Benjamin emphasizes the soldiers’ *confusion*, rather than referring to the immorality of what they were doing.⁴ He describes how, gradually, these activities made no sense to him, and made him question the very logic of Israeli presence in the territories.

The political, in Benjamin’s story, starts off as puzzlement, then, not as an exclamation of a truth suddenly revealed to the subject. In other words, when Benjamin talked to me, he conveyed that, at that time, he was mainly puzzled and experienced what they were doing as a mixture of violence, confusion, nonsense, boredom, and problems of control.

Benjamin describes himself mainly as feeling *agitated* during those years in the territories—which serve as a marker of his puzzlement. Emotional and cognitive conflicts tortured him. He expressed a deep sense of futility—and, then, simply not wanting to be there. It was disgusting, he noted, to invade Palestinian homes in the middle of the night to make an arrest of a suspect when there were children screaming and a 70-year-old grandmother was scratching you.

In the end, he preferred to avoid service in the territories, although, at times, such a choice was hardly in his hands. He said that whenever he could and whenever there was some division of labor possible, he tried to be the one to be positioned in some other place, to fulfill some other military duty.

Once again, these experiences were not translated, by Benjamin, into political action or even a political frame. He thought of them as situations he wanted to avoid because they were, he believed, “simply” (at times he adds “completely”) “surreal” [Hebrew: *hazuy*] or “really” (or again at times “completely”) “crazy” [Hebrew: [*metoraff*]]. The terms “surreal” and “crazy” appear frequently in his descriptions of the army operations and the situations he found himself in the territories. However, once again, these were just isolated descriptions of what was going on. They were not viewed as connected with or leading to any concrete political conclusions.

During these early years in the army, Benjamin was much pressured but still eager to contribute and participate in whatever it took to be a good soldier. After about two years in the army, and well after some troubling experiences in the territories as described above, he volunteered to join the Officers’ course. This decision serves as yet further evidence of how Benjamin hadn’t reached a new political view at that point. Volunteering for the challenging Officers’ course is an indication of how deeply he felt obliged to continue to contribute to the army. Benjamin’s pursuit of officer candidacy was especially notable given the physical challenges he faced with his injured limb. It is apparent from his narrative that had he been hesitant or unwilling to make this additional sacrifice, the army and Benjamin’s commanders would not have put pressure on him to commit yet another year to the army in order to go through the Officers’ course and become a commander of a unit.

Benjamin’s doubts grew stronger as he became an officer, and later when he finished his mandatory service, and began serving in the reserves. His entire sense of belonging had changed as he began to spend most of his time outside of the army—starting his university studies as an undergraduate student (BA) majoring in Jewish Thought—and only being drafted to short periods of military service (a few weeks every year).

Benjamin found himself, while in the reserves, again, serving in the territories. This time he was given more responsibility as an officer. He made efforts to ensure his unit was acting in a humane way toward the Palestinians.

For example, he was careful to analyze the personalities of the soldiers under his command and chose the most stable and quiet soldiers, those “having much patience,” to serve in checkpoints. He also had great intellectual conversations and debates with other officers about their service and experiences during long evenings. These talks, he says, assured him that there was a space for exchanging ideas and debating, and a feeling he was operating out of choice, not automatically. At the same time, Benjamin became more and more explicitly suspicious toward the broader goals and broader logics of the army operation in the territories. These thoughts were not about specific matters alone, but also about the larger picture. He explained that his vision of things has been changing. For one thing, he said, he wasn’t as young as before. In addition, his own commanders, the ones who were above him in the army’s hierarchy, were now people his own age—the ones who stayed in the army for a professional career. Now it was hard for him to blindly accept their guidance and authority. He saw things in his own way.

In addition, he now had different life experiences including getting married and having a baby daughter. He was establishing a family of his own. Whenever his unit invaded a Palestinian house in the middle of the night to capture a suspect, or when he found himself at a checkpoint preventing a Palestinian father from crossing the border for work or to buy food for his family—it gradually became more difficult for him not to look in the mirror, not to think immediately of himself, not to sympathize with being a father and what it meant for this Palestinian father to be stopped at the checkpoint.

It became, then, harder for Benjamin to distance himself from the hardship he was inflicting. Further, Benjamin was also rethinking his relation to his fellow Jews. It became more and more difficult for him to separate the difficulties of the Palestinians from the contrasting life for the Jewish settlers. Thus, his repeated deployment in the territories often involved missions aimed at mostly securing the Jewish settlers, and, with time, he came to differentiate between what he called “the Jewish survival quest in Israel” and “the Jewish settlements in the West Bank.” This sense resonated with what later became part of the soldiers and officers’ *Ometz Lesarev* (“Courage to Refuse”) and the claim that they will no longer participate in the “war of the settlers.” Benjamin explained how he slowly came to argue—to whoever would listen—that the Israeli army needed to defend the existence of Israel against serious threats by the Palestinians and others, but that service in the territories was quite different.

Benjamin started questioning the mission of defending the Jewish settlers who often acted as sole owners of the territories.

Another sense of change Benjamin related was associated with the notion of a “complicated space.” The territories gradually became for him a more differentiated place. The territories were composed of diverse places that formed different experiences. The most troubling experience was when he served in Hebron, where radical Jews settled (or resettled) right after the 1967 war in the midst of the Palestinian city. There, he saw how the army privileged the Jewish settlers over the Palestinians, while Benjamin thought that the Jewish settlers shouldn’t have been there in the first place, even though some were living in houses that were occupied by Jews for generations.

Perhaps, it is no coincidence that the activity of *Breaking the Silence* was started—as three narrators told me—by soldiers who served in Hebron and who simply took pictures of their own daily lives in the midst of the conflict between Palestinians and Jewish settlers in the city. *Breaking the Silence* meant revealing images of a life that is not part of Jewish-Israelis’ everyday experience. It was precisely meant to force mainstream Israeli society to see life under occupation, to watch pictures and images of a life it tries to avoid, deny, and keep outside the Jewish public sphere; and, it was aimed at making the Jewish public listen to voices and narratives it usually wants to keep silent and ignore the existence of. It was, thus, about showing the price Israelis and Palestinians are paying for the ongoing occupation.

At that time, after serving in Hebron, Benjamin wrote a detailed report to the Military Advocacy General testifying about unjustified offenses against Palestinians’ human rights in Hebron, only to receive what he perceived as a detailed legalistic and bureaucratic reply, explaining away what he saw as abuses of Palestinians’ rights.

Another mediation through which the political was slowly emerging for Benjamin was the experience stemming out of changing places. Service in the reserves involved, Benjamin noted, abrupt transitions between civilian life and army life. To keep the occupation intact for many Israelis meant keeping Israel and the territories at some distance from each other. To make this work, Benjamin said: “You just simply don’t want to know about the territories.” Part of this strategy involved building separate roads so that Jewish-Israelis do not see the Palestinians even when they are driving in the midst of the territories. However, Benjamin reminded me that,

as Israel is so small, geographically (for example, Palestinian Hebron is only some 25 miles away from Jewish-Israeli Western Jerusalem), the army cannot sustain a persuasive distinction between the two. Benjamin relates how these boundaries were blurred and how they were becoming confusing for him. When he served near Jerusalem during the Palestinian uprising in the early 2000s, he arrived at home driving his heavy army Jeep. The absurdity entailed in this blurring of known boundaries was apparent simply by seeing this out of place Jeep parked near regular cars. The oddity grew even greater, for the vehicle could not even be locked. He had to stay in it, he told us, while his wife came down from their home, to serve the soldiers some coffee.

Benjamin's last reserve service started on the very day Israeli minister Rekhavham Ze'evi (Gandi) was assassinated during the second Palestinian uprising by three Palestinians in a Jerusalem hotel near Mt Scopus, not far from the Hebrew University (October 17, 2001). Already before that, Benjamin had come to the conclusion that he did not want to serve in the territories anymore. However, he first acted upon this decision when he witnessed the invasion of Palestinian villages in the aftermath of the assassination and as part of what he called the "Israeli frustration." He felt he could not participate in what he perceived as yet another demonstration of unnecessary violence with no definite military goal—soldiers were shooting with machine guns at no visible targets, tanks roaming down the streets of the city of nearby Bethlehem. By the end of a long conversation with his Battalion commander in which he explained why he could not and would not serve anymore in Palestinian lands, he was dismissed from serving in these territories.

At this point, it appears as though we are reaching a decisive transition point in Benjamin's narrative—a transition toward the explicitly political. We, presumably, can ask, then, how come Benjamin arrived at this definitive political view. When analyzing stories told between 2005 and 2008 by veterans of the US military who served in the first years of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Gutmann and Lutz (2010) argue that a salient feature of these stories is that they contain revelatory moments from their military service which are narrativized as quite completely transforming the teller. For example, they write about the story of Charlie who crossed over from Kuwait in March 2003 with the Marines 1st Expeditionary Force: "Watching how his leadership approached combat did more than just confuse Charlie. He suddenly felt anxious, anxiety that would

become anguish, about what he was doing in Iraq. *This event became one in a series of political and moral epiphanies that would change him forever*" (ibid., p. 2; emphasis added). I argue, by contrast, that Benjamin's story, and most of the other stories I heard from the soldiers I interviewed in Israel, did not contain the same kind of a narrative structure of a (Christian) conversion tale, and, particularly, not as a sudden revelation story or as a series of "*political and moral epiphanies*" that transformed the subjects. When carefully listening to and reading Benjamin's narratives, even the final, critical decision to no longer serve in Palestinian lands is not framed as the direct cause or part of a series of "epiphany moments" that triggered the emergence of a new political awareness. Instead, Benjamin struggles to find the precise language to talk about the blurry situations where the political is still an elusive shadow, a possibility not clearly articulated. For example, he repeatedly uses the word "slowly," and in describing a turning point he used the expression "then slowly it has ripened," referring to a process that occurred slowly before finally being acknowledged and acted upon. For instance, Benjamin describes how he has reached a turning point:

It's accumulated information. But it crystalized in a final... crystallization... and was anchored mainly in the sense that... I cannot do these things... What can I do? I just can't. So they'd call me a coward. Call me whatever they want. I just cannot stand there in the road blockade and prevent, day after day, thousands of people from reaching their destination. I was not created for this. And... I also have a moral debt to my daughter.

The words "crystallized" and "final" seem to mark a clear turning point. My argument is still that we should note that Benjamin is referring to "accumulated information" that led to a turning point; not to an epiphany. Further, while in this quote Benjamin mentions explicitly his fatherhood, it is clear from his descriptions as mentioned above that it was not just becoming a father that was the turning point but the accumulation of all his experiences.

He further described his position in a way that places the emphasis on a break in what he could do, or just could not do anymore. The emphasis is not on a conclusive ideological or political position as such, although it is indeed clear that he was tilting politically more and more to the left (expressed, for example, in his positions about the Jewish settlers, mentioned above). The emphasis in his narrative is placed on the

existential feeling that accumulated from his various experiences that he just cannot be there in the territories. He describes finding himself in a liminal zone in which, he said, "It had become quite clear to me at the time that the territories are not something I'm ready to do any more."

While feeling that "the territories are not something I'm ready to do any more," when talking with his Battalion commander, he did not have a ready-made personal, let alone political, stance that he wanted to deploy. He was just expressing the fact that he felt out of place. His commander sensed Benjamin's growing uneasiness and, as he was familiar with Benjamin's political orientation, he offered him a way out. The commander was looking for a solution and for a depoliticized move. He told Benjamin: "You know what... Don't come to the reserve. We'll bring someone else instead. Simply sit at home and refuse in a 'gray' manner like many good people do." Interestingly, and perhaps as things became clearer (or articulated more clearly in retrospect) in our conversation, Benjamin later understood his commander's very suggestion to be a political act, allowing unofficial refusal to serve in order to *fight the formation of the explicitly political*. By turning a blind eye, so Benjamin explains, the army postpones, depoliticizes, and, in fact, censors the emergence of a new and collective political consciousness and actions. Benjamin drew, then, a distinction between the explicit political action he took when finally joining the declaration of "Courage to Refuse," and the kind of "gray," psychologized, individualized, and thus depoliticized framing his commander was offering him.

PERSONAL FORMING OF THE POLITICAL: THE ROLE OF MEDIATIONS

Telling a complicated narrative does not mean Benjamin was totally confused or at a loss. When talking with me, he was still trying hard to make sense of these layers of his life and to distinguish these various experiences, commitments, and identities. In his moral work, he was trying to form a consistent political viewpoint based on a humane morality. And still, once again, the many layers from which such a viewpoint emerged tended to disrupt a clean, coherent narrative. This very effort by the teller to distinguish the political from other aspects of his life, also apparent in other narratives we heard, made me appreciate how, in reality, the political is blended within the various mediations of the subject.

After many moral and other deliberations, there is a conclusive political position acted upon at the end of Benjamin's story. But should we, the interpreters of his story, read it as moving in a straight line, from one point to the next, and finally reaching the decisive political conclusion? And, should we read the story as if Benjamin was trying, through his life and through the retelling of his story, to find the causes or the reasons that led to such a conclusion? I believe not. The narrative is much more complicated than that, and we should be careful to suspend our eagerness to find closure, even in the face of an unequivocal decision that marks Benjamin's final political stand (a decision that now defines, in some ways, his cultural identity). The relation between personal experiences and political views is not, I argue, that of simple cause and effect. Personal experiences do have effects, but they are not direct or straightforward. Following the narratives that tellers provide of their experiences indicates, instead, how individuals struggle to find the right language and the right actions in order to make sense of their experiences, to form their political views, and take some political action. I think that we should avoid, then, the temptation to read the narrative solely as an effort to understand how political views are *preconditioned on certain life experiences, presumably serving as the causes of a political commitment*. Instead, I suggest reading the narratives in order to understand *how a certain language and a certain understanding is evolving for the individual*, working within diverse *mediations*—contexts, discourses, experiences, interactions, intersections, and life changes. Further, we need to distinguish between the events (what happened and whether it all clearly foretold the outcome) from the way Benjamin and the other soldiers narrated their experiences in 2004. Hence, looking into Benjamin's narrativized timeline reveals, I believe, that the story is not teleological despite its definitive current end. And, its morality, and where things were leading to or stand now, is not strongly sewed in along the way.

Benjamin, and the other soldiers I interviewed, tell complex narratives about the ways their moralities—tied up, eventually, with their political orientations—are *mediated* and how they *slowly* and *gradually* transformed.

“The political” figures, in these narratives, not only as explicit debates (what should be done with the territories, for example), but also as embedded in experiences of dissonance—of something that failed to work in ways that could be easily explained or emotionally

handled. One is reminded of Das' (2006) argument about the relations between (violent) experiences and their expression in words and language, based on her inquiries into the experiences of women in India in the aftermath of the Partition of India in 1947 in which many women were abused. Psychotherapists, argues Das, tend to privilege the expression of emotions and of (violent traumatic) narratives of life experiences. Anthropologists, by contrast, should observe, she suggests, how the violent event "attaches itself with its tentacles into everyday life and folds itself into the recesses of the ordinary" (2006, p. 1). Experiences become entangled with living in the world and acting in it, within what she calls ordinary life. Similar to Das' work, in my interviews with Israeli soldiers, I gave priority to listening to narratives soldiers told about their violent service in the territories. I believe the stories themselves, and my interpretation of them, point to the limits of language and the avoidance of quick, definitive political closures, and of difficulty in finding what Das calls "a voice" (2006, pp. 2–3). For many years, these soldiers acted according to the army's expectations, and they linguistically framed their experiences as part of the necessary work of the military. They were taught to disengage the political from service in the army, in general, and in the territories, in particular. The lack of a ready-made political act was not a matter of inner psychodynamic processes acting on individuals' psyche but, rather, the lack of a shared political language for giving shape to the meaning of those processes and the experiences that shaped them. The public sphere and educational system in Israel tend to censor questioning such service in the territories, framing it as part of Israel's security concerns (recall that Benjamin asserted that he would quickly be termed "a coward" if he explicitly refuses to serve). Benjamin's commander offered him a personally and politically elusive exit strategy (refusing in the "gray" way) to avoid the public backlash that could accompany his act of refusal. This act is meant to both protect Benjamin and to avoid the political burden associated with his act of refusal. Soldiers, as is clear in Benjamin's case, lack easy (say leftist, progressive, critical) articulations of alternatives to army service.

In short, for these soldiers, the political is an orientation that is generally avoided while serving in the army because the army is characterized as beyond political struggles and differences. "Being professional" is not only a personal mask to distance themselves from touchy moral questions

(Ben-Ari 1989) but also in line with the general way public discourse in Israel is formed. The separation of the political from the army (and one's own service in the army) is a powerful sociopolitical divide that is not easy to bridge. The moral work associated with becoming political, or drawing some new conclusions and finding new expressions and language, entails making connections that are usually depoliticized, that is socially (hence, also personally) censored and downplayed. Making it all politically relevant can be an emergent and confusing process in which soldiers try to frame new experiences in ways that usually are not permitted or are not shared by others. These soldiers thus grapple with their experiences, trying to figure out right and wrong, their needs and interests, their social and intersubjective relations, and their place in their families and their heritage.

I demonstrated, then, how subjectivity and politics are deeply embedded in complex-*mediated* experiences, and how social relations and cultural collective meanings and constraints are worked out and changed through individuals' narrating of their improvisations.

A few salient mediations emerge in this narrative inquiry, which, thus, demonstrate how a political subject is denied, downplayed, obscured, discovered, maintained, or transformed. In particular, Benjamin narrated his political subjectivity as mediated by a number of contradictory intersubjective commitments and experiences, ranging from the personal to the organizational, the social, cultural, historical, and political. Specifically, while putting order on a narrative that lacks well-defined categories, I suggest that the political in such complex situations is mediated for these Jewish-Israeli individuals by personal concerns, biography and upbringing, peer relations and hierarchies of authority in the army and mundane experiences during their army service, changing family status (like becoming a father), and semiotic mediations like political discourses about Jewish-Israeli suffering and about the "occupation."

Soldiers are, thus, absorbed in these mediations and, at times, as we've seen with Benjamin, occupied in many years of subjectivity work to differentiate and purify the quite hybrid notions of the political. In such a trajectory of subjectivity and politics, the complications of both are manifested in continuous efforts to form a political voice, to make sense of it and to act upon it. The political voice emerges, then, at times, quite hesitantly, despite and in light of the many and various mediations it is usually embedded in and articulated through.

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NOTES

1. Also, note that estimating the Palestinian population has been, in recent decades, part of a political conflict between Israeli and Palestinian agencies.
2. Although in Israel (and elsewhere, including in the US), various state mechanisms like education systems help in shaping specific views, people in democratic states are usually not (completely) indoctrinated into specific political views. There comes a time when citizens are expected to develop the moral sensibility that determines their own political views, to make personal commitments about political matters, and to express and enact their preferences.
3. An exception is Orthodox women who are exempted from service, based on their declaration of being religiously observant. Some of these women still choose to serve. In recent years, a debate has occurred in the religious community precisely concerning this issue.
4. Benjamin describes boredom and its problematics: "And these are situations when something happens. Yet, in most situations, you go out in the morning for a patrol and in the First Intifada we were very heavily equipped. You go out with the machine guns and bulletproof vests, and weapons, and plastic-caps, and all on your head, and after 2–3 hours you have a bunch of super nervous soldiers, who are hungry, nervous, sweating (...). And you don't know how they will react toward the next child who will curse their mother. It is a very difficult situation to control, then. You must give them some outlet, to compensate for the experience they go through for eight hours for nothing, and additional eight hours they will go through for nothing... (...). This is problematic. You need to create some intense activity since, otherwise, they will lose their alertness."

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An Ethnographic Life Narrative Strategy for Studying Race, Identity, and Acts of Political Significance: Black Racial Identity Theory and the Rastafari of Jamaica

Charles Price

In Jamaica, from the early enslavement of Africans through the present, African-descended or Black people have been regarded as inferior to White and Mixed/Brown peoples.¹ Blackness, as an identification, and Black Jamaican popular culture, such as Revival healing, the pro-Black discourse of Ethiopianism, and Rastafari, were treated as second-rate cultural phenomena into the 1970s. One could argue that denigration of Blackness and Black popular culture in Jamaica is still the case, but less so, due significantly to the cultural and political impact of the Rastafari. Thus, a study of how the Rastafari gained adherents and how such adherents learned and enacted political discourses and ideologies, enables us to explore the process of change in personal and collective racial identities.

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A fundamental concern of this chapter is to lay out an ethnographic life narrative strategy for studying how people come to learn and enact race, political discourse, and political/religious ideology as a part of their identity. By arguing for multidimensional ethnographic life narrative studies of identity, I am arguing for a kind of person-centered approach. Consider, for example, a social movement. Why do people get involved? How do they get involved? What keeps some committed to a movement while others drift away? How do people create and manage multiple and sometimes conflicting identities? A lifespan perspective on a person's experience, relationships, and beliefs offers a way to make sense of what happens at a microlevel, how people use cultural resources, and how lives connect with history and institutions/structures. We can gain a sense of what shapes personal beliefs, feelings, and action, and how people, through their daily activities, contribute to the sociocultural production of reality in its multiplicities.

I use the Rastafari of Jamaica to illustrate that we can productively study identifications such as race and related concerns such as political ideology and political action through an ethnographic life narrative methodology. By applying this methodology to the Rastafari of Jamaica, we can see how an ethnographic approach to changes in racial identities contributes to Black racial identity theory (BRIT).

It is important, at this point, to distinguish between race and racial identity. Race describes a category of beliefs about people, both positive and negative, while racial identity describes how people live and give meaning to racial categories. Racial identity theories assume that racial formations—races—and the cognitive, sociocultural, and institutional structures that make their existence possible—vary in the details of how members experience race (Wijeyesinghe 2012). There are theories of White and Latino racial identity development, for example (Helms 1990a, 1990c; Hardiman 2001; Hardiman and Keehn 2012; Gallegos and Ferdman 2012). My focus on BRIT is useful in helping us make sense of how individuals infuse the category of race with meaning and life, and how these evolve over time.

While there are many versions of BRIT (e.g., Jackson 2012; Helms 1990b; Sellers et al. 1998; Worrell 2012), I shall focus on William Cross's theories. His version of BRIT was initially formulated as the "Negro-to-Black Conversion" (1971), playing on the metaphor of "Negro" as an ascribed and unflattering typology and "Black" as indicative of achievement and "self-authoring" (Holland et al. 1998). Cross

later dubbed the model “Nigrescence,” the psychology of developing a positive Black identity (1978). Cross first focused on explaining why Blacks in the United States made Blackness a salient and valorized part of their self-concept given that, for most of US history, Blackness was designated a degraded status.

As I explain, however, BRITs focus on individual psychology and, methodologically, have traditionally relied on questionnaires, and, thus, alone are insufficient in substantively connecting individuals to collectivities, history, social change, and political discourses. Furthermore, Cross’s BRIT was based upon the specific history of race in the United States. By conducting ethnographically grounded life narrative research in Jamaica, I learned how dominant and alternative political discourses and ideologies inform the personal experience and identity of people who became Rastafari (e.g., Price 2009). The ethnographic life narrative method, in turn, shows the local specificity of development of a positive Black Identity. For Rastafari, that identity is a spiritual as well as racial identity. Nigrescence, in practice, comprises simultaneous phases rather than a linear sequence. A person’s commitment over the long-term to racialized identities like Rastafari may be a function of how much they have invested into and sacrificed for the identity, and participation in a collectivity is key. Finally, internalization of a positive Black identity need not be a final stage, but ought to be thought of as ongoing.

Through an ethnographic life narrative strategy, we learn, for example, that Rastafari identity forms through critical self-reflection, dialogic exchanges between oneself and other people and ideas, through learning and embodying cultural practices, and through social interaction such as ritualized celebration. Rastafari identity can inform political subjectivity and political action, drawing on its own discourse to pursue justice and equity. An elder Rastafari, Sam Brown, explained to me that his generation of Rastafari was reincarnations of the biblical Moses, Jesus, David, Shadrach, and so on. He saw them performing the role of Old Testament saints—challenging entrenched and oppressive discourses and ideologies—amidst the people and institutions of mid-twentieth century Jamaica. Brown’s allusion to the past was also an allusion to the contemporary; in his view, the past and present coexist. We want to understand why and how people create and internalize such identifications, and how such identifications “add up” in ways that manifest as collective action.

I will begin with a discussion of BRIT and then explain the ethnographic life narrative strategy. In order to demonstrate the utility of an

ethnographic life narrative strategy and how it can productively expand our view of race, identity, and politics, I draw on the life narrative of an elder Rastafari woman, Rasta Ivey. Rasta Ivey was born between 1906 and 1911 in Kingston, Jamaica, to parents who migrated to Kingston, the capital city, from Manchester Parish in central Jamaica. When I interviewed Rasta Ivey, she was among the oldest living female Rastafari; she was part of the first generation of Rastafari, one where women were involved, sometimes prominently, in propagating, supporting, and even suffering for the fledgling faith and identity.

A SKETCH OF BLACK IDENTITY THEORIES AND NIGRESCENCE THEORY

Black racial identity—Blackness—as a receptacle and vector of meaning, functions in many capacities.² Chief among them are *anchor*, *bonding*, *buffer*, and *bridging* (Cross 2012). As a *social anchor*, Black racial identity positions a person's self-concept in relation to other identifications and other people; it offers “locations” in the various sociocultural worlds that one inhabits. Black identity plays a *bonding* role to the extent people use it to produce a sense of connection among disparate, unrelated, and unknown Black “others.” Black identity can provide a *buffer* against racial discrimination and White hegemony, for example, in how people valorize Blackness and use it to contest narratives of Black inferiority—e.g., pro-Black discourse. Finally, people can use Black identity to *bridge* both in-group and out-group differences, that is, to create camaraderie out of highly varied racialized experience. For example, an African American and a Black Jamaican may connect with each other based on a notion of both identifying as Black. Alternatively, Black people of different socioeconomic strata might use Blackness to bridge their class difference. Black identity can also be used to bridge out-group difference, such as when two people who express different racial identifications—say White and Black—can create meaningful relationships, each conscious of the other's racial identity.

For nearly two decades, BRIT explained Black racial identity primarily in relation to centuries of racial oppression. That is, people had little choice as to whether to identify as Black, and a defining feature of Blackness was experience of discrimination and racism. The workings of race and racism shifted during the post-1960s era, the result of factors, such as civil rights legislation, an expanding service economy,

a diminished welfare state, and a rise to dominance of neoconservative politics (e.g., Omi and Winant 2015). Post-1990s BRIT considers such factors and more, including how Black identity functions daily; how the people who identify as Black has grown more diverse; how globalization complicates Black identity; and how Blackness intersects with other identifications, such as gender, sexuality, social class, and geography (e.g., Renn 2012; Cross 2012).

I focus on Cross's formulation of Black racial identity as an exemplar of the field because it has informed all subsequent BRITS and because it has been repeatedly revised for more than 40 years. Cross explained that the primary factors shaping Black identity among African Americans were the interrelated influences of deracination, discrimination, and miseducation. Deracination considers the effects of the erasure and neglect of the culture and history of enslaved Africans and their descendants on subsequent generations. Discrimination against Black Americans has many facets, including racism, the deprecation of Black people and their culture, and the exaltation of White people and their culture. Miseducation results from learning the history and culture of a dominant group—in this case, Europeans and their descendants—while neglecting Black culture and history. If a Black person is taught that Christ is a White man, for example, and then discovers that such a claim is a self-flattering depiction created by White people, it can set the stage for one revising one's worldview, one's self-concept, and even one's political subjectivity to the extent that one is dismayed by asymmetries in power and interested in a critique of anti-Black discourse.³

Cross (e.g., 2001) defined Nigrescence as a metamorphosis in which a part of a person's self-concept—Black racial awareness—is singled out and transformed in ways that facilitate a positive assessment of Blackness (pro-Blackness). The person internalizes the emergent consciousness through practice so that it eventually functions as a consistent part of the person's revised self-concept. It becomes “natural,” who the person “really is.” Nigrescence, as identity transformation, involves a person's tussle reconciling discrimination, deracination, and miseducation with a positive Black self-concept (Price 2009). Nigrescence involves reeducation and resocialization into a different way of thinking about oneself and about the world, and it involves redefining one's reference groups.

Cross's “revised” version of Nigrescence Theory (1995) advanced beyond preceding versions by, for instance, placing less emphasis on White racism and Black self-hate. The revised model draws on the five

“stages” of the original Nigrescence Theory (Cross 1971)⁴: pre-encounter; encounter; immersion–emersion; internalization; and commitment. In the revised model, internalization and commitment are combined because Cross saw few differences other than “sustained interest and commitment” (Cross 1991, p. 220). In explaining the revised model, Cross (e.g., 1991, 1995) addresses the five phases of the original model and I do the same here.

Pre-encounter describes the various identities that a person is socialized into before an identity transformation; Blackness may or may not be salient among a person’s various identifications. Unlike the pre-encounter stage, the *encounter* describes unsettling racialized experience(s) that bring into relief for a person discrimination, miseducation, and deracination, facilitating a person’s desire to revise their self-concept and worldview in ways that valorize Blackness differently from the pre-encounter state. An encounter does not have to be a negative experience. The encounter is important for grasping how an anti-Black ideology can be undermined. The encounter opens a person to new black identity options that can undermine a dominant political discourse and ideology, such as that of anti-Blackness.

The period of transition from the pre-encounter identity to the transformed (or revised) identity is *immersion–emersion*. During this phase, a person is attempting to revise their self-concept in ways that valorize and privilege Blackness. This phase involves learning about Black identity, culture, and history, developing a critique of Eurocentrism, and observing people who one takes to be exemplars of Black history and culture. During this phase, a person may express either a pro-Black or an anti-White orientation or both (Vandiver 2001, p. 169).

Internalization, an opaque processual concept in psychology, means roughly how a person goes about “naturalizing” their revised identity by making it a part of their identity repertoire and social networks. Cross deemed *commitment* as the state where a person feels comfortable with and committed to the transformed identity. Both internalization and commitment are ongoing and dynamic states. Cross’s revised definition that merges internalization–commitment assumes a “healthy” *Black identity*, meaning that a person is comfortable reaching beyond “Black only” concerns. Secure in their sense of Blackness, they are willing and able to bridge racial, ethnic, and other differences. The Nigrescence model posits change occurring primarily in personal identity, worldview, ideology, and reference group orientation (RGO), not personality or psychological

adjustment. RGO constitutes the stance that one takes toward particular collectivities. Nigrescence Theory emphasizes a shift in RGO where one aligns oneself with groups compatible with a pro-Black or high-salience black identity. Although implicit in the theory, RGO can include contradistinctive groups. A Rastafari person, for example, might view as key RGOs African-descended people and Rastafari people in general, or specific groupings of Rastafari such as “Nyabinghi” or “Bobo Ashante,” while distinguishing her- or himself from Black Christians or Black police officers.⁵

Nigrescence Theory describes commitment as a state where one is committed to the new identity. The observation is important because people must maintain the identity through identity work, and because not all people remain committed to the revised identity (Price 2009). However, Nigrescence Theory is silent on what *fosters* commitment, especially in the case of stigmatized identities where one may pay a cost to publicly express the identity.

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC LIFE NARRATIVE STRATEGY FOR STUDYING IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF RACE AND POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

While Cross’s Nigrescence Theory provides a valuable framework of phases in racial identity formation, it is limited both by its focus on the particularities of the Black experience in the United States and by its psychological methods. BRITs by and large explain racial identity development at the level of the individual. While Nigrescence Theory circuitously tells how reference groups are important to Black identity formation, it does not thoroughly detail the social nature of racial identity formation. Because of this weakness in existing BRITs, I advocate the underutilized ethnographic life narrative approach to studying racial identity formation and its relation to political discourses, ideologies, and personal experience as a supplement to the methods traditionally employed in BRIT research. This methodology allows us to assess people’s recollections and stories that tell how they came to be the racial (or religious or political) being they say that they are, and that tell us about the formative influences that molded their self-concept. An ethnographic life narrative strategy involves more than in-depth interviewing. It involves observing what people do and how they interact with others, and participating in such activities and interactions, in real-life situations instead of experimental settings.

By spending significant amounts of time with Rasta Ivey and others, and through in-depth interviewing and casual conversations with Rasta Ivey and other Rastafari who came of age from the 1920s to the 1960s, I gained a perspective on racial identity formation that eludes much of racial identity theory with its reliance on scales and questionnaires.⁶ Other benefits of an ethnographic life narrative strategy include being able to probe and observe the various states of identification and awareness posited by BRITs like Nigrescence Theory.

I suggest a multidimensional life narrative methodology that addresses racial identity from four angles: personal/individual; social-collective; historical; and ethnographic. The *personal and individual* angle involves in-depth life interviews focused on a person's relationship with race from their earliest memories. It should also consider exploring relevant personal cultural products such as photographs. The personal focus allows for probing into seminal influences, such as family, school, friends, and authorities in order to explore the person's changing views and experience of race, and understand the motives that people identify as guiding how they express (or fail to express) racial identity. The *social and collective* angle contextualizes racial identity in relation to situations, relationships, and collectivities, real and imagined. The social and collective angle can be explored through interviewing and participant observation. The *historical* angle investigates the historical influences that shape people's identities and relationships, such as the lingering effects of enslavement or residential segregation. The historical angle involves analysis of material, such as oral and life narratives, and cultural products, such as songs and texts, as well as archived documents, such as news stories, institutional memos, or police reports. The *ethnographic* angle draws on participant observation and assessment of how people interact in ways that give meaning to racial identity. It also allows for an assessment of the relation between what people say and what they do. The ethnographic angle allows a researcher to witness the situations that one's interlocutor experiences.⁷

The life narrative format that a researcher chooses should be informed by the goals of the researcher. For example, if one is committed to privileging the voice of one's interlocutors, then autobiography, life history, life story, and testimonio are viable options. Autobiography and life history often emphasize veracity and documentation, while life story and testimonio give greater emphasis to meaning and story. Veracity is important, but not as essential as they are for life history or biographical

methods where multiple types of documentation and crosschecking might be in order. A retrospective narrative may be revised to accord with the narrator's current understandings, hence it cannot be taken as proof of the narrator's attitudes at a prior time. However, it provides a contextualized account and a method suited to collaborative research.

The multidimensional life narrative methodology and BRIT can also benefit by incorporating a social practice theory of political becoming, which points us to identities as formed through context-relevant social relations and mediated by sociocultural resources (see Holland et al. 2018). Both life narrative methodology and social practice theory provide explanations informed by the interconnections among personal (individual), social-collective, and historical factors. Practice theory's concern with how individuals operate as agents within structures, how individuals internalize the social worlds in which they live and act, how individuals and institutions influence each other, and how durable structures of the past continue to influence the present, is compatible with the life narrative strategy outlined in this chapter. As Rasta Ivey demonstrates, to become and remain Rastafari is to demonstrate agency. Becoming Rastafari, though, plays out in a field of social relationships that inform the experience of becoming and being Rastafari. Through a multidimensional life narrative methodology, we can access the social dimensions of racial identity formation, as well the interior dialogues and historical influences. Practice theory can enhance the life narrative methodology and BRIT with its emphasis on the relations among process, structure, agency, and identity.

THE RASTAFARI PEOPLE OF JAMAICA: IDENTITY, RACE, POLITICS, 1930s–1960s

In this section, I offer a brief sketch of the Rastafari to provide an example for a BRIT-informed ethnographic life narrative methodology. The Rastafari, who emerged in Jamaica perhaps as early as 1933, are a people whose collective identity has been fashioned around themes of race, religion, and history. The Rastafari adopted tenets of Ethiopianism, a pro-Black discourse that dates to the mid-1700s in colonial America, as a part of their novel faith and identity (Price 2009, 2014). They claimed that Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia was the biblical Messiah returned to redeem Africa, Black Africans, and the oppressed people of the Black Diaspora. They coalesced around a conception of Blackness as something

valuable and worthy of reverence. Because the Rastafari privileged Black identity, culture, and history, and worshipped an African king, fellow Jamaicans treated them like absurdities. Yet, despite being marked as undesirables, the Rastafari grew from a handful of adherents in early 1933 into a self-perpetuating people who, by the 1980s, numbered in the tens of thousands and had altered Jamaicans' sense of collective identity, helping to shift Blackness from a stigmatized identity to a valorized identity. The Rastafari eschewed Jamaican politics for many reasons,⁸ yet they significantly influenced Jamaican politics, culture, and identity (e.g., Chevannes 1994; Edmonds 2003).

The Rastafari were religious heretics because they preached of a Black Messiah and God in a society where God was imagined and portrayed as White; they were racial heretics because they preached racial pride and Black superiority in a society where White supremacy had been established by the British by the 1700s, and developed into sophisticated theoretical and policy statements and practices; they were political heretics because they were anti-colonial, they advocated not paying homage or taxes to the Queen of England, and they did not trust the "Brown men," who tended to dominate government as the White colonials abdicated. But the message of Rastafari, of the coming Black Messiah and Black redemption, did resonate in the minds of some, if only as a seed that later germinated, as some life narratives suggest.

From the emergence of the first Rastafari in 1933 well into the 1970s, non-Rastafari Jamaicans treated the Rastafari both as pariahs and as threat to the status quo. Two founding Rastafari leaders, Leonard Howell and Robert Hinds, were charged with sedition in 1934 and imprisoned by the colonial British government because they preached a message that promoted allegiance to a Black King, Emperor Selassie I of Ethiopia, instead of the King of England. Their trial received national coverage, with much of the reportage ridiculing the beliefs of the Rastafari (e.g., a Black Messiah who also was a living Ethiopian monarch). The subtext, though, was that Jamaican elites saw the Rastafari as a potential threat to the colonial order. Bongo J, one of the Rastafari with whom I spoke, makes this point about the later period when Queen Elizabeth II ruled:

... all who came after Howell in Jamaica ... spread the word of Rastafari as the doctrine of the Black King [and Emperor]. Not [Queen] Elizabeth, because that time [the idea of a] Black king surfaced. Elizabeth was

demoted because the Black subjects started to turn to His Majesty [Emperor Selassie I]. Not paying attention to Elizabeth's sovereignty. Her troops and agents started to harass the doctrine because it creates a diversion just like when Christ used to preach in his days against the Elders, Sadducees, and the Philistines, and they rose up against him saying that this man seeks to take away the people from Caesar. So, they said that this man [Howell and Hinds] was taking the worship from the Queen, all the honor that the Queen should get⁹

Praising Emperor Selassie I rather than British monarchs threatened to undermine the authority of the British Crown in Jamaica, motivating the Colonial Government's quest to destroy Howell and the Rastafari people before they gained traction.

Identity formation of members of collectivities such as social movements involves both members and nonmembers. The effort of non-Rastafari—especially elites—to ascribe a negative identity to the Rastafari was an important part of Rastafari collective identity formation. Many Jamaicans genuinely feared the Rastafari. Most of the news reportage on the Rastafari, through the mid-1960s, conformed to the dominant anti-Black discourse and ideology. Authorities and cultural elites portrayed the Rastafari variously over four decades as nuisances, lunatics, menaces, racial agitators, idlers, and drug users—Black popular culture and Black people gone berserk (Price 2009). Portrayed as such, the Rastafari regularly suffered attacks from citizens and police, and could count on no one for protection but themselves.

This relationship between the Rastafari and non-Rastafari takes us a long way toward explaining why and how, for example, the Rastafari call Jamaican society *Babylon* (i.e., a decadent and corrupt society inhospitable to the faithful) and why they see themselves as persecuted and chosen people awaiting redemption. An elder Rastafari, who was a leader in organizing the Rastafari for protection of their rights, told me how “Elders had to face police and battles and soldiers and all that just to talk about Rasta business in the streets [They] do us all manner of evils We [were forced to] have to stand up for our rights.” Being Rastafari and professing a pro-Black identification could have serious repercussions. Why, then, would anyone want to express such an identity? Answering this question allows us to address questions of motivation at the level of the individual as well as questions about how identities and collectivities are socially constructed in real time.

In retrospect, violence and vilification of the Rastafari eventually developed the paradoxical effect of increasing the number of adherents and of bolstering pro-Black ideologies. Around the age of 12, during the mid-1940s, Douglas Mack had his first encounter with a Rastafari, Brother Lover (1999, p. 19). Up to that point, family and friends had taught Mack to fear them. However, the warm and gentle Brother Lover disarmed him. Mack became puzzled as to why non-Rastafari persecuted them. He began to listen to Rastafari discussions, and to learn their messages of faith, love, and Black Pride. Douglas Mack himself became a Rastafari. Increasingly the Rastafari, as an emergent collectivity, became “strange attractors” (e.g., McClure 2005) for people interested in a pro-Black religio-racial paradigm. That is, the Rastafari were growing without any coordinated efforts to recruit, and the factors inducing people to become Rastafari were multiple and varied over time. Fear and persecution of the Rastafari worsened during the 1950s. For example, in 1951, a grisly murder conducted by a bearded man identified as a Rastafari generated a national panic about how to address the Rastafari “menace.”

Although the Rastafari tended to keep a low profile and not engage in activities of political consequence, this began to change during the late 1940s as a militant group of Rastafari emerged: the Dreadlocks (physically identifiable by their uncombed and untrimmed tresses). The Dreadlocks excelled in the art of political theatrics and symbolic violence, although not physical violence. For example, a band of Rastafari “captured” and briefly occupied the official residence of the Governor before departing peaceably; they publicly shouted obscenities about the colonial government; they convened ceremonial rituals focused on the supernatural destruction of Babylon (Jamaica and its colonial system). The Rastafari also began to organize into groups interested in repatriating to Africa, with some of the groups directing their demands toward elected officials. This was probably a minority of Rastafari, concentrated in Kingston and Spanish Town; most Rastafari of the period would probably have said that they were not involved in politics. Nevertheless, the cumulative effect resulted in outcomes one would desire from organized political action, such as making the public aware of a group’s grievances. Brother Bongo explained to me in detail how several different groups of Rastafari “... decided to organize a united front that brings all brethren together [W]e decided to draft a resolution with the provision, by law, of our rights to claim our Ethiopian nationality...” The Rastafari agitation generated results, such as the Government’s response to their call

for repatriation to Africa with an exploratory mission to Africa in 1961 that visited five countries and included three Rastafari among its delegates (Price 2009). The Mission was among the first instances of the Rastafari's increasingly significant influence on Jamaican society. At the same time, as with many social movements, only a portion of the Rastafari engaged in political action. Nevertheless, the Rastafari continued to face the violence and vilification of the wider society, exemplified by the state-initiated pogrom against the Rastafari in 1963 known as the Coral Gardens event.¹⁰ However, the status of the Rastafari made a phase shift in 1966—from pariahs to exemplars of Black culture and identity—when Emperor Selassie I visited Jamaica and requested a meeting with Rastafari leadership. The Rastafari God had called on his sheep. All Jamaicans took notice.

RASTAFARI, BLACKNESS, AND ACTS OF POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE IN THE LIFE OF AN ELDER RASTAFARI

During the late 1990s, I was fortunate to meet Rasta Ivey, also affectionately known as “Granny.” One of the first things that Rasta Ivey told me, once I asked her for a formal interview, was “tell the world about Rasta Ivey, that is what you should do.” Rasta Ivey was an unsung “fighter” for the right of the Rastafari to practice their faith and express their identity. Her path to becoming Rastafari differs from the possibilities open to, say, people of the post-1960s, who could draw upon decades of Rastafari cultural resources in their transformation into Rastafari. Rasta Ivey and her contemporaries were integral to creating such cultural resources. Rasta Ivey helped me grasp why and how people became Rastafari, and why and how they remained committed to a stigmatized identity.

Tenacious, cantankerous, and committed are reasonable descriptions of Rasta Ivey's character. Let me illustrate. Rasta Ivey once challenged the Parson of a church in downtown Kingston to talk to his congregation about repatriation to Africa. Before the 1970s, it was heresy for establishment leaders to acknowledge Africa as a place worthy of attention or as a homeland of Black Jamaicans. “I went to jail from that church at King Street (Parish Church) I told the parson to talk about repatriation,” she recalled. Continuing, Rasta Ivey said the Parson “sent for policeman to take me to jail.” Punitive and arbitrary imprisonment of Rastafari was a common experience for the first two generations of Rastafari. However, when the police Inspector arrived, Rasta Ivey did not easily surrender: “I climbed upon the Inspector and he and I had it out well.” Once,

I invited Rasta Ivey with me to visit a Rastafari man, Brother Dee, who was about the same age as her. When she saw the white-bearded and white-headed wheelchair-bound Rastafari man, she stretched her eyes and twisted her lips, and said, loudly, “Look how him old! What me come fi see old man?” The elder man, though, hard of hearing, heard what Rasta Ivey said and became agitated: “Who you call old?” Rasta Ivey saw him as feeble compared to her aged-but-mobile cantankerous self who was still active in “Black people[‘s] business” [concerns and needs of Black people], as she would say. However, once I introduced the two and smoothed their ruffled feathers, Rasta Ivey gathered that they shared many experiences in common and warmed up to him.

An emaciated octogenarian, Rasta Ivey retained a defiant commitment to justice for Rastafari and for Black people. In talking about her life, I heard Rasta say that “They say I am a fighter. Whether I am a fighter or not, they say I am a fighter. They know I can fight.” Rasta Ivey did not back down when challenged. For example, in 1998, Rasta Ivey and I found ourselves in the middle of an uprising between the Jamaican armed forces and a local paramilitary militia. She immediately shifted from a reflective elder into an agitated rebel in defense of Black people. She accosted an officer armed with an M16 and verbally abused him: “You dirty. You always want to kill the people. I am one of the people. Kill me now,” she taunted. I recognized in that moment, by being with Rasta Ivey, that confronting authority and facing violence were things she had much experience with. Being present with Rasta Ivey went a long way toward making sense of her life and how she told it.

Early Years, Seeking and Learning

Rasta Ivey was born between 1906 and 1911 in Kingston, Jamaica, to parents who migrated to Kingston, the capital city, from Christiania, in Manchester Parish. Manchester, located in the center of the Island, is known for its cooler climate and high-altitude villages. According to Rasta Ivey, her mother and grandmother lived more than a “hundred-odd” years. She sometimes blended her life story with those of her maternal forbearers. For example, Rasta Ivey talked about a devastating earthquake that struck Jamaica as if she had lived through it. I learned later, through various stories that she told, that it was her grandmother who experienced the earthquake, most likely in 1907. The stories of her matriarchs’ past were told as her stories in the present; the past lived on in the present, through her.

Rasta Ivey never married and never had children, though she had many brothers and sisters. Rasta Ivey's recollections of her father trace to the 1920s. She remembers him working on Piers One, Two, and Three at the Port Royal Wharf. The work was irregular, so he also worked "... on the road when no boat came." However, the Piers were circuits through which information about the Black Diaspora traveled. Indeed, useful information about Ethiopia and King Ras Tafari/Emperor Haile Selassie I arrived through publications carried by sailors and by steamship travelers (Price 2009).

Rasta Ivey's mother and grandmother were higglers, vendors, and peddlers who played a vital role in Jamaica's formal and informal economy. Rasta Ivey's matriarchs served wharf workers, road construction workers, and meetings of Revival practitioners. Rasta Ivey traveled with and learned from her grandmother as she plied her trade. Rasta Ivey herself became a higgler: "I sew children's clothing I sew and go around the country [selling clothing]." Rasta Ivey also peddled Ganja [Cannabis] along with her other wares.

"Truth and rights" and "Black people[s] business" intrigued Rasta Ivey from an early age. In effect, Rasta Ivey was seeking to overcome her miseducation about Black people in the context of a British colonial polity committed to the cultural hegemony of Whiteness. By truth, she meant gaining knowledge of Black history and culture and of biblical lore. By rights, she meant both civil rights and righteousness, both in a moral and biblical sense, such as the right to be treated as a child of God rather than an inferior Black being. Rasta Ivey's experience suggests how learning that Black people are not inferior, and that they have histories and cultures worthy of recognition, can radically alter how one understands Blackness.

As a young girl, Rasta Ivey attended sermons delivered by the charismatic and anti-colonial Black preacher, Alexander Bedward. During the 1890s, Bedward gained widespread fame as a healer, and his sermons and healing rituals attracted thousands of spectators. Bedward grew critical of the poverty and powerlessness of Black Jamaicans under British colonialism. He promoted a pro-Black attitude. Toward the later years of his life, Bedward articulated a notion of a Black Messiah, and he led his followers on protest marches that sometimes culminated in clashes with police. One of the British strategies for liquidating religio-racial activists like Bedward was to diagnose them as lunatics and send them to an asylum. Bedward died in an asylum, in November 1930, shortly after King Ras Tafari was crowned Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia. Rasta Ivey

also took in the teachings of UNIA leader Marcus Garvey during his last years in Jamaica, between the late 1920s and mid-1930s. These ideologies and movements developed the view that being Black is positive, that Black people will be redeemed, that the redeeming Messiah is Black, and that Whites are not superior after all, creating the conditions that make Nigrescence an identity-shaping experience.

During a conversation with Rasta Ivey, I asked if she became Rastafari during the 1930s. She replied,

Yes. In the 1930s. That time, nobody else was preaching about it [Rastafari]. Till them start to hold Leonard Howell until he went to mad house (asylum). I only follow him sometimes to listen what he was saying, but I had understood already. From he started talking, I understood because from Mr. Bedward I could put everybody together and it becomes one.

There were four or five people who Rasta Ivey described as being “in chord”: Bedward, Garvey, Howell, and a few other early Rastafari evangelists. The note that each man sang in common was a pro-Black ideology that encouraged viewing God through the lens of Blackness. Some of the elder Rastafari called conversion to Rastafari “sighting up” [i.e., coming to see the Emperor as divine]. Each encounter with new ideas and practices encouraged Rasta Ivey to critically reflect on her worldview. The various Rastafari evangelists and Rasta Ivey were in a dialogic exchange, reassembling, reinterpreting, and communicating cultural resources. As Holland et al., put it, they were simultaneously addressing and being addressed (Holland et al. 2018). Rasta Ivey was seeking information while contributing to creating a new faith and identity, Rastafari. Rasta Ivey was “self-authoring” her life with her practice as Rastafari, and in doing so, contributing to “authoring” a polystranded collective narrative of Rastafari people.

Many of the first and second-generation Rastafari organized themselves into “camps” or bands typically headed by a male leader. Rasta Ivey considered herself a member of Robert Hinds’ camp. Hinds himself was a former Bedwardite, and, for a while, preached in partnership with Leonard Howell:

I did join a man named Brother Hinds.... If Brother Hinds were alive, he would be two hundred years old. Brother Hinds was an old Bedwardite. He was a Rastafari. [Like] Melchisedec.¹¹ Melchisedec was the same Rastafari [King Ras Tafari/Emperor Selassie I].

Becoming and Being Rastafari

An important phase of identity transformation is becoming competent in a new identity and culture. For example, Rasta Ivey had to learn how to explain the relationships among a living leader like Hinds, the biblical figure Melchisedec, and Emperor Selassie I, in culturally salient terms. Readers will probably wonder why Rasta Ivey believed Hinds, who participated in Bedward's 1921 protest against colonial authorities (*The Gleaner*, May 5, 1921, p. 6), would be two centuries old if he were alive in the late 1990s. In the Old Testament, various characters lived for centuries, and time did not apply to Melchisedec. Couple the biblical knowledge with cultural beliefs about reincarnation and living vicariously through stories of deceased relatives, and we have an example of the interweaving of cultural resources at multiple levels: the person, networks-society-institutions, and history. One way that people learn is by observing and listening to people who they consider embodiments of what they want to become. "[I would] Go to people's house round and about," Rasta Ivey recalled. "Anywhere that any of the [early Rastafari] leaders going," she said, "I would go." By following the leaders, observing their sermons, and contemplating their messages, Rasta Ivey gradually evolved into her own identity as Rastafari. Moreover, as Rasta Ivey became competent as Rastafari, she began to perform a role like that of the early leaders that she observed. Working as a higgler, Rasta Ivey used her travels as an opportunity to evangelize for Rastafari. This is one route through which Rastafari was spread: through itinerant travelers. Through Rasta Ivey, we can identify an intergenerational assemblage of cultural resources circulating through the pathways of intersecting groups and through dialogic exchanges between living people and the past.

Many factors and experiences influenced and sustained Rasta Ivey's transformation into Rastafari. One was the persecution that she experienced for being Rastafari. In terms of identity, persecution of the early Rastafari was metaphorically akin to shining a bright light onto someone standing in the shadows, barely noticeable. In shining the light the figure is distorted, but rendered visible for all to see. The light makes one recognize that she is now seen as a caricature, but no longer able to stand, unnoticed, in the shadows. By fall 1934, citizens and police officers were beginning to single out Rastafari people for mistreatment. Many of the first two generations of Rastafari people were harassed, beaten, lynched, and men's beards or Dreadlocks were forcibly trimmed by police. During

a formal interview, I asked Rasta Ivey “Did people fight [antagonize] against you? People tell me that Rastas during those times had to hide” [keep away from certain public places]. She replied,

Yes man. Yes man. Yes man. Dem [them] beat me up kick [me] up...
 First time, Rasta man gone to jail, get lick down and all those things...
 That used to happen in the 30s Today, everybody can talk about Africa
 and Ethiopia.... First time we could not. Like how we can sit down now
 and talk

Rasta Ivey sacrificed her safety and well-being to be Rastafari. Indeed, the intolerance toward the Rastafari extended to their ideas. The idea of exalting Africa and Ethiopia could get one into trouble if one did not know one’s audience well, even if one did not self-define as Rastafari. There were times when it was unwise for a Rastafari to travel alone lest she or he get physically molested by police or vigilante citizens who knew they could harass Rastafari people with impunity. Many Rastafari recognized their status was that of pariah. Yet, persecution enhanced their sense of community and shared experience, both vital to the maintenance of collective identity. The power of stigma and dysphoria to create “extreme” sacrifice for and with nonkin is increasingly acknowledged (Whitehouse et al. 2017, p. 1).¹²

Another factor affirming and sustaining Rastafari identity are the acts of being recognized as Rastafari by both fellow Rastafari and by non-Rastafari. The Rastafari hailed each other as Rastafari and they carried symbols, such as red, gold, and green emblems, that identified them to one another as Rastafari. Recognition from non-Rastafari, whether unpleasant or sympathetic, marked a social self while also feeding an internal self.

Community-building practices affirm and sustain Rastafari identity, for example, learning and using Rastafari language and participating in rituals such as “Reasoning” and “Groundation.” The Rastafari created a unique vocabulary and concepts to communicate their views of the world. Existing terms such as the biblical Babylon were imbued with additional meaning, for example, defining the police as protectors of a corrupt and decadent society bent on destroying the righteous, or Zion as a holy and spiritual place located in Africa rather than Jerusalem. Reasoning is an indigenous ritual form of what we call critical analysis. Two or more Rastafari gather to discuss matters of interest, to dissect some idea or event—such as the crowning of King Ras Tafari as

Emperor—and interpret it in a way consonant with Rastafari visions of the world. Sometimes Cannabis is smoked during reasoning to facilitate the analytic experience. Groundation describes Rastafari ceremonies convened in recognition of events or holidays. For example, as early as 1937, Rastafari gathered to celebrate Ethiopian Christmas in January. Such celebrations involve displaying Rastafari symbols, communal cannabis smoking, and chanting [singing] hymns, thus fostering identity work by communicating stories, symbols, and values of import to the Rastafari. A group of Rastafari, for example, might feel solace, strength, and unity in this “chant”:

I am on the battlefield for JAH [Selassie I]
 I n I [collective “we”] on the battlefield for JAH
 I n I fight for I right
 And I will never run away
 I n I on the battlefield for JAH

The chant depicts the Rastafari as brave soldiers fighting for their rights and for their God. Rasta Ivey would sing such chants for me. Together, persecution, recognition, language, ritual, and other factors reinforce Rastafari identity while fostering community and communion.

Political Subjectivity and Acts of Political Significance

While Rasta Ivey was fiercely committed to Rastafari and deeply involved in embodying her faith and Rastafari identity, she did not confine herself to the realm of the sacred. She engaged the profane world of politics and activism, though she did not put it in those terms. What Rasta Ivey did was agitate for “rights”: to be Rastafari; to worship an Ethiopian/Black God; and to repatriate to Africa. She was a part of the politicized social movement orientation of some Rastafari, unlike others who wanted only to be left alone and have nothing to do with politics. There were periods during the late 1950s into the 1960s, for example, when Rasta Ivey “went to see the representatives everyday.” She became known to four Prime Ministers of Jamaica (Alexander Bustamante, Norman Manley, Michael Manley, and Edward Seaga). Rasta Ivey, like many Rastafari people during the period, followed closely the government’s position

on repatriation. Norman Manley was instrumental in sending a mission to five African nations to explore the prospect of Jamaican migration to Africa. Rasta Ivey noted that Norman Manley's son invited her to the House of Representatives to talk about repatriation. This likely happened during the early 1970s during Michael Manley's campaign and first term as Prime Minister. That a woman, and a Rastafari woman at that, would be invited to talk to male politicians speaks to people's recognition of Rasta Ivey's forcible character.

Rasta Ivey kept up her activism in one form or another until she became ill. She lived for the later part of her life at the Ethiopian Orthodox Church in Kingston, which was where I met her. I visited Jamaica in 2007 and learned that she had passed away. No one could tell me exactly when she passed away, or where her remains were laid to rest. It is ironic that such a feisty soul who lived so long and was so active was forgotten so quickly. But such is the case with nearly all of the first two generations of Rastafari agitators.

In Rasta Ivey's case, we have a religio-racial identity transformation accompanied by a shift in political subjectivity. By ethnographically studying persons, lives, and culture, we see how BRIT aids in explaining racial identifications, where the theory falls short, and how to revise it in ways that lead in productive directions.

APPLYING AND EXTENDING NIGRESCENCE THEORY

Rasta Ivey's story fits the developmental path predicted by Cross's Nigrescence Theory, but it suggests some limitations of that model as well. For Cross, accepting a pro-Black RGO required addressing anti-Black discourses, deracination, and miseducation about Black people. The change in attitudes would culminate in a secure and committed Black personal identity and RGO that might manifest in social activism. Rasta Ivey overcame her deracination and miseducation in a society saturated with racism. Blackness and Rastafari anchored Rasta Ivey in time and space, providing a historical and religious narrative that connected with her present African heritage. Blackness provided a means for Rasta Ivey to bond with like-minded pro-Black people; she used Blackness as a buffer against anti-Blackness and White hegemony; and as she grew older, she bridged difference, for example, creating relationships with non-Rastafari people of the middle and upper classes. Her love for Rastafari and Black people also motivated her toward political engagement.

Rasta Ivey's encounter involved a series of experiences listening to and analyzing the messages of pro-Black leaders and the first Rastafari evangelists. She believed that they had important things to say about Black people and Africa, things she did not know and Jamaican institutions would not teach her. She noted how the "five become one," meaning she identified common themes among the messages of the different evangelists, such as the notion of Black redemption. The evangelists' messages challenged the hegemonic discourse of a White Christ, of an African continent without history, and of an inferior Black people, and they inspired Rasta Ivey to revise her self-concept and worldview in positive and pro-Black ways.

We can imagine that Rasta Ivey's encounters transitioned into what Nigrescence Theory describes as immersion and emersion. Not only did Rasta Ivey need to learn the beliefs, language, rituals, and practices of the Rastafari, she had to become competent in how to perform them in culturally appropriate ways. She noted how she observed and learned from the earliest evangelists. She demonstrated her Rastafari competence, for example, in discussing Melchisedec's and Christ's manifestation in Emperor Selassie I. Her critique of Eurocentrism contested the norms of White British rule in Jamaica. Rasta Ivey did not talk about whether she was anxious about her identity as Rastafari during her first years in the faith. Indeed this might not have made sense to her given that her first years as a Rastafari were also the first years of the Rastafari. Nevertheless, her stories of the early years relate bravado and zealotry, consistent with what one would expect during immersion–emersion (Cross 1971, 1995).

Rasta Ivey became and remained Rastafari. The revised Nigrescence Theory notes that identity change occurs primarily in self-concept and RGO. Above I offered examples of reference groups—Bedwardites, Garveyites, police, vigilante citizens, churches, and Rastafari evangelists—integral to the development of Rastafari identity among the early Rastafari. I showed Rasta Ivey as an example of what we can gather from a person-centered approach to identity and politics. Psychological theories of racial identity do not take us to the places where identity is socially constructed. Indeed, one could argue that social-collective identity and history are integral to the personal dimensions of identity. Ideologies like Rastafari or agrarian populism become durable entities that inform the identities of multiple generations, all the while evolving and shifting (e.g., Price 2013, 2014). People in the present may be in dialogue with discourses of the past *as well as* the present, as attested by Jamaica's

Rastafari or small-scale farmers in Kentucky (Price 2009, 2013). That is why it is valuable to study the interconnected dimensions of identity formation.

By applying Nigrescence Theory to Black Jamaicans, I suggested that the theory should be revised to apply to people who are not African American. Because the Rastafari privilege race *and* religion, Nigrescence Theory was only partially adequate as an explanatory framework for Rastafari identity, which is not a racial identity alone. Revising Nigrescence Theory to include religion was feasible because, as Cross pointed out, Nigrescence is essentially a process of resocialization and reeducation. In these ways, Nigrescence has much in common with religious conversion. Religious conversion involves resocialization and reeducation, internalizing a new way of imagining one's self and one's relationships to other people and ways of thinking about the world. Thinking of Nigrescence as a kind of conversion opens new ways to think about various racial identity states, such as the pre-encounter state. Just as there are people interested in exploring another faith irrespective of whether they are already committed to a faith at the time, people like Rasta Ivey were seeking answers to existential questions about God's relationship to African-descended people. Before the crowning of Emperor Selassie, I in 1930, before there were Rastafari people, we can describe Rasta Ivey as a "seeker," someone in search of both racial and religious knowledge (Price 2009). The notion of a seeker acknowledges that people may have positive conceptions of Blackness, or be aware of their miseducation and deracination before they experience an encounter. Indeed, an encounter is itself a racialized version of religious conversion theory's notion of a "turning point" or life-altering experience that inspires a revision of one's self-concept.

A social practice approach also stresses the socially embedded nature of internalization and commitment, processes that are not well explained in Nigrescence Theory. Being singled out and treated as different or less than human, or being "hailed" as Rastafari by others, or being a participant in a community of like-minded practitioners, are some of the ways in which an identity is internalized. Commitment to an identification is more than a matter of an individual coming to feel secure in it. Again, it is necessary to view Rastafari as a faith, identity, and collective practice. One would not have to search far to find cases of Rastafari apostasy. My research was with those who remained committed. Among them, sacrifice functioned like an investment: the more one sacrificed, the more one

invested in Rastafari identity. Indeed, the notion of Babylon prepares a Rastafari for persecution and travail. Rasta Ivey's commitment was fed by more than confidence in her conviction that Rastafari was the right and the best way to be in the world. As supported by theories of identity fusion, sacrifice for being Rastafari and decades of investment in Rastafari help explain long-term commitment to Rastafari identity. Even toward the end of her life, living in abject poverty, Rasta Ivey's commitment to Rastafari did not waver:

I am waiting on him. When you do not have money, you have to wait till Rasta [Emperor Selassie I] comes for his people. Rasta is coming for his people. That means repatriation when Rasta comes and say, 'I am carrying you home. I am carrying you home. Whether you have money or not, I am carrying you home.' No one can stop you.

CONCLUSION

This chapter sought to outline a multidimensional approach to studying (Black) racial identity through an ethnographic life narrative strategy informed by BRIT, such as Nigrescence Theory. At a minimum, we should approach identity formation from personal, social-collective, and historical standpoints as these manifest in and are expressed by our interlocutors. During the 1930s, Black Jamaicans connected Ethiopianism—a durable ideology of pro-Blackness—with a new faith and identity, Rastafari. The colonial government and non-Rastafari citizenry stigmatized the Rastafari and their religiously inspired pro-Black identity from the start. Important questions to ask are how people learn such belief systems, how the beliefs and their bearers are politicized, how (or whether) they connect the past to the present, and how identifications such as race factor into such social equations? I sought to address these questions by showing how Rasta Ivey's life narrative can tell much about race, religion, identity, and politics, broaden our perspective on these beyond what conventional theories like BRIT or methodologies like ethnography alone usually do. By using an ethnographic life narrative methodology—asking people to tell us about their lives, experiences, decisions, and motivations, and by observing how people practice their identities, and by understanding the historical context of a given complex of identifications—we can answer such challenging questions in rich and compelling ways.

NOTES

1. In Jamaica, race and racial identity manifest in forms different from the USA. For example, there are three major racial formations—Black, White, and Brown—along with Indian and Chinese.
2. Cross's focus is primarily Blackness in the United States, although there is increasingly wider international application of BRIT.
3. As a child, I once asked my grandmother why was Jesus White and not Black. She hushed me and never answered my question. The question remained with me as I aged. As a young adult, I pursued answers to the question concurrent with my emerging racial and political consciousness.
4. Cross recognized the teleological notions evoked by the term "stage"; the "stages" should be understood as dynamic states or phases.
5. The Rastafari are diverse and constitute many variations on the central identity theme of Blackness and the divinity of Emperor Selassie. Nyabinghi and Bobo Ashanti represent two major Rastafari groups, known in Rastafari parlance as "Houses" or "Mansions."
6. During 1998, I tape recorded in-depth interviews with 26 elder Rastafari, five of them women. I interviewed another Rastafari matriarch several times but was not permitted to record the interviews. I conducted additional fieldwork and interviews during 1999, 2000, and 2007.
7. I recognize that the experiences are not commensurate.
8. For one, the Rastafari identified politicians as a primary source of the oppression that besets so many Black Jamaicans.
9. Life narrative interview conducted in 1998, Linstead, Jamaica.
10. On April 11, 1963, near Montego Bay, police discovered a mangled corpse and burned-out gas station. Informants identified a local group of "bearded men" as the culprits. Police and the Jamaican Defense Force were mobilized to arrest them. The crime initiated a bloody crackdown on Rastafari across the island, especially the Western region. Official reports announced more than 150 Rastafari were arrested within two nights of the crime (Price 2009, pp. 85–86).
11. Melchisedec is a figure of the King James Bible, described as a King and Priest of righteousness who exists beyond the confines of time or parentage; he is before time and has neither father nor mother.
12. Such behavior is called identity fusion. It is a "normal (i.e., not psychopathological) form of group alignment in which the boundary between personal and social identity becomes porous, producing a visceral sense of oneness with the group Driven by the conviction that group members share essence with oneself in ways that can transcend even the bonds of kinship, persons strongly fused to a group report willingness to engage in self-sacrifice."

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Political Becoming in Movements: Lessons from the Environmental, Tea Party, and Rastafari Movements

Dorothy Holland, Charles Price and William H. Westermeyer

INTRODUCTION

How do people become activists? Identity and agency are important components of person-centered theory and a key to becoming a political actor. Social practice theory focuses in-depth on these phenomena and illuminates channels whereby broad structural conditions flow into the person and vice versa. The theory distinguishes clearly between two interrelated forms of identity. Drawing from contemporary US culture, “terrorist,” “African American,” “radical environmentalist,” “Trump supporter,” “young White girl,” and other *social identities* are collectively imagined types of persons who presumably act certain ways and are associated with levels of (dis)respect and (dis)entitlement. *Intimate or*

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subjective identities, on the other hand, are dynamic, self-authored senses of self. While social identities are a significant channel through which social forces—institutional and interactional—act upon, or in Foucault’s power/knowledge phrasing, discipline, persons, intimate identities are personally developed platforms from which persons comprehend and (re)act toward the world and others. These self-authored identities emerge gradually over time from orchestrations of personal experiences, emotional memories, learned discourses, treatment from others, media images, vague affects, and other bits of subjectivity.¹ Reacted to by others and by institutions, and, exposed to a range of cultural resources, persons may form intimate identities that are personalized versions of common social identities or perhaps ones from less familiar figured or cultural worlds in which the person has formed a self, such as the Tea Party (see Westermeyer, Chapter 3, this volume). For those drawn into—dragged into—cultural worlds materialized in schools, for example, where they are targeted with a negative social identity such as “unpromising boys” (Wortham 2006), an intimate identity may be cultivated in hostile reaction and inner struggle. However, it develops, an intimate identity as a “social justice activist” or “uppity Black woman,” for example, can serve as a vital platform on which a person organizes and evaluates herself in political and other venues of her life, gains agency in those places, and sometimes, especially in league with others, acts back on social forces and powerful structures. In this sense, intimate identity and personal agency are often at the crux of political efforts toward social and cultural change.

CULTURE AND THE PERSON

Social practice theory brings to person-centered studies elaborated theories about identity and social life associated with George Herbert Mead, Lev Vygotsky, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Pierre Bourdieu. These practice theorists emphasized the social (trans)formation of mind, self, identity, and personal agency *in practice as mediated by cultural resources* (Holland et al. 1998). This line of theorizing is a far cry from pre-1970s anthropological thinking about subjectivity with its stress on cultural beliefs and reliance on underdeveloped notions of internalization (see Strauss’s 1992 critique). When the person is conceived as a passive subject of culture, culture’s significance for political subjectivity, becoming, and agency—the topics of this volume—required little more than straightforward notions of socialization.²

The meta-theory of practice, in contrast, which became more pervasive in the 1970s, viewed persons as capable of agency and cultural resources as tools. While humans are frequently *subjects* of culture guided by collective precepts, they are also *users* of culture. Humans have potential for agency because they can use cultural resources to affect themselves and others and they can collectively create new cultural resources, and, in fact, new cultural worlds. These possibilities do not imply that social life is easy and the world is one's oyster. Social life is frequently beset by conflict and contentious practice; institutions are often hard to access and hostile. People's minds and selves must be understood as dynamically forming, and their actions comprehended as happening, in the back and forth of interactions that are almost always marked by difference, power, and conflict.

These theoretical shifts opened up anthropological interest in the person and political action and agency³ and in social movements and political activism (Kurzman 2008).⁴ Concurrently, the interdisciplinary field of social movement studies (SMS) took a significant "cultural turn," producing two or so decades of research cogently summed up by Andrews (2001, 2004, 2017), as revealing three main pathways by which movements gain power: cultural, disruptive, and organizational. Most relevant here: Movements have cultural power by changing thinking, language, and everyday practice. Our purpose in this chapter is to focus on how movements and their cultural power constitute sites for political becoming including the development of political agency. We draw upon our respective ethnographic studies of political becoming in the environmental movement in the US, the Rastafari movement in Jamaica, and the Tea Party Movement in the US.

POLITICAL BECOMING IN PRACTICE: CULTURAL MEDIATION AND SITUATEDNESS

Social practice theory's dual emphases on cultural mediation and on being in practice (situatedness) have multiple implications for political becoming. Significantly, the implications take us beyond everyday notions of political consciousness as key to an individual's political action. Deciding a cause is righteous and worth support is usually only a step toward political action, and one that often happens after rather than before involvement with political groups (Aronson 1993; Munson 2009; Kitchell et al. 2000).

Inquiries concentrated on political consciousness alone may miss the significance of the person's relationships to already existing venues and resources for political action. A person may have an intimate "positional identity," a sense of one's place, that is embodied and relatively out of awareness.⁵ Consider the emotional starting point of people in North Carolina local politics. In interviews with 100 people—half activists, half not—about local democracy in five different sites in North Carolina in the late 1990s, roughly a third of the participants expressed fear at the thought of becoming politically involved (Holland et al. 2007). Westermeyer carried out a second analysis of these political life history interviews and concluded that for many, conventional political venues such as public hearings and politicians' offices seemed remote and unapproachable (Westermeyer 2009). Engaging in political action entails becoming involved in already existing efforts, whether they be contentious exchanges on the streets, in workplaces, or in print media (Ahearn 2010; Duranti 2004; Hervik 2011), the moves and countermoves of serious games (Bourdieu 1977a; Linger 1992; Ortner 2006; Holland and Lachicotte 2016) such as electoral politics and the decision-making of government bodies, or immersion in established movements or transformative social projects (Robertson 2017) such as those of the Rastafari. Getting involved in, learning to navigate, and being accepted in relevant venues are all central components of political becoming that are just as important as developing one's consciousness of the political system and issues of the day.

What social practice theory emphasizes, in addition to tracing political consciousness, are (1) how people become *situated* in already existing structures for political action and existent political communities, and (2) how they use cultural resources to develop agency and intimate capabilities for sustained action under such conditions. At one end of the analytic continuum of becoming, political subjectivity consists of disorganized bits and pieces of sentiment, memories of emotionally charged exchanges, a phrase frequently voiced by one's father, an episode from media, vague dispositions, and so forth. Politicians, by skillfully playing on such fragments of *history in person* (Holland and Lave 2001), may be able to mobilize people to limited actions such as voting for a particular candidate, venting anger at a political rally, or contributing to a sense of moral panic in conversations with friends and relatives. Or, for another example, an interviewer's questions may provoke a momentary cobbling together of a political position. But, by and large, persons with

relatively disorganized political subjectivities are primarily reactive, at most spectators, when it comes to political venues and related struggles. They may, in fact, feel unentitled or without standing in these venues. They can voice an opinion, and express distress about a political struggle, but they have developed few of the internal means to be proactive, to act voluntarily. Moreover, they are likely to stay out of movement activity because of negative social images associated with activists. In the case of the environmental movement, for example, potential interest was deflected by dis-identification with “tree huggers” and “radicals,” and a number of movement participants themselves struggled internally as to whether they were radicals.

Toward the opposite end of the continuum, the person, by way of what Vygotsky (1960) would call “higher mental functions,” actively employs cultural resources including “media dosing” (cf. Casey, Chapter 6, this volume) to organize and modify their own thoughts and emotions (Holland et al. 1998, p. 100). Vygotsky’s emphasis on routines using “semiotic mediation,” what we have been calling “cultural mediation,” is key to understanding his notion of human agency (Holland et al. 1998). Humans place terms, images, and objects in their environment, some of which eventually become triggers or pivots that they can voluntarily evoke to modulate their own thinking and feeling. Without such use of collectively produced resources, Vygotsky held that humans would be left to react willy-nilly to whatever stimuli they happened to bump into in their environments. This albeit modest ability to voluntarily control one’s thinking, feeling and action, is a basic building block of human agency. Relying on these personalized cultural resources, one is able to organize oneself as a certain type of political actor and, depending on the forces arrayed against one’s position, engage in sustained political action (Holland et al. 1998). Such a person has a formed sense of her self—a personal or intimate political identity—and so an anchor against provocations that would divert her from her political purposes. We conceptualize political becoming as moments of movement along this continuum, and consider that *history in person* tends to become more organized and action more under one’s control as the person gains experience in political activity.⁶

One objective of the chapter is to view processes of political becoming through the close-up lenses of social practice theory. Drawing transformational moments from our ethnographic accounts, we illuminate moving along the continuum of agency either with respect to *becoming*

socially situated in the activism and/or *developing culturally mediated senses of self, the political system, and the struggle at hand.*

A second objective is to contrast three social movements and their demands on political becoming. By definition, social movements are potential engines of change, disruptive to interests vested in the status quo and potentially the source of new imaginaries to live by. The movements differ from one another in terms of the set of political venues into which they carry or evoke conflict, how participants are treated in those venues, how the movements are responded to by the host society and how distinctive the movement's political vision is. The differences allow us to better understand political becoming: the work entailed in the development of political agency, how movement participation shifts political consciousness, and the different textures of becoming in different movements.

PASTOR WILSON'S POLITICAL BECOMING AND CHANGES IN THE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

The first account from the US environmental movement comes from Pastor Wilson⁷ (Allen et al. 2007).⁸ In the early 1980s, in Warren County, North Carolina, he co-organized protests to stop the state from dumping PCB laden soil near a largely poor, African American community, thus contributing to the origin of the "environmental justice movement." It was there, too, that the concept of "environmental racism" was coined (Kaplan 1997). Especially in the 1970s environmental justice with its focus on those suffering the burdens of environmental damage and waste was understood as distinct from the environmental movement, which focused on the well-being of the earth.

Pastor Wilson described how he became an environmentalist as well as an environmental justice activist. He tells how he began protesting because of environmental justice, but then had an experience that led him to understand himself as an environmentalist as well. He began his participation in the political struggle over Warren County's toxic landfill with no thought of becoming a "lover of nature." "I went down there because I felt like dumping on those Black folk was an injustice. If they wanted to dump on those rich White folk in Raleigh I probably would never have become an environmentalist." From a low level of concern about the environment per se, Pastor Wilson changed over several years

to the point of declaring to Kim Allen, the interviewer: “Yes, when I say I am a lover of nature, it is an identity. I have empathy with those things.”

[In an early protest] as I became involved in the struggle marching all the way from Warren County landfill through Warrenton to Raleigh [a distance of around 45 miles] to the state capitol...[I was reading the Bible] In Jeremiah 30...all of a sudden [I realized that] this struggle is about the salvation of the earth. [Allen asks: How did that happen?] Just a leap that is called empathy. This struggle is not really about a Black community that is being dumped on.... That chapter that I was reading, it shows off what slavery was about... [I]t really was about the economics of it. What ended up being used are people and the earth. The earth was not supposed to be used; [it was supposed] to be related to...The earth...it really is about justice for the earth because if you don't have justice for the earth, you are not going to have justice for people because everything becomes a thing to be used rather than a part of it.

Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of “dialogism” (Holquist 2002) is useful for capturing the core importance of cultural resources in political becoming. Dialogism assumes that sentient beings—alone and in groups—are always in a state of being “addressed” and in the process of “answering.” Cultural resources constitute the media of those exchanges. Pastor Wilson was being addressed through the talk of his fellow protestors about the collective meaning of the struggle. At the same time, he was also making his own personal connections using another cultural medium, the Bible. Exemplifying Vygotsky's higher mental function, Pastor Wilson resignified his knowledge of Biblical teachings to orchestrate his thoughts and feelings about the environment. In the process, he was “authoring” the world and his own political becoming as an environmentalist in that world.⁹ The Pastor's epiphany during the protest march was part of a longer, gradual identity transformation. Through naming himself and adopting some of the environmental discourses he was hearing, he was creating a new sense of himself, a new identity—a lover of nature, an environmentalist. He began to preach about the environment and, from there, eventually to join organizations working to save the earth. Through these ongoing practices of appropriating environmental discourses and creating his own particular connections, environmental concerns became personally meaningful and a basis for his political action and agency.

A second part of the Pastor's account described his later efforts to participate in an environmentalist political group dedicated to protecting a North Carolina river. Even though one can self-author through cultural mediation and even act on the identity that one develops, one cannot always situate oneself in a desired community. In a move that made him an early sociolinguist, Bakhtin (1986) recognized the importance of the "social image" attached to dialects, languages, and linguistic registers. Linguistic forms are not socially neutral; they are associated with those who use them. In a sense, they are "owned" and their use implies a claim to being of a particular social group. Pastor Wilson was unable to convince the members that he was an environmentalist. Instead, for them, he carried a Black social identity which they associated with racial concerns, and they persisted in treating him as though his issues were those of an environmental justice activist. He finally concluded that White environmentalists "owned" caring for the earth and he could not make the contributions to caring for the river that he wanted to make. (For another account of a struggle with the image of a movement, see Ewing and Taylor (Chapter 7, this volume) where participants struggle with the association of 3rd gender politics with mostly lower caste hijras.)

The environmentalist movement in this nation has no room for Black folk. [Allen: What do you mean?] The Sierra Club is dominated by White [people]. It has not really had a Black agenda. The Riverkeepers in New Bern is a White-dominated environmentalist movement. I have wanted to be a part of it because I really thought I had a contribution to make. It has the blessings of the state to deal with those issues and White folk don't really need Black folk... [Allen: You are saying that environmental justice is an opportunity for Black people to participate in the environment?] Yes, because... [the issues of environmental racism] have not yet been dominated by the White power structure.... That is a legitimate role, to become a spokesperson for the environmental racism issue. From where I was, real conversion comes about when you discover the way the earth and the environment have been treated—the issue of injustice. ... White people can be environmentalists and racists at the same time.

While Pastor Wilson had undergone an expansion of his political subjectivity of the environment, he was unable to change his social relationships to those already engaged in the political struggle to care for the river and other environmental entities. In the collective cultural imaginaries of those White North Carolina environmentalists, his interests

were illegible because he was Black. As Bourdieu (1977b) so vividly explains, individuals develop a sense of their standing among a group of people and anticipate the likely response of the group to any contribution they might attempt to make. If they expect disinterest, ridicule, or worse, then they *self-censor*. In a sense, Pastor Wilson found out that types of environmentalism were raced—environmentalism was “owned” by Whites; environmental justice was owned by Blacks, and he censored himself in any further attempts to contribute to environmental groups. On that late 1990s terrain in North Carolina, Pastor Wilson was excluded from having a reference group of environmentalists and from the possibility of agency as an environmentalist. Likewise, an opportunity for the environmental movement to include a more diverse collective was thwarted.

KEVIN’S POLITICAL BECOMING IN ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICT

The second trajectory we describe comes from another man interviewed for the research project on local environmental groups in North Carolina. This example illustrates that movements affect the political subjectivities of those who become engaged with them, even if they are critical interlocutors rather than adherents. Kevin became caught up in a dispute over the fate of a tract of land in the southwestern mountains of North Carolina. Locals such as Kevin had long used the land as a de facto commons for hunting, picnicking, and other family and kin activities. Newcomers and parties from outside the area wanted the tract to be maintained and protected as a state park, a change in status that would prohibit hunting. Preventing hunting was not a goal of most of the pro-state park proponents, yet for many locals with deep histories in the area, its prohibition loomed as a devastating loss. Because of family and personal histories and memories associated with the place, simply going somewhere else to hunt, which many of the pro-park proponents naively suggested, was not a solution (Holland 2003).

The media and many commentators read the political struggle as an “environmental conflict,” casting or situating those for the state park designation as “environmentalists” and those against as “anti-environmentalists.” The latter were often referred to as “hunters” even though some were not hunters, but simply concerned to keep the commons for family activities including hunting. Eventually, after an initial alliance between the opposing sides failed, heated exchanges between the

“hunters” and the “environmentalists” erupted via the media, in a public hearing, and sometimes in exchanges on the street. These exchanges, which locals recounted to us a year to two and a half years after they had happened, were still matters of strong emotion. When Kevin suggested that the area could be both a state park and remain a game land, a Sierra Club member, according to his account, “started insulting everything I said and didn’t even listen. I was so mad I turned around and walked off. That’s the whole narrow-minded bit that I was talking about.” Kevin related another conversation with the Club member where in the heat of the argument,

she had asked me what gave me the right that I should be the one to decide [what happened with the land]. I said nothin’ does, but how many times have you been in there, picked up trash, worked on a road, cut a tree that was across the road so that somebody else could get in? She said, ‘Oh, I went in last Saturday’. I said, ‘Well, I bet you I’ve done it 25 hundred times. Any time that I was in there that anything needed doing like that, you know, if the road was starting to wash out I’d get out and fix it and be done with it’. ‘So, oh’ [she says], ‘that doesn’t matter, it doesn’t matter what you’ve done to it’. She said that we had our own private hunting reserve for the past 100 years...that we just wanted to keep everybody else out...Never once has anyone told them [the Sierra Club] that they couldn’t come in here, but now they’re tellin’ us we can’t.

Kevin’s reenactment of this exchange illustrates how internalized dialogues with critical interlocutors often become components of political becoming. Such dialogues, as compared with unsorted feelings, thoughts, and memories, constitute a movement toward the more organized end of the continuum of political subjectivity. Bakhtin’s dialogism stresses the sociality of the self and makes sense of such dynamics. Identity formation is dialogic. A person’s identity involves incorporating the others of its social world. The dialogic self is more or less in dynamic tension with a constellation of self (selves) and others, which may change over time (Bakhtin 1981; Lachicotte 2002). In this conflict situation, Kevin’s political becoming began and continued to build around this struggle between locals and newcomers/outsideers and the discourses that they used to argue their points of view.¹⁰

As the heated “dialogic exchanges” continued, Kevin and other locals formed the Blue Ridge Gamelands Group (BRGG) to present their views, and another twist in Kevin’s trajectory developed. He and the

BRGG began to self-author as “environmental” what to them, before the conflict, had been the commonsense activities of maintaining trails and roads, clearing litter, and conserving wildlife. Likewise, they began to highlight their worries about acid rain and the potential loss of the land to commercial development as environmental concerns. They tried to situate themselves and gain traction in the debate by realizing, and then clarifying, how they too were “environmentalists.” They, too, had important knowledge about the land that should be taken into account. But while they had started to claim an identity as an environmentalist, they had difficulties changing their relations to the others in the debate. They had trouble gaining standing as environmentalists because the dominant image of the environmentalist was already “owned” by people who embodied different backgrounds, orientations to the land, and regional class characteristics.

In Kevin’s account, as the story unfolds, we see how the social ownership of the environmentalist movement troubled his formation of a political identity.

...now whenever you say environmentalist the first thing 90 per cent of the people think of is the Sierra Club or some bunch that has a more extreme view. I guess you’d call me more of a conservationist because I don’t believe that we should lock it all up and then just let whatever happens happen. It’s too late to do that, we’ve already changed the balance of everything, so we [got to] go in and kinda help control populations [of deer, wild turkeys, boar, bear, and so forth].

The image of the environmentalist was owned by White, relatively wealthy, and “educated” people. Their environmentalism was that of preservation and saving endangered species. The “hunters,” with their regional dialects and styles of comporting themselves in addition to a different philosophy about and practices regarding wildlife, tended not to fit this image and thus had trouble garnering respect and authority in the political struggle over the use designation for the land. At the time we left off with the interviews, the hunters had a new sense of themselves as a kind of environmentalist—they had undergone the subjective part of political becoming by drawing on outsider discourses to author themselves as environmental activists, but were not accepted as such by others. Newcomers and outsiders were challenging their sense of the value of their cultural activities, their claims to special knowledge about local land

and their right to have their concerns honored. They had not managed to gain credibility as environmentalists.

As with the case of Pastor Wilson's thwarted desires to undertake political action as an environmentalist, we see in the case of Kevin that self-authoring as a political actor can be easier than becoming situated as a recognized, respected political actor in a political community. In this case, too, the expansion of the environmental movement to include a more diverse collective went awry.

SANDY'S BECOMING IN THE EMERGENCE OF THE WELL-RESOURCED TEA PARTY

Westermeyer's research on the Tea Party (Westermeyer, Chapter 3, this volume) took place during initial phases of the Tea Party's formation. Out of widespread but relatively amorphous sentiments—what Raymond Williams (1977) referred to as a structure of feeling, what Masumi (2002) might construe as affect—a new political stance coalesced across the country. The years 2009 and 2010 saw a naming and fleshing out, an interpretation, a figuring, or what Spinoza et al. (1997) call a “disclosure,” of the disgruntlement, anger, and fear among conservatives concerning the direction of the country that generated the Tea Party movement. Rare for movements, the Tea Party had unusually positive support in the host society. The Tea Party developed with the aid of constant, 24/7 sources of radio and television broadcasting of movement-relevant media images and accounts (Westermeyer, Chapter 3, this volume). This unusually positive media support of the Tea Party sets it apart from the environmental and especially the Rastafari movements.

The first personal account comes from Sandy. She and her husband, a business consultant, were upper-middle-class Whites residing in a well-off neighborhood in one of North Carolina's larger cities. Although a neophyte, Sandy easily situated herself in political communities and venues. Her quick transition to political agency was quite remarkable.

Westermeyer asked Sandy, who was 35 at the time, to tell him about starting the “Hamilton County” Tea Party group:

It started with the 2008 [presidential] election. I've never been politically active except to vote before. Just seeing what seemed to be not necessarily an easy choice, but two very different candidates, and seeing...the choice I made because he [John McCain] was the more conservative choice—he

was more focused on ensuring American values in a way that I was comfortable with...I think that the defining moment was the Joe the plumber. [Candidate Obama said:] ‘We want to spread the wealth around.’ I was wondering whether anybody else was listening to this. It was at that point when I really started paying attention. After the election..., I was inactive but I was watching the news and listening to talk radio and starting to have more discussion with friends, mostly at church and neighbors. In December of 2009, I went on a business trip with my husband and took Sarah Palin’s book with me.... What I got out of the book [*Going Rogue*] is that if Americans would just take care of their little piece of America, their own backyard... If they got involved locally and cleaned up the corruption, the good old boy network, and found out where their tax money was going. If everybody took care of their little city or county, oh my gosh! We would see such a difference. It’s called ‘trickle up politics’ as Brett (my husband) has coined the phrase.

Sandy’s description alludes to the beginning, for her, of a number of social and subjective transformations. She describes her previous political activity as limited to voting. Then, during the 2008 campaign season, she experienced a heightening of attention. She began to focus and draw upon circulating cultural resources. A heavily publicized exchange between presidential candidate Obama and a questioner, whom conservative media turned into the celebrity, “Joe the Plumber,” gave an image to Sandy that she used to remember and communicate her fears that forces desiring to “spread the wealth around” were gaining power. Palin’s book and “trickle up politics” became cultural resources for focusing on the local. She continued:

I was so inspired by that [“trickle up politics” idea] because I think a lot of times people feel very helpless when they watch the news. They see all these huge national issues in Washington DC in these politicians; these things that you will never be able to get your hands on to do anything about. And every couple of years you get to vote. ... all of a sudden, ‘gosh, I think there are politicians who do stuff locally!’ ...So I thought that we needed to do something. We have to do something on this local level. ... Robert [a friend in her church] and I decided ... to sit down and have coffee and decide what we were going to do...At this point I didn’t even know enough about the Tea Party to think about whether somebody is already doing something like this in [our city]. We just decided that we would do something. We called a meeting of some friends ... and had a meeting at our house ...[We invited] probably 40 people and about seven showed up. Three of whom were me and Brett and Robert.

Sandy, her husband, and her friend Robert were attempting to change their social relationships by creating a new political organization with people they thought might be like-minded conservatives. Undaunted by the small turnout, Sandy approached another political venue in her area, a Republican precinct, and started to learn how to operate in that venue and met more people she thought might be interested in helping form a conservative group dedicated to local politics.

I think I went to the first GOP meeting in January or February. So now I have a whole idea of what a precinct is.... I learned that there are all these precincts, that there is already a system where everybody can take care of their own backyard. So I became an official precinct chair for the GOP. [For] The second meeting [of the Hamilton County Conservatives group—the emerging Tea Party group] I passed out flyers around my neighborhood and sent out another e-mail. At the meeting... we had 25 people.

Sandy easily forged new social relations with others interested in the Tea Party. As a part of the emerging movement, she found others in her networks with similar interests who already had skills and knowledge for organizing a group of people. She had no difficulties like those of Pastor Wilson or Kevin fitting the social image of the political group. In fact, she used her awareness of the emerging social image of the Tea Party to identify others, such as those in local Republican precincts, who might be attracted to her group. Several of the local Tea Party groups (LTPG) Westermeyer studied cultivated their collective political agency by teaching their participants how to become effective actors in the decision-making and leadership of conventional, local political institutions. Other newcomers to local politics stressed the importance of the guidance, encouragement, and support that participants in the LTPG provided each other. The groups taught participants that they were entitled to participate in these local venues.

What we see emphasized in Sandy's story is about becoming situated in the political community and even more about how she used cultural resources being circulated by the Tea Party-friendly media and the emerging local groups to mediate her sense of needed political action. As already pointed out above, the importance of cultural resources in social movements is not a new idea. Here we are pushing two relatively under-emphasized aspects of cultural resources.

One aspect is the need for a more complex concept than “frame” (Whittier 2004) to conceptualize the political consciousness that can be created by movements and activism.¹¹ Changes in consciousness occur not just through a movement’s message frame but also through new practices participants enact. We use the concept of “figured world,” a collectively produced horizon of meaning that is materialized (performed) by a group of people in a particular time and space. It is “a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others” (Holland et al. 1998, p. 52). The construct of figured worlds incorporates notions of dispositions and emotional complexes as well as identities and self-investment, and is thus useful for understanding those who participate in alternative cultural worlds of political sentiment and action. As leader of the Hamilton Tea Party group, Sandy helped create a figured world of politics performed with other TP adherents (Westermeyer 2016, Chapter 3, this volume). In that world, she came to identify herself as someone taking care of problems at the local political level.

The second aspect of cultural resources important in this chapter is related to agency. Instead of simply reacting to politicians’ rhetoric, Sandy began to look for cultural resources that she could think with and strategies of action that might make a difference. The cultural resources such as she found in *Going Rogue* and “trickle up politics,” helped her orchestrate her thoughts, feelings, and impulses to act into complexes that she could voluntarily evoke. Although not all of Westermeyer’s consultants were as impressive as Sandy in organizing and running an LTPG and being locally active politically, many of them did become active forces to be reckoned with in local government bodies such as County Commissioner meetings (Westermeyer 2016).

JANINE’S BECOMING IN THE EARLY TEA PARTY

Although Janine, a 35-year-old, White, married woman with two young children, also found conservative media an important resource and eventually tried to start a local Tea Party group, her political trajectory had a different texture than that of Sandy’s. For Janine, the process of identifying herself with the social image of the movement took longer and seemed of more significance than for Sandy. When Westermeyer interviewed Janine, she was living in North Carolina where she had, several years earlier, settled after her four years of military service ended.

Janine came from a West Virginia family with a tradition of military service. Her military service was a source of great pride: “so when I was able to put on my uniform—it’s just an honor to wear the uniform. I didn’t have to have a ribbon anywhere; it was just an honor to wear the uniform.” Although she had never before been politically involved, her military service and a keen sense of herself as a patriot provided resources important to her political becoming. Her interview also helps us see her dialogic sense of self and how her political becoming developed through identification and belonging. In explaining how she became a political actor, Janine began by telling Westermeyer that the country had started veering off track during the George W. Bush administration.

Okay, it goes back to the ...second term of Bush, President Bush, when I started to see him veer off, I mean completely veer off the track as far as ... Medicare part D and things like that. I was sitting back going, ‘Wait a minute, what are you doing?! ...The Republicans don’t stand for that...’ And in the last two years with the whole issue of we’re a nation at war and yet you don’t deem it necessary to control our borders especially with the information coming in that they might be infiltrating Al-Qaeda and coming across our borders...you don’t deem it necessary as our President to close those borders and control it somehow?!?

In her imagined dialogue with President Bush, Janine questions him as falling short of her ideal of a Republican and reproaches him for not recognizing a potential danger to the country. In the next passage, she leaves off with the conversation with President Bush and turns to an imagined dialogic exchange with fellow Americans in which she reports Bush’s speech, and explains to her imagined interlocutors how Bush and his advisers missed an opportunity to model the patriotism and citizenship that’s called for in time of war.

... that was where Bush went wrong with the Iraq war. During WWII, you had...rations and people went house-to-house collecting metal. Everybody was involved in the war effort... [George W. Bush] had the mindset of ‘we’re just gonna get in there and do what we need to do and get out, nobody likes it anyway.’ they missed the opportunity to educate the people and get them really involved...And he told us, “Go buy! Go buy!” And that’s not my idea of how a war is... Can we not just look outside ourselves for a moment and realize that we live in a society that everybody

has to put in a part? You have to be focused and you have to be willing to sacrifice for this cause. That's part of being a patriot. That's part of being a citizen.

Janine's introduction to the Tea Party came soon after the inauguration of Barack Obama, whose "fiscal irresponsibility" also alarmed her. She spontaneously recounted the event seen by many as the spark that set the Tea Party in motion, the on-the-air outburst by CNBC reporter Rick Santelli from the Chicago Mercantile Exchange on February 19, 2009. Outraged at a government proposal to help those with mortgages they couldn't pay, Santelli equated out of control government spending with forsaking the nation's founders, which he saw as symptomatic of a much broader decline in American citizens' self-reliance, patriotism, and desire for restrained government. Santelli's outburst, which pulled together the basic themes that would become important to the movement, was capped off by a less than serious call for a "Tea Party" protest on the shores of Lake Michigan. Due to the intense replaying of the rant by broadcast media, most of Westermeyer's consultants were familiar with the clip, including Janine:

I actually saw that excerpt and as soon as he said, this is a Tea Party, you know it's time for us to have an old fashioned Tea Party.... I was like 'that makes sense! it's time for us to stand up and say. ... we're out of control here. We're really out of control and someone needs to stand up.

Janine began to watch conservative protests on television and attend nearby Tea Party functions. When Westermeyer asked her what she thought of the people she was seeing, she explained the positive social image she was associating with the Tea Party.

I noticed, first of all, that they [the participants] were for the most part elderly people and I've always been raised that you respect your elders. They know a lot more than you do because they've been down the road a lot further than you have. And when they start getting concerned about things, it's time for you to take a look at it and wonder 'maybe they've got a real point here.' Then as I started attending the [meetings], the next thing I noticed was women, a lot of women standing up.... I initially thought that it was Sarah Palin's impact but then as I got to talking to them, it was their concern about the future.

Janine's sense of belonging and congruence with the activists was solidified at the massive Taxpayer March on Washington in 2009, a huge rally that was attended by tens of thousands of Tea Party supporters.

And I'm walking, physically walking on the street [on Constitution Avenue toward the Capitol in Washington, DC], surrounded—just surrounded by...I couldn't even venture a guess [as to the numbers of people]. Chills up my arms. [Westermeyer: Why?] Why? You ask me why? Because I was part of something that loved their country that I consider with even more pride than when I was in the military. ...This was something that I thought: 'When my children look back they're gonna say, 'Mom was there, right there, she was a part of that movement.' It was just, like I said, pride in my country that I felt before, but not to that extent. It was just overwhelming. It made me want to cry on three or four different occasions.

Janine's comments provide a description of her developing sense of a social image to attach to the Tea Party and her work to relate herself to that image. She notices the presence of older people, for example, and gives them the personal meaning of elders and their wisdom. She notices the presence of women and comes to associate that with their concern for the future. But the overwhelming sense from the Taxpayers March on Washington is a sense of finding others with whom she can perform the pride she feels for her country and stand up for righting its direction.

Figured worlds, building on George H. Mead's practice theories of the social formation of mind and self, uses a specific understanding of intimate identity—a sense self-authored from personal experiences, sentiments, remembered discourses as explained above but also built in relation to the actions and social identities recognized by the community materializing the cultural world. One invests oneself in being a particular kind of actor in that world and tries to live up to the claims one has made in doing so. An "environmentalist" or "Tea Party person," for example, is such an identity. Once developed, the intimate identity is both a guide to what activities to involve oneself with and a lens for self-evaluation. In addition, it is often associated with belonging.¹² The joy of finding others who share and with whom one can comfortably act out one's political and civic values was a reoccurring theme in Westermeyer's Tea Party interviews. So was the sense of needing to do something to right the country. These LTPGs worked well to nurture the political becoming of many new activists.

POLITICAL BECOMING IN A HOSTILE JAMAICA

While the emerging Tea Party was provided with resources and technical support from some of the richest people in the US, the developing Rastafari movement in Jamaica in the early 1930s was met with severe hostility from the government, media, and many Jamaican citizens. Developing out of a long history of struggles in Jamaica over the colonial and postcolonial privileging of those who were classified as White and Mixed/Brown over African-descended or Black people, the Rastafari movement generated a figured political/religious world that predicated a new people built around a particular understanding of Blackness and a Black moral economy (Price 2009; Price, Chapter 9, this volume). Against the discrimination, miseducation, and the deracination visited on the Black population, the movement, in effect, undertook political action to reeducate Black people as to their rightful history, origins, and value. It drew heavily on Ethiopianism, which held that “Emperor Haile Selassie I of Ethiopia was the biblical Messiah returned to redeem Africa, Black Africans, and the oppressed people of the Black Diaspora.” (Price, Chapter 9, this volume, p. 245). This figuring of a political/religious world dictated affiliations with a Black Messiah and with Black royalty, and so a radical shift in political allegiances. The Rastafari claimed their political/religious affiliation and citizenship was not with Jamaica and the colonial power of Great Britain, but instead with Ethiopia. Participants acted to bring the legal relationship between the Rastafari and the Jamaican government in accord with the sense of truth and justice championed by the movement (Price 2009; Price, Chapter 9, this volume).

The survival and continuation of the Rasta movement over the 80+ years since the 1930s is striking given the profound shift in subjectivity that the movement asked of its adherents, the array of hostile opponents and critical interlocutors that the movement evoked, especially in its first four decades, and the fact that the Rasta movement had no system of recruitment for new members. Those who wanted to situate themselves in the Rasta way could avail themselves of Rasta teachings, but the movement had no organized structure for proselytizing.

The following quotes convey the shifts in subjectivity and social relations that happened as newcomers made their way into the Rasta world. We also get a sense of the critical voices of interlocutors and the dialogues across difference that they introduced into the political trajectory of those absorbing the political consciousness of the Rasta. An elder Rasta, Ras Brenton, described the deep shift in national affiliation as follows:

So we say Zion [*Ethiopia/Africa*] is the throne and we ain't going to leave it alone... [*we*] defend that throne. Because that is Black man throne. We can't...control England throne, and quarrel over it, because that is Queen Elizabeth throne and her syndicate [*i.e., White people's throne*]... Everybody get to, what you call, downgrade [*us*] I and I say [*because*] we no have no king.

For a Rasta, the political/religious sense of self that comes to light with a Black king reflects a significant transformation.

Ras Chronicle and others describe what we have referred to as movement along the continuum of political becoming. (As will be seen below, Rasta interpret the becoming differently.) In these quotes about the transformational moments, we see that grasping the figured world and identifying with the identities of the world such as “warrior” is a gradual process and much more of a shift than was required for most of the environmentalists and certainly for the Tea Partyists.

Price asked Chronicle how he would answer a youth who asked him “Why are you a Rasta?”

‘Why me is a Rasta? Because Rastafari is... [*pause*] a tradition thing from Africa. Once you sight [*grasp*] Africa, the Black people, and the faith, you gradually become a Rastafari...some man say we born it [*i.e., a person is born a Rastafari and later discovers the identity*], an inborn conception from Africa, you know...so why me become a Rasta is because Rasta is ... the cream [*spiritual culmination*] of the Black people, of the African race.

Becoming a Rasta was talked about as gradually coming to know the truth, rights, justice, and acting upon that knowledge. Notice that Ras Chronicle indicates a culturally specific sense of political becoming. The idea of “becoming political” is not how the older Rastafari like him saw what they did. They described their struggles and fights in the concepts of their cultural world for “truth and rights,” for example, the “truth” of European/colonial hegemony and the “right” to identify as Ethiopian. They agitated for this right, but more so in the sense of being spiritual warriors confronting an evil and oppressive empire. For the spiritual warriors, standing up to or confronting “Babylon” [the colonial authorities and civic leaders] became a duty forever defined when one realizes one’s Rasta identity. By the same token, one does not “participate” in Rastafari if one *is* Rastafari; one does not “join” the Rasta movement. One does not become more self-assured and self-confident as a result of recognizing

that one is Rastafari, but rather “stronger” and “fuller.” Rasta religious/political consciousness, in short, theorizes a world in which an essentialist Rasta identity is a basis for consciousness and action.¹³

One of the reasons for the gradual nature of acquiring a political/religious consciousness as a Rasta is alluded to above. One must create one’s own path of learning and coming to consciousness as a Rasta before one can become situated in the Rasta community. From a feeling of discomfort about what one has been taught to believe growing up and its disjuncture with what one sees and hears in the world, one goes through a period of seeking (Price 2009) to find resources for understanding. One of the younger men Price talked to described part of his period of seeking:

Burrell: Well, when I leave school. ... I ask myself, I would like to know the true God, the true and living God. ... [Price: how old were you?] 16–17 years. [Price: So, even from that time you concerned with justice and God?] Yeah! Truth! I hear big people talk about God. The man God. They call him ‘Jessus’. You have some of them call him Selassie I. Some of them call him ‘Jeezus’. So, when I leave school now, I tell myself, say, I want to know the true one. ‘Cause it is three name I get. I want to know which of them is the true one.

Also relevant to the gradual nature of the process is the centrality of the Rasta identity and the need to change one’s social relations. Gabi Selassie, also known as Brother Bongo, explained the deep subjective significance of his realization of his Rasta self, but also the necessity of creating a new everyday name from which to base his relationships to other Jamaicans:

I renounce Trevor Campbell, which is my slave name; that is my slave master’s name. I come of age and to the consciousness to my ancestral rights, my original rights, my original identity as an Ethiopian. So as an Ethiopian, I cannot be identified as Trevor Campbell... It must be a slave that is named Trevor Campbell. So now that I am redeemed from mental slavery, I am now Gabi Selassie [his new name]....

Price (Chapter 9, this volume) points out that identity formation of members of social movements involves both members and nonmembers. As we’ve already seen, especially in the case of Kevin and the conflict over the Blue Ridge park, critical interlocutors can become important

figures in one's developing sense of self. Interestingly, neither Sandy nor Janine, nor indeed, many of Westermeyer's study participants, were as caught up with critical interlocutors as Kevin and the members of the BRGG were. While many outside of the Tea Party were critical of the Tea Party, seeing racism as the driving dynamic of the movement, for example, commentators did not manage to upset Tea Party groups or draw individuals into internal debates to any great degree.¹⁴ Rastas, on the other hand, faced many critics, many of whom were violent, including other Blacks who were in the police and the military. Unlike the would-be environmentalists in BRGG, however, the role of opponent was incorporated into their figured world. Standing up to opponents and "Babylon" [the evil empire] was part of what Rasta were expected to do. (See also Price's discussion of Rasta Ivey, Chapter 9, this volume.)

We see the importance of "Babylon" among the social configuration of others that make up a spiritually encoded political self:

Ras Brenton: Rasta man had to hide from Babylon to wear his locks on the road or walk freely on the road. Police would want to chase you or find some way to embarrass you to get you out the way. You see me? Because why, they know within themselves that we are fighting for our continent [Africa], but because Babylon bribe them to beat us off the streets, and beat us up and do us all manner of evils...we have to stand up for our rights. (BR, p. 77)

Answering a question from Price: "How did His Majesty [God/Selassie] come to you?", Ras Chronicle makes an aside about other repressive and demeaning treatments that the Rasta received:

Ras Chronicle: I really start get the vibes after [the] Coral Garden[s] [*incident in 1963*]¹⁵ after Coral Garden[s] now things get more ____ [*doesn't say but gestures with his hands in a way that suggests large and intense*]... Rasta get trim [*forcibly shaved*] and all them things. Ya understand? After that now things [*Rastafari resolve*] get more stronger.

Disrespectful addresses also came from other Jamaicans in the streets—disrespect and fear. Price asked about discrimination against Rastafari:

Ras Chronicle: A whole heap a things [happened to I n I]...when you sit down in a bus, near a girl, she want go through the bus other side [Price: "What?!"]...it's just a little beard me have, you know...me a tell you man,

you see it, society teach them how Rasta a Blackheart and Rasta a thief...
 [Price: "What does Blackheart mean...?"] Blackheart man? Them teach
 you say Blackheart man will eat out your heart.

Ras Chronicle and other Rastafari, in other words, underwent beatings as well as daily microaggressions as a result of the social identity of the Rasta promoted by the powerful of Jamaican society. The space of the imagined Rasta was filled for the public by media images of a Blackheart cannibal and a thief. For some residents of Jamaica, the image gave them license to behave rudely on the street toward the ostracized other. Again, the Rasta people configured themselves in relation to others who are the puppets of Babylon and are either bribed or miseducated to treat Rasta people negatively. Yet, in the figured world of the Rastafari, Rasta deserve respect and they persevere despite mistreatment. In fact, opposition, interpreted through the lens of their figured world, strengthened their resolve. In the Rasta vision, the social project of realizing the truth, justice, and righteousness included greater respect for the Rasta. As Brother Yendis stated, "We want authority man. We fe become a mass force fe reckon with in a de world."

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Taking up political action involves more than changing political beliefs. Instead, becoming a political actor entails changing one's social and subjective relationships to existing political institutions and practices, and to already existing or emerging activism. Becoming an actor who is sufficiently motivated and capable of sustained political action entails *investing one's self* (i.e., *developing an intimate identity*) in a culturally figured political struggle *while self-authoring as a movement actor*, and becoming *socially identified* as a particular sort of actor in one or more political venues.

One of the most striking aspects of our accounts is how being part of a social movement or social project enables political becoming even when the movement may demand a radically different consciousness and entail participating in hostile situations, as did the Rastafari activism described by Price. While availing themselves of cultural resources from the movement as a means of organizing their interpretations of political struggles and themselves as actors in those struggles, participants often gain a new sense of entitlement to belonging in the political venues. They experience what Zibechi (2010) calls the liberatory power of

communal agency. For those who are able to connect both subjectively and socially with collective change efforts, movements provide cultural platforms that support the development of political agency.

The work of political becoming is to engage in political practice, to make personally meaningful the cultural genres of the politics of the time, to self-author, which often includes struggling over one's discomforts with existing activism, to incorporate political struggles through dialogic exchanges in which one takes a stance toward others, to incorporate others through integrating their words into oneself, to develop a more objectified sense of one's positionality and political standing such that one has the possibility of political agency. One must go beyond reactive responses and develop a sense of political entitlement to existing political venues. One must become situated in existing political platforms and groups and draw on cultural resources to mediate one's political consciousness and sense of self. Importantly, the figured worlds of movements, as illustrated in our research, provide rationales for participant entitlement and guide interpretations and feelings. Collective activities supply places of learning and communal support for new practices in unfamiliar venues. Becoming a political actor demands immersion in political practice and navigation of complex cultural and social terrains, tasks aided, but not captured, by a limited focus on political consciousness.

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NOTES

1. As Friedman's case in this volume shows, the loss of possibilities to validate and perform such intimate identities can present major difficulties for those so affected.
2. Of course, there were exceptions, e.g., Alexander Lesser's (1933) Pawnee Hand Game.
3. For an early account see Holland (1997).
4. Some have moved away from older understandings of movements as unified actors and instead use, as we do here, a decentered, dialogical relational perspective (Wolford 2010; Holland et al. 2008). A related development especially in sociology focuses on identity work (e.g., Cabaniss 2017).

5. Holland et al. (1998) build on the work of others to describe positional identities and contrast them to the more conscious figured identities. While the authors focus on the two types as kinds of intimate identities, they make clear the complex relationships among the types, related social identities, and cultural resources. Embodied *positional* identities result from the ways one is socially identified and treated. Figuring refers to how those identities are represented in names, discourses, narratives, images, and other forms. A person absorbs collectively produced figurings to imagine and sometimes make conscious and act against her or his positional identities. For example, immigrant boys in Denmark’s “ghettos” sometimes play at the social identity of “ghetto boy” among themselves (e.g., Vertelyte and Hervik, Forthcoming). Their positional identity as ghetto has become a figured identity that may still be painful but one that they can purposively play with. Figuring can be an important tool of agency.
6. Holland (1992) uses related ideas to address the development of agency in a different cultural domain—that of romance.
7. Movement individuals and groups (in the case of the Tea Party movement, the counties of the local Tea Party groups) have been given pseudonyms.
8. During the late 1990s, Holland, Willett Kempton, and associates carried out participant observation and conducted environmental identity trajectory interviews with both environmental justice and “mainstream” environmental activists (Allen et al. 2007; Holland 2003; Kitchell et al. 2000).
9. Bakhtin’s self-authoring should not be mistaken for the Western notion of the individual as an autonomous being. Self-authoring is dependent on collective languages and resources.
10. For other developments of Bakhtin’s notions of internalized dialogues across difference and the dialogic, decentered self, see Lachicotte (2002), and Satterfield (2002).
11. More technically, frame “refers to an interpretive schemata that simplifies and condenses the ‘world out there’ by selectively punctuating and encoding objects, situations, events, experiences, and sequences of actions within one’s present or past environment” (Snow and Benford 1992, p. 136).
12. Other major theories of identity such as Erikson’s, emphasize belonging—recognizing and coming to terms with being a member of a particular set of social groups in the society such as ethnic, religious, race, class, and gender groups. We refer to what results from these processes as *intimate identities* of belonging and the *social identities* associated with them as social identities of belonging. Theories associated with G.H. Mead, on the other hand, emphasize the intimate dynamics of being an actor in a particular social world. These two types of identity overlap—a social or intimate identity as a Rasta is not only an identity of action but also a social or intimate identity of belonging. Social practice theory emphasizes Meadian identities of action.

13. While social practice theory does not start from the premise that identities are essentialist, it does recognize that people's materialization of a figured world in which essentialist identities are contemplated can be honored as effective.
14. Westermeyer (Chapter 3, this volume) describes an incident where a Black critical interlocutor orally assailed a Tea Partyist and meetings in which there were discussions about low Black interest in joining the Tea Party, but by and large racism challenges did not get under the skin of Tea Partyists.
15. The Coral Gardens incident was a vicious crackdown on Rasta people by the Jamaican government. See Price (Chapter 9, this volume).

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