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The People of the So-called New World and the Practice of Othering in Czech Written Sources of the 16th Century

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ABSTRACT

The article deals with the issue of representation and the practice of *othering* of the indigenous inhabitants of the Americas – the so-called Indians – in selected Czech written sources from the 16th century. Using the concept this/that/the other by literary historian John Barrell, it examines how the practices of *othering*, i.e., the production of signs of difference, are produced in analysed sources and identifies key discourses for their formation.

Applying the concept to concrete textual passages, the article explores its benefits as a tool in textual analysis. It enables to categorise different types of otherness, among which it identifies the interrelationships, and the way power is distributed. *Othering* is produced through discourses of civilization and barbarism, religious discourse, and the discourse of power. Textual discourses are based on existing European literary production, strongly dominated by Christian discourse and the resulting Eurocentric interpretation of the world. European ideas about society and its organization are also transmitted to the New World.

KEYWORDS: Czech lands, Czech literature, otherness, Native Americans, representations, 16th century

According to Michel Foucault, the 16th century period can be understood as a time when the way of thinking was dominated by the Renaissance episteme (by the word

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episteme we mean the way of thinking and knowledge inherent to a particular time – see Foucault 2002b), which was based on the search for similarities (Foucault 2002, 27–29). The meanings of things were constructed through finding analogies between the microcosm and the macrocosm, or inside and outside. This, of course, was reflected in the ways in which the New World[1] was represented in literature.

The literary theorist Walter Mignolo states that the new lands represented not only a possible target for geographical expansion, but also a place where the whole of Christian society could expand (Mignolo 1995, 326). That includes the expansion of cultural ideas and concepts as well. In texts, e.g., early modern European gender roles, religious ideas, and ideas about the ideal society and its organization are transferred to the New World. Textual representations of indigenous societies – the so-called Indians[2] – in the analysed sources are therefore constructed within the framework of period discourses and draw on existing European textual production. At the same time, according to the literary historian Stephen Greenblatt, a common European identity began to emerge through the contacts of European travellers with the American other (Greenblatt 1992, 8–9; see also Dussel 1992).

The representations of overseas cultures and societies in travelogues were thus constructed, for instance, through late mediaeval fantastical discourses that appeared in notorious works rather than on eyewitness accounts.[3] Moreover, many authors did not view the New World only through the lens of contemporary travel literature, but also, as art historians John Moffit and Santiago Sebastián point out, through the eyes of the ancient classics (Moffit and Sebastián 1996, 170), whose works were widely published in the Renaissance and therefore formed the backbone of almost all disciplines. So, it is likely that a certain part of the readership of travel books was also familiar with the works of ancient authors. However, the form of

1 Terms like “New World” - and, by extension, the “Old World”, “overseas discoveries”, “pagans”, and “barbarians” – can only be understood as European constructs and projections that reflecting a Eurocentric perception of the world and Christian universalism. All these labels are the result of European efforts to categorise the world.

2 I am aware that referring to the indigenous people of America by the term “Indian” is highly problematic. It is a European historical construct – like e.g., "New World", mentioned above. In my paper, I consider the word to be a period designation derived from geographic affiliation and a mode of textual representation based on it.

3 In the lands of the Czech Crown, e.g., the *Travelogue of so-called Mandevilla*, first published in a Czech translation by Vavřinec of Březová, probably between 1369-1398 – see Šimek 1963; on the problem of dating see p. 199.

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travelogues was not only influenced by existing literary production, whether contemporary or ancient. Indeed, travelogues often commented directly or indirectly on events in Europe at the time and sought analogies for European events in the newly "*discovered*" societies.

For the analysis of textual representations, I used the method of Foucauldian discourse analysis (see Foucault 2002a, Foucault 2006). I examined three notorious written sources relating to the New World that originated as translations in the Czech lands in the 16th century and were written in Czech. In the chronological order, these are Mikuláš Bakalář's *On the New Lands and the New World, concerning which we hitherto have had no knowledge nor have heard anything* (1506),[4] a work created by combining several foreign sources (hereinafter referred to as *Writings on the New Lands*); *Cosmography of Bohemia: This is an account of the lay of the lands, or countries, and customs of the peoples of all the world, and of the history according to the number of years that have elapsed thereon, never before seen so together in any language* (1554)[5] by Zikmund z Púchova, a title based on Sebastian Münster's *Cosmography* (hereafter referred to as *Cosmography*); and *History of a sailing to America, otherwise called Brasilia* (1590)[6] by Matěj Slovák and Pavel Cyrus (hereafter referred to as *History*), a translation of a travelogue by the Calvinist pastor Jean de Léry.

All these texts can be collectively called travelogues since they tell of a journey from somewhere to elsewhere. They are also linked by the theme of first contacts with the American Other and could all be characterised as translations. It is important to remember, however, that in the early modern period, translation was not understood in the same way as it is today, and from today's perspective, many works-in-translation would probably be seen more as original works, or at least adaptations. Indeed, as cultural historian Peter Burke points out, the very act of translating into vernacular languages often already shifts the meaning of texts. Moreover, the author-translators themselves usually changed the content of the texts, shortening,

4 *Spis o nových zemích a o Novém světě – faksimile a výklad plzeňského tisku Mikuláše Bakaláře z roku 1506* (translated by the author).

5 *Kozmograffia Czeská: To jest wypsánii o položenii krajin neb zemii y obyčejiich národuow wsseho swieta a hystorii podlé počtu leth naněm zběhlých, prwé nikdá tak pospolku w žádném jazyku newidaná* (translated by the author).

6 *Historie o plavení se do Ameriky, kteráž i Brasilia slove* (translated by the author).

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rearranging, or adding their own commentaries or excerpts from other works. As a result, the resulting text-translation did not always resemble the original text (Burke and Hsia 2007, 26-30). And this is also how the text is treated in the three sources analysed.

Regarding the problem of translation, all citations from early modern Czech used in the article were translated by the author. This might cause some meaning shifts and inaccuracies.

Figure 1: *Locations of peoples mentioned in the text*[7]

[7] However, the geographical loctaion and the name of the people are not always given in the text and cannot be precisely identified.

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Table 1: *The most common themes within which sources mention the peoples of the Americas*[8]

	Writings on the New Lands	**Cosmography**	**History of a sailing to America, otherwise called Brasilia**[9]
Habits, morals, and behaviour	Peoples of Brasilia, Peoples of the Caribbean	Peoples of the Caribbean, Peoples of Hispaniola, Peoples of Dominica, Peoples of Patagonia, Peoples of Trinidad, Peoples of Paria, Peoples of Yucatan, Peoples of Ah Canul, Peoples of Cozumel, Peoples of small islands off the coast of Central America, Peoples of Cempoala, Peoples of Nahua city states, Peoples of Tlaxcala, Peoples of Tenochtitlan	Tupinambas, Margaiates, Ouetacates
Food and dining	Peoples of Brasilia, Peoples of the Caribbean	Peoples of the Caribbean, Peoples of Hispaniola, Peoples of Dominica, Peoples of small islands off the coast of Central America, Peoples of Tlaxcala, Peoples of Nahua city states, Peoples of Tenochtitlan	Tupinambas, Margaiates, Ouetacates
Gender relations and differences	Peoples of Brasilia	Peoples of the Caribbean, Peoples of Dominica, Peoples of Yucatan, Peoples of small islands off the coast of Central America, Peoples of Nahua city states, Peoples of Tenochtitlan	Tupinambas, Margaiates

[8] Sometimes it is difficult to determine which region the text is talking about. Also, in many cases, the text refers to multiple peoples or locations at once, and it is often not possible to determine which ones it is referring to specifically.

[9] Although the text mentions other groups of people, it is mainly devoted to the Tupinambas, other groups are neglible.

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Religion	Peoples of Brasilia, Peoples of the Caribbean	Peoples of Cozumel, Peoples of Cempoala, Peoples of Nahua city states, Peoples of Tenochtitlan	Tupinambas
Canibalism	Peoples of Brasilia	Peoples of Dominica, Peoples of Saint Croix, Peoples of Brasilia, Peoples of small islands off the coast of Central America, Peoples of Tlaxcala, Peoples of Nahua city states	Tupinambas
Appearance	Peoples of Brasilia	Peoples of the Caribbean, Peoples of Hispaniola, Peoples of Patagonia, Peoples of Yucatan, Peoples of Nahua city states, Peoples of Tenochtitlan	Tupinambas, Margaiates, Ouetacates
Civilizing mission	Peoples of Brasilia, Peoples of the Caribbean	negligible	Tupinambas
Gold,wealth and its extraction	Peoples of Brasilia	Peoples of the Caribbean, Peoples of Hispaniola, Peoples of Dominica, Peoples of Paria, Peoples of today's Nueva Esparta, Peoples of today's Lesser Antilles(?), Peoples of Brasilia, Peoples of Yucatan, Peoples of Colhuacan, Peoples of small islands off the coast of Central America, Peoples of Tlaxcala, Peoples of Nahua city states, Peoples of Tenochtitlan	negligible

The Construction of Otherness: Same or different?

According to historian Lucie Storchová, *"the grasp of the foreign lies in its linguistic representation*" (Storchová 2005, 410). Textual representations understood in the constructivist sense as an encoding of cultural meaning (Hall 2003) thus serve as a

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means of a practice called *othering*. *Othering* can be defined as the production of signs of socio-cultural difference. Through *othering*, the dominant group has the power to create knowledge about the "other" – in this case, Native Americans. However, are the people from overseas truly represented as Others, or are their textual constructions similar to those of Europeans?

Within the framework of the Renaissance episteme, we can identify an attempt to constantly liken seemingly alien cultures and phenomena to something already familiar in the analysed texts. When a mutual analogy is found between phenomena, the foreign is stripped of its strangeness, and its inclusion in the image of the Christian cosmology of the world takes place. As the *Cosmography* states, "the speech of Solomon stands true, who says that there is nothing new under the sun." (Z Púchova 1554, f. 116r).

Searching for similarities: The practices of ritual violation of the integrity of one's own body and cannibalism

In particular, the Czech translation of the *Cosmography* provides us with many parallels between the religious rituals of indigenous peoples and the religious practices of other cultures that were probably familiar to European readers at that time, i.e., cultures already known from earlier European literary tradition[10] - either ancient cultures such as those understood as cultures of the European past, like Rome, Carthage or Greece, or non-Christian cultures such as Turkey. The numerous comparisons emphasise that inhabitants of the so-called New World are similar to something already known. Thus, although they are becoming objects of textual othering practice, they are not constructed as radically different – they do not transgress completely the order of the known world. Native Americans are coded as different from Europeans, but also somehow familiar to them or to the cultures they are familiar with.

The textual parallels between Europe's pagan past and New World societies consist mostly of describing practices of cannibalism and other bloody religious rituals, both consensual and non-consensual. According to the *Cosmography*, cannibalism is a

[10] Chapters XXVII-XXIX, included in the Czech translation. They were probably written by Zikmund z Púchova by himself.

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practice spread across the whole world and “in many places human flesh is eaten.” (Z Púchova 1554, f. 116v). So are rituals violating the integrity of one's own body during various bodily modifications (piercings, artificial body deformations, etc.) and the sacrifice of one's own blood or human sacrifice.

Thus, for the human sacrifice, which was most encountered in urban Mesoamerican civilizations, (Z Púchova 1554, f. 108r; 106r; 107v) the *Cosmography* finds parallels, e.g., in Tertullian, who describes the sacrifice of girls to Saturn in Africa during Tiberius' reign (Z Púchova 1554, f. 116v). The *Cosmography* also mentions ancient cultures practising mutual blood covenants and drinking blood, as well as those that sacrificed their blood to the gods, as the Mesoamerican “Kolwakanya”[11] do (Z Púchova 1554, f. 107v). The practice of the ritual violation of one's own body is also attributed to Old Testament pagans who “oftentimes scratched themselves and cut their faces” in blood. According to the *Cosmography*, “self-torment” continues to be “held in high esteem” among the Turks as well (Z Púchova 1554, f. 116v).

The parallels, however, are not found in pagan societies only. In the context of the ritual violation of bodily integrity, the text also mentions the habit of flogging, a custom that “persists to this day” in Italy (Z Púchova 1554, f. 116v). European religious practices of the time, such as flagellantism or even fasting into a faint, considerably resemble the described pagan rituals. After all, let us not forget that Christianity did not shy away from other bloody rituals either – e.g., the religious practice of scarification was present in it. Scars and other stigmata were evidence of a divine miracle, of the wearer's faith, or a memento of the wounds suffered in the Crusades in defence of the faith (Mackendrick 2010). Christ's scars could also be symbolically transferred to his faithful followers. As religious historian Kathryn Dickason notes, the scars thus covered the body with cultural marks that could be read (Dickason 2021).

But the acceptance of these body practices applied exclusively to scars, perceived as evidence of belief in the Christian god. Familiarity with the other above-mentioned phenomena thus does not imply approval – all such 'pagan' rituals are roundly condemned in the text. The *Cosmography* explicitly notes that such bloody practices are “forbidden by Christ the Lord [...]” (Z Púchova 1554, f. 116v).

[11] Probably Cōlhuàcān.

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While the parallels in all the texts examined emphasise the non-Christian nature of the populations of the "new lands," (Bakalář 1981, f. A1r, 5) they also incorporate it into the picture of the known world. And thus, they give their practises meaning in the context of general Christian history. Indeed, the universality of Christian cosmology is emphasized even by the *Cosmography* with the following statement: "God is good to all peoples [...] among all peoples he is gracious, even among those who fear him" (Z Púchova 1554, f. 117v). A similar expression of Christian universalism and the desire to incorporate all human communities into the one Church of Christ can be found in the *Writings on the New Lands*, where new discoveries are seen, among other things, as a reason to rejoice "in so great a multiplication of Christians" (Bakalář 1981, f. B4v, 13).

In search of parallels with New World societies, the *History* looks not only to ancient Europeans and pagans, but also to examples from early modern Europe. Against the backdrop of contemporary European events, the text even relativizes cannibalistic practices, for example by comparing them to the violence committed by European Christians against each other during the European wars of religion. Right at the beginning of the book, the Czech dedication states: "It is a terrible thing to kill people, to roast and eat human flesh [...] but is it a less terrible thing to torment the religious and miserable, to torture and torment them, to afflict the poor and needy orphans and widows, and to extort their hard-won bread almost out of their hands?" (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 54). We find similar comparisons elsewhere in the text, where, e.g., the practice of usury is directly related to the "sucking of brains and blood" or eating people alive (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 234). In other words, practises may have been associated with certain marginalised groups in mediaeval Europe, such as Jews as moneylenders or witches as murderers of newborn babies (Hsia 1988; Roper 1994, 138).

Such statements underscore the moralising tone of the *History*, based on the rejection of bloody religious disputes among Christians and criticism of injustice, violence, and crimes in the whole society. The textual metaphor of the cannibal – man-eater is thus used as a tool of pillory of European sinners. The following excerpt from the Czech dedication points particularly at the Czech ones: "Oh how many such man-eaters [...] has this our Europa, but what about Europe, even our own land, the Czech land!" (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 54). The mutual enmity between European Christians is recalled throughout the text. According to the *History*, Christians commit greater atrocities against themselves and their bodies than the Brazilian cannibals – e.g., during the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre, remembered in the text by Léry

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(Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 239). To some extent, statements criticising the behaviour of the European population can be understood as idealising the otherness of the people of the New World.

The text, however, does not use the figure of the cannibal – man-eater merely as a metaphor. For example, it mentions the consumption of humans during the siege of Sancerre (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 350) or the cannibalistic "atrocities" recorded during the revolt against the Roman emperor Trajan (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 221). The literary trope of the cannibal-man-eater is thus a familiar stereotype used to delineate against Others, against their conduct, and to dehumanise them. This is also how this mode of representation is used in connection with non-European non-Christian societies.

The text for instance, speaks of the cruelty of "bloodthirsty" Turks and Muslims in general. Their cruelty is considered "crueller" than the "American" one (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 229–234). Yet the *History* stresses that the "cruelty of Machomet" – that is, the "tyrannical" Turkish emperor (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 229) – is nothing compared to the events of the European Wars of Religion, and especially the events of the St. Bartholomew's Day massacre in France (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 236). According to the written source, cannibalistic practises often occurred during religiously motivated violence; for example, "some Italians cut a little boy in two and ate the liver out of him" for religious reasons (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 237), or that Frenchmen sold human lard in the market "like other tallow." The text states that the behaviour of the French during the incriminated religious conflicts was significantly worse than other "cruel" acts of the Turks and "Americans" (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 241–2).

So, I can say that the practice of othering in the analysed texts does not only involve so-called Indians but also some Christians and members of other non-European societies. It's especially the Turks who are frequently constructed as the non-European Others, which is evident from their depictions in the *Cosmography* and the *History*. The Turks as "rabid dogs" (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 231) and "beasts" (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 230) are animalized and dehumanised here. They are described as "cruellers [...] than the Brasil man-eaters" (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 234) because of the violence they commit. Representations of the Turks as cruel, barbaric, and bloodthirsty people are also associated with the conquest of Constantinople, "at the capture of which everything was filled with blood, horror, and death [...]" (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 229). The textual representations of the Turks are coded as the

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menace of Christianity - though no more than European religious conflicts (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 236).

This corresponds to the fact that the Turks are also constructed as European Others in many early modern texts and travelogues. As literary scholar Elizabeth Spiller points out, their textual representations as barbarians and violent infidels are related to the conquest of Constantinople (Spiller 2011, 41–79). The described characteristics thus highlight primarily their warlike nature, as seen in the analysed sources. However, the Turks were not always constructed in a mode which we could call military masculinity. According to historian Anna Suranyi, the Turks in early modern sources were often depicted as ephemeral and having very loose sexual morality (Suranyi 2009). As a result, they did not generally represent the ideal of masculinity as defined by the European construct of masculinity at the time.

This/that/the other

The practice of making American Indians look more familiar to Renaissance Europeans, a practice that appears throughout all the analysed sources, is complemented by the practice of othering. The practice is dependent on multiple textual discourses. I have used the lesser-known concept of this/that/the other by literary historian John Barrell to identify significant discourses and to better understand the ways in which otherness is constructed and represented in the analysed texts, and how it can be categorized (Barrell 1991).[12]

The othering as a process of creating the imagination of otherness is often explained through the binary model of self and the other. Such an interpretative model allows us to classify textual representations and concepts depending on whether a concept belongs to a certain category or not. However, as Barrell points out, this model can be unsuitable and oversimplifying for many textual resources. Indeed, the effort to interpret texts by using strictly dichotomous models often fails to capture the complexity of relations between statements and discourses therein, for it necessitates that the terms self and the other always remain in opposition (Barrell 1991, 8–10).

[12] Barrell uses the concept in the context of the 19th century British imperial policy. Nevertheless, I believe that it is worth a try to explore whether or how it's applicable to other territories and time.

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Inspired by literary and postcolonial theorist Gayatri Spivak's conceptions of the self-consolidating other and the absolute other (Spivak 1985),[13] Barrell proposes to extend the terms of self and the other by a third term stage situated somewhere between them, which he calls that, resulting in the triad of this/that/the other (hereafter also t/t/t). Barrell's model of t/t/t explains how the textual othering functions and, thus, how the otherness is constructed. Categories of this and that, although somehow different are at the same time in many ways alike (Barrell 1991, 10). On the contrary, the category of the other is entirely dissimilar from the remaining ones. Let us see how the concept works in textual representations of overseas societies.

This has the power to produce knowledge about others and to othering them. It represents the position from which the text is written. In the analysed sources, the category is thus embodied by Europeans. That is in a subordinate position in relation to this. Hence, indigenous societies that have already been conquered or in other ways subjugated, Europeanized, or societies that do not pose a threat to Europeans, are often represented as that in the sources. The texts frequently represent the act of subduing as being accompanied or followed by the act of imposing European culture. The category of that also consists of societies that were similar to Europeans even before their first contact. The mutual resemblance between their textual representations can be seen in the relation to societies coded as the other. The other is situated in a subordinate position to both this and that and it is constructed as their complete opposition. The other represents a significant disruption and transgression of the ideal social order – the order as constructed by the then-European discourses – and a direct threat to Europeans in the analysed texts. According to Barrell, members of the category of the other often act as enemies of both this and that as well (Barrell 1991, 163).

Thus, in relation to European society, indigenous societies can be represented in different power roles within different discourses. That is decisive for the construction of a specific type of colonial relations. In the analysed texts, I have identified three

[13] Spivak uses these terms in the context of othering and the British colonial administration in India in the 19th century. She is referring to the process by which the other and the alien – *the absolute other* – become a pacified and subjugated other – a *self-consolidating other* that accepts the hegemonic discourse and power position of the colonizers and their power to produce knowledge about others. The member of the category of the *self-consolidating other* thus accedes to the subordinate position in which he or she is placed in the epistemic framework of the colonisers. See Spivak 1985.

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basic discourses that structure otherness - discourse of civilisation, religion, and power. These three discourses can also be called categories of textual difference. Differences between societies and cultures are produced right through the trio of these discourses, which therefore serve as a tool of othering practices.

For each of the discourses, the main rules of their formation can be identified. Using the discourse of civilization, the different societies in the texts are compared mainly based on material conditions, i.e., the way of life, knowledge of technology, the level of urbanization, and the type of economy. Religious discourse constructs differences through different religious concepts about the world and its cosmologies, but also through distinct forms of religious organization. The production of difference within power discourse occurs through the distribution of power relations between societies – better said, through how Europeans relate to other peoples in texts.

Civilizational discourse

The textual representations of New World societies are constructed as either civilised or barbaric.[14] These constructs reflect ideas about the European ideal of a developed society at that time. The ideal also serves as the measure by which Indian societies are classified in the analysed texts. As the linguist Sara Mills points out, discourses of civilization and barbarism are one of the frequent means of othering through European history (Mills 2005, 98–100).[15]

Although the analysed texts do not use words such as barbarian or civilisation[16] very often, we frequently encounter discourses that draw directly on the dichotomous concept of civilisation and barbarism and use its mode of cultural coding. Such a binary understanding of cultures comes to the fore, especially when comparing, from

[14] For an early modern understanding of these concepts, see, for example, Rubiés 2011, 329; Jones 2009, 356 and 358–364.

[15] Regarding the current state of research in the Czech Republic, the construction of representations of Indians through binary oppositions of civilization and barbarism is also the subject of a study by historian Monika Brenišínová, who analysed murals in Ixmiquilpan, Mexico. See Brenišínová 2019.

[16] In fact, unlike the concept of barbarism, the term "civilization" as currently understood was unknown in early modern Europe. If we look, for example, at 16th-century Spanish sources on non-European cultures, the Spaniards used the term *policía* instead to describe the way of life and the way of government in a particular society. The term *policía* was associated with urban life – polis – see, e.g. Hinz 2008.

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the European point of view, less developed (barbaric) societies, which across all texts are usually found on islands, and urban (civilised) societies.[17]

European society, with which all the authors of the analysed texts identify themselves in certain passages, is primarily understood as civilised in the texts. European society is constructed as highly functionally differentiated, technologically advanced, urbanized, and isolated from nature. Separating oneself from nature is represented as allowing for the efficient exploitation of natural resources, which barbarian societies, by contrast, are incapable of, and plays an important role in the early modern conceptualisation of humanity. Unlike barbarians, civilised people are thus able to control and effectively exploit their surroundings – their space. That is, to cultivate the land, and to permanently settle it and build cities on it; to extract available resources from it by using advanced technologies; and to protect it from their enemies. But equally important for the evaluation of a society is the level of culture and respect for the natural laws of God.

Focusing on the textual representations of barbarian societies, they are often located on islands or non-urban places. Barbaric peoples, such as the Tupinambas in the *History* or various islanders in the *Writings on the New Lands* and the *Cosmography*, are characterised mainly by their unsettled way of life (Z Púchova 1554, f. 102r) and living in very flimsy dwellings, which, for example, "have no doors" (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 211). Sometimes they have no dwellings at all, and "cover themselves from the heat with large and broad leaves," as on the nameless island mentioned in the Cosmography, "where the people were abominable" (Z Púchova 1554, f. 103r). Inadequate dwelling can thus become a means of textual dehumanization. For the most part, the islanders embody the exact opposition to civilization - they do not build larger settlements, they do not know trade (Z Púchova 1554, f. 102r; Bakalář 1981, f. A4v, 9), letters (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 248), art (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 249), advanced technology, or clothing as one of the basic elements of culture, and some of them go naked even to battles and "do not cover their bodies with anything" (Bakalář 1981, f. B1r, 9).

In this context, I think it is important to recall that the concept of civilisation can also be applied to the understanding of human corporeality. As pointed out by Storchová,

[17] For more about the differences between barbaric and civilised societies, see Pagden 1986, 74 and 92.

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the measures of social maturity in early modern Europe were the way the body was covered. The wild nudity stands in stark contrast to the civilised, clothed European body. According to Storchová, the naked, uncivilised body becomes a means of sexualization (Storchová 2005, 440).

As portrayed in the texts, the non-urban peoples of America lack complex social administration and laws (Bakalář 1981, f. A4v, 9), they do not have rulers (Bakalář 1981, f. A4r, 8) nor "costly and splendid palace built up" (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 283). Their ability to exploit natural resources and reshape the space around them is limited, as is their knowledge of the technologies and tools that texts consider advanced. To some extent, they are represented as societies not yet separated from nature, which they themselves are unable to control. Sources, however, describe how their backward technological level is often increased with the arrival of Europeans, who bring, e.g., weapons such as rifles (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 209) or working tools like axes (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 285) to the local people.

By the logic of early modern civilizational discourse, knowledge of more advanced practices and technologies allowed for a division of labour, which was also associated with greater social stratification. In the representations of barbaric societies, however, the descriptions of more complex social hierarchies are almost absent. The stratification of society and the division of labour allowed, for example, the development of specialised crafts, organised religion, and culture. According to period understanding, the concept of culture consisted, e.g., of recording events, the existence of art, and, above all, knowledge of writing and books. As Storchová points out, written culture also played an important role in the construction of otherness, with the letter-using us on one hand and the oral them on the other (Storchová 2005, 413). Indeed, the importance of writing is also made clear in one of the texts analysed, which considers it not only as a sign of civilised society but also as a means of dominating oral cultures. According to the *History*, "writing is a boon from the lord of God [...] to us in Europe, in Africa, and in Asia, dwelling above the foolish people who dwell in the fourth part of the world" (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 249). Writing also figures here as a sign of intelligence, a means of knowing and describing the world around us, and of recording one's own history. Above all, however, it is the mark by which the inhabitants of the Old World distinguish themselves from the inhabitants of the New one. The image of an advanced and civilised society is also

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completed by the knowledge of the liberal arts,[18] "which we learn from books" and "which are totally unknown to those savage people (meaning Tupinambas)" (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 249).

Civilised societies are encountered exclusively in the *Cosmography*, within the representations of Mesoamerican urban societies. The way urban societies live differ fundamentally from barbarian societies, including where they live, how they dress, and how they organise their societies. They are mostly encountered on the mainland, but this is not necessarily the rule. Their main characteristic is life in the cities, which are described as centres of cultural life (Z Púchova 1554, f. 109r), trade (Z Púchova 1554, f. 110v) and organised religion, the centre of which is the temple, a building "beautifully decorated with fine work and masterly painting," like in Tenochtitlan (Z Púchova 1554, f. 111r). In the towns we find several specialised places and buildings, such as various shops, workshops, religious buildings, inns and lodging houses, and taverns, "where the local people gather to drink" (Z Púchova 1554, f. 110v).

Thanks to a well-developed network of services and a market in which the population can easily acquire everyday necessities, "no one in the city crafts for himself," i.e., does not have to make them him or herself. People can therefore engage in various specialised professions - for example, goldsmithing, painting, (Z Púchova 1554, f. 111v) or medicine – in Tenochtitlan, even "proper apothecaries" can be found where one can buy "herbs and species for human health" (Z Púchova 1554, f. 110v). The profession's heterogeneity leads to a greater hierarchisation of society and a division of labour. There is a ruling class, a working class, and one that is solely concerned with the administration of the cult. There are more marked differences in property and power.

Some urban societies, according to the text, have letters (Z Púchova 1554, f. 107v) and laws by which "the mayors administer the cities, punish criminals, and pardon none," (Z Púchova 1554, f. 109r) and thus have an advanced land administration. More efficient land administration and the use of natural resources are made possible by their level of technological advancement and knowledge of science. Their form of economy is also much more advanced than that of societies constructed as barbaric. Urban people can transform the landscape around them

[18] The *septem artes liberales* is the sum of general education at that time.

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and make good use of it, as for example in Tlaxcala, "where there are no barren hills or valleys [...] but everything is planted and sown as it should be" (Z Púchova 1554, f. 109r). What distinguishes them from European civilisation is their ignorance of Christianity and the practice of cannibalism and human sacrifice, as is often pointed out in the descriptions of barbarian societies as well.

The populations of urban societies, thus, may have been perceived by Europeans as pagan and faithless, but this did not necessarily make them barbarians in the eyes of their European contemporaries. They are even compared to some European cities and regions (such as Venice, Genoa, or Switzerland) in their type of urban establishment (Z Púchova 1554, f. 109r).

Compared to Europeans, they are constructed as having somewhat less developed technology, and the manifestations of their culture are often considered imperfect, odd, or simply different – for example, they have "strange writing" and write "books [...] on strange paper" (Z Púchova 1554, f. 107v). They are therefore not the same, but their textual representations are in many ways like those of Europeans, who are always portrayed as the most advanced. The practices of Mesoamerican religions involving bloody rituals, sacrifices, and cannibalism may have seemed shocking and, in some ways, barbaric to Europeans. In the texts, however, they were able to identify with Mesoamerican urban dwellers somewhat more than with the so-called barbaric islanders, who knew no trade, no letters, and often no agriculture. In civilizational discourse, these urban societies thus represent that.

We can therefore observe a distinct difference between the textual representations of indigenous peoples constructed as advanced empires such as the Aztecs, Incas, or the populations of smaller Maya city-states, and, conversely, the representations of people living outside of cities and so-called societies without laws and governing. That is, people living outside of civilization. In the *Cosmography*, barbarian societies are in this way othered not only in relation to Europeans or even some "Old World" societies mentioned in the text, but also to Mesoamerican urban civilizations. The barbaric societies of the New World represent the other, something that is truly different. This is also apparent in textual representations in the *History* and the *Writings on the New Lands*. In the texts, however, civilised urban societies are completely lacking, and all indigenous peoples concerned are constructed as barbaric.

This can also be examined through representations of social hierarchies within these populations. The example of the *Cosmography* shows that the structure of urban

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societies depicted is in many ways like the European model of the three estates,[19] or, better said, the textual representation of social structure is coded as such. The text distinguishes between the estate of the clergy-priests (oratores), the ruler-warriors (bellatores), and the rest of society (laborantes), which includes merchants, craftsmen (such as painters, goldsmiths, or stonemasons), and farmers (Z Púchova 1554, f. 111v). Thus, it is mainly manual labourers on whom the first two estates are dependent for their livelihood. At the top of the imaginary social pyramid is the prince or king, who has, e.g., his court, personal guard, and many servants, such as Tlatoani of the Aztec empire, Moctezuma, residing in Tenochtitlan and having 300 people "who bring food" (Z Púchova 1554, f. 112r). Other members of the nobility who are subordinate to the prince-ruler also have their own guards and servants.

But the social distinctions constructed in the text are not only based on the share of power, but also on the amount of wealth. In fact, unlike in barbarian societies where property differences are minimal – if any – there are both rich and poor people living in cities, who, for example, in the city of Chorultekal, together with the sick, beg "before their temples," just as European beggars and beggars "before our churches" (Z Púchova 1554, f. 109r).

The organisation of barbarian societies is usually described as non-hierarchical and without property distinctions, and their textual representations do not usually resemble the European doctrine of the three estates. These populations have no kings, no lords, no laws – "every man is his own master" (Bakalář 1981, f. A4r, 8). Texts often make no mention of priests or other people in charge of the administration of the cult, nor of any form of organised religion – often there is no person present at all who is solely in charge of religious ceremonies. Similarly, there are no buildings dedicated exclusively to religious practice, thus, they have "no churches" or any religious law, such as in the *Writings on the New Lands* (Bakalář 1981, f. A4r, 9).

If the first two estates are not present in barbarian societies, there cannot be laborantes. Their existence as a category is conditional on the existence of the other two estates to which they are subjected. Among the barbarians, the provision of livelihood is usually the responsibility of all people, both men and women. Since members of barbarian societies across the texts analysed are often portrayed as

[19] For the concept of three estates in general, see e.g., Iwańczak 2011:44–5, Dane 198:283–309.

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unfamiliar with merchantry and the division of labour, they are constructed as relatively autarkic in terms of obtaining food, making tools and everyday items. Everything they need, they usually produce themselves.

Living without laws, nevertheless, can also serve as a tool of admiration, as can be seen in the *History*. Although the texts often explicitly speak of the difference between barbarian societies and the ideal European model, a system of three estates is sometimes projected into the textual representations of barbarian societies. Like other barbarian societies in the analysed texts, the Tupinambas have no princes, kings, or other rulers or laws, and are described as being all equal. According to the text, they are guided in their social organisation by "natural light" (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 281). Rather than praising the Tupinambas, this statement can be understood to shame those Europeans who have "all good orders erected and rights divine and human established," (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 281) but do not follow them.

Religious discourse

In all the analysed texts, religion receives considerable attention and acts as a social structure that creates differences between societies. A basic distinction can, of course, be made between Christian and non-Christian societies, which are then called pagan. The representatives of Christian society are solely Europeans. However, the non-Christian – pagan societies of the New World do not form a homogeneous mass, some of them are already partly evangelized, others have quite complex structure of their own religious ideas and practise organised religion, while others are represented as living completely without faith.

So, first we have a category of societies where evangelization is underway or has already partially taken place. The societies to which the Europeans in the texts betray "from their nonsensical faith to our Christian faith" (Z Púchova 1554, f. 107r). Cultures that choose to embrace Scripture - or have Scripture forcibly imposed upon them – are Europeanized through religion. As a result of evangelization, they cease to be godless the other, and become that. With the adoption of religion – whether willingly or unwillingly – societies often adopt other features of European civilization, both cultural (Z Púchova 1554, f. 105r), and material, such as clothing (Bakalář 1981, f. B2v, 11). In texts, they are understood as a kind of semi-Christians or second-class

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Christians whose religious practice still lacks something. This is true regardless of how sincere their efforts to adopt the faith are.

Some cultures are portrayed as explicitly evangelization-requiring. These are, for example, the men and women of "Potanecyanuom"[20] of the *Cosmography*, who "gladly accepted the faith gratefully from us," (Z Púchova 1554, f. 107v) or the islanders in the *Writing on the New Lands* writings who "asked to receive Holy Baptism" (Bakalář 1981, f. B3r, 12). On these examples, it can be well seen that textual coding of otherness through religious discourse is not permanent. And so, in the realms of religious discourse, barbaric societies first constructed as the other can become that by embracing Christianity.

Otherness can also be produced through the way of religious organisation and its similarity or difference to the European Christian model. In this case, urban societies, albeit non-Christian, represent that since their religious organisation is kind of like the European church structure. In textual constructions of Mesoamerican cities, there are cultural places dedicated exclusively to the exercise of worship - in the *Cosmography* referred to as temples, with temple schools operating alongside them (Z Púchova 1554, f. 107v). There is also a special group of inhabitants in charge of the administration of the cult - the priests. Moreover, in the textual discourses, the complex religious structure is a sign of the cultural maturity and intelligence of urban dwellers (Z Púchova 1554, f. 109r). Thus, though a great number of urban societies are represented as pagan, the structure of religion and the complexity of religious ideas make them a bit like Europeans.

Although the *Cosmography* does not endorse their beliefs, it does recognise them as a form of religion, albeit a little bit "weird" one (Z Púchova 1554, f. 111r). After all, it can be compared to something already known. As mentioned above, the text describes many analogies between the religious practices of the Old World's pagan societies and the pagan societies of the New one, including the consumption of human flesh or human sacrifice.

We do not encounter a more organised and complex religion in textual representations of barbarian societies. Moreover, the barbarian societies that have

[20] I was unable to indentify the city of *Potanecyanuom*.

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not yet been even partially Christianized, the texts do not identify the presence of any ideas that would be identified as manifestations of religion at all.

The representatives of one such society are the Tupinambas in the *History*. The "wicked Americans" are said to have the most "hearts turned away from God" (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 251) of all the "nations" of the world, unable to even grasp the concept of God and thinking instead that "he must be a villain" (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 251). Generally, all the analysed texts interpret religion as one of the most important expressions of human culture that humanises it. For example, in the *History*, life without religion is compared to the life of "unreasonable beasts" (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 251). This statement is complemented by Cicero's paraphrase, "there are neither so untamed nor so savage people, who, though they know not what god they trust in, do not believe that at least they are bound to worship one" (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 248). According to the *History*, this is not true of the Tupinambas, however, since they do not worship any gods. They are thus textually coded as a kind of anomaly, which is even not supposed to exist, as faithless the other.

The absence of religion and the inability to understand certain religious ideas is associated with low intelligence and becomes a means of animalization and dehumanization. Non-Christian societies are usually judged worse if they are already familiar with the Christian religion but refuse to embrace it, or, for worse, even ridicule it – like the Tupinambas (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 220). This reluctance is explained precisely by their stupidity, i.e., their lack of reason.

Power discourse

The practice of othering is also carried out through the distribution of power relations. Otherness is shaped by mutual hostilities, alliances, and other relations between different ethnicities and cultures. In the texts, power discourse is largely determined by how Europeans relate to local American societies. Sometimes, however, it is also formed by representations of relationships between Europeans themselves – both in Europe and America. In relation to Europeans, American societies may be represented as already colonized, conquered, and pacified, allied, hostile, etc. The typology of otherness in power discourse is determined by the degree of power that Europeans can exert over particular societies. In the text, the foreign – the other – embodies a fundamental threat because Europeans cannot control it. The other, hence, represents a possible threat to the hegemonic position of the Europeans.

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Through subjugating, ethnicities cease to be represented as potentially dangerous. After being conquered by the Europeans, they do not become part of European society, but they cease to be alien. Because they become power-dependent on Europeans, they are forced to accept their authority, and a European image of the world is imposed on them. Also, the allied ethnic groups, whether the Tupinambas in the *History* or the Tlaxcaltecs in the *Cosmography*, who "saw the Europeans gladly, hoping to stand by them against the tyrant Zima," (Z Púchova 1554, f. 109r) (meaning the Aztec ruler Moctezuma) - as well as some other Mesoamerican peoples, do not represent a source of threat to the Europeans in the texts. By forming alliances, they can at the same time stand together with Europeans against another group, a common enemy that is thus being othered. The societies collaborating with the Europeans thus represent that – whether voluntarily, such as the inhabitants of "Cempoala" who, like Tlaxcaltecs, join Cortés "to retaliate against the tyrant of Zima," (Z Púchova 1554, f. 108r) or involuntarily. Taking as an example, the "Churultekals"[21] whose city the Europeans and their Indian allies "after five hours took control of" and whose nobility, because of their defeat, were then compelled to collaborate with the Europeans (Z Púchova 1554, f. 109r).

Thus, the danger for this – Europeans and that, whether European allies or dominated ethnic groups, is posed by societies that Europeans do not yet control or are in a state of war with. In the *History*, this primarily refers to the Margaiates – the Europeans' enemies and the Tupinambas' "archenemies" (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 204). Regarding the *Cosmography*, those are the inhabitants of Tenochtitlan, against whom the Europeans are fighting together with some Mesoamerican city states. E.g., the already mentioned Tlaxcaltecs and the inhabitants of Cempoala,[22] who "waged constantly war with the king of Mount Zima (a name confusion derived from Latin mons = mountain and Czech zima = winter)" (Z Púchova 1554, f. 108r).

The members of the urban civilizations represented as the other – that is, especially the inhabitants of Tenochtitlan, with the ruler Moctezuma at their head, are generally described as the more cunning and deceitful ones compared to the inhabitants of other Mesoamerican cities (Z Púchova 1554, f. 108v). Also, members of hostile barbarian societies are characterised as more treacherous (Cyrus and Slovák 1957,

21 Today's Cholula.

22 Also known as Zempoala.

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94), devilish, and savage compared to other barbarians (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 93). Thus, societies represented as the other are generally associated with adjectives that directly imply their evil nature and potential dangerousness. The Margaiates are called "robber peoples," (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 206) the Ouetacates, also a Brazilian ethnic group, are referred to as barbarians even by the Tupinamba themselves (Cyrus and Slovák 1957, 312). The reverse is also true. Ethnic groups who are friendly or already subjugated are usually portrayed in a rather positive and moderate way. The Tlaxcaltecs, for example, are "very reasonable people" (Z Púchova 1554, f. 109r); the inhabitants of *Kolwakanya*, who are friendly and welcoming to Europeans, are described as people of good and peaceful manners, for whom "murder is a strange and terrible thing in their eyes" (Z Púchova 1554, f. 106v).

Conclusion

In this article, I have presented how textual representations of Indian societies are constituted in the context of early modern discourses, and how the indigenous peoples of America are otherized. As shown in the textual analysis, the authors of the given sources look not only for signs of mutual difference, but also for mutual similarities. Finding them mainly through parallels in history, they compare American Indian societies and their customs to past or present societies of the Old World. Such analogies include, e.g., cannibalistic practices and the violation of the integrity of one's own body.

Christian universalism also helps to find similarities between human societies as well. Nothing is new in a world where everything stems from a single god and is foreshadowed in the Bible. Everything belongs to the one single cosmology of the world. Given that all human societies can be traced back to Noah's sons, all societies were part of a single world history based on the Scripture. Textual otherness is thus constructed primarily through the attempt to apply one's own cultural concepts and cultural codes in a universalistic way.

Hence, although the so-called new lands are constructed as being different, the numerous comparisons to the things previously known make them something familiar – different but nevertheless similar in many ways. After all, we must not forget that the world of Renaissance knowledge was a world full of mutual similarities and analogies. Nothing could, therefore, be so diametrically different that it did not at the same time resemble something else. The other, too, was therefore inherently familiar

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since its essential characteristics were manifested in already familiar entities and phenomena. All discourses were thus applicable quite universally, or better said, globally. The resulting unity and universality of discourse made it possible, once similarities were found, to write equally informedly about the next village and the distant islands.

I have used John Barell's concept of this/that/the other to explain how the othering practice of indigenous societies functioned in the analysed textual sources. I applied the t/t/t/ formula to the three basic discourses that help to construct and structure otherness – discourses of civilization, religion, and power – within which I identified different types of alterities and the kinds of power relations between them.

The classification of societies through the t/t/t concept is both locally and temporally variable and is strongly influenced by textual context. Thus, the way in which t/t/t categories are constructed is always dependent on the one major discourse of which the categorised representations are part. This, as the hegemonic discourse with which the textual speaker identifies, is always represented by Europeans. American societies can act in different roles in relation to the European ones within discourses. This is, inter alia, conditioned by the various ways of forming power relations during the conquest of America and the early phase of its colonization.

The population of the New World may be likened to the population of Christian Europe within certain discourses, while its otherness is emphasised within others. It is evident, then, within each discourse – that is, discourses of civilization, religion, and power – the same societies are invoked in different ways, and the categories of that and the other may not overlap across textual discourses. At the same time, I have shown that these categories are not static. Regarding the categories of alterity, it is possible to speak of the translation of otherness further into a hitherto unconquered space. In the analysed texts, societies represented as the other can become that by voluntarily accepting elements of European civilization or also by their defeat in a struggle that forces them to submit to the Europeans and accept their civilization involuntarily. But of course, none of the New World societies in the texts can become this – the dominant knowledge-producing entity, and therefore equal to Europeans and fully integrated into Christian society.

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"We are Indians, Whores and Lesbians, Revolted and Twined Together." Decolonial Feminism in Bolivia

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ABSTRACT

The aim of the text is to analyse contemporary Bolivian decolonial feminism using Cusicanqui's model of cultural hybridity. Cusicanqui formulated the concept of ch'ixi as an analytical tool for theorizing about the mixing of cultures that maintain distinct aspects but enter a mutual creative dialogue and create new qualities through it. In my analysis, I focus on two streams of Bolivian decolonial feminism, represented by Mujeres Creando and Mujeres Creando Comunidad movements. First, I describe historical roots of Bolivian decolonial feminism with an emphasis on the influence of anarchist ideas both on the formation of the Bolivian workers' movement and on strategies and practices of social and indigenous movements at the turn of the millennium. In the following discussion I analyse the ideologies and strategies of Mujeres Creando and Mujeres Creando Comunidad movements using Cusicanqui's model of hybridity. I conclude that both movements construct a subversive network of alternative knowledge and practices, within which seemingly contradictory experiences can coexist harmoniously and create a new, non-dichotomous qualities. According to Cusicanqui, these ch'ixi spaces are the source of a new, emerging epistemology based on which a radical vision of decolonised modernity can be formulated.

KEY WORDS: Aymara, Anarcho-feminism, ch'ixi, Community, Decolonial feminism, feminism, Indian hegemony

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"*We community feminists continue with our left fist raised, because the system has not been defeated, because the system continues to hurt our bodies and the bodies of our brothers and nature. This system of oppression has been permanently recycled ever since it was built, it is not a natural system, it was made historically, and it will also end historically because of the revolutionary action of the people"* (Paredes 2013).

Introduction: Practicing the radical theory of Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui

Many anthropological texts have been written about the indigenous peoples of Bolivia, the country with the largest indigenous populations in South America (Fabricant and Postero 2015; Postero 2017; Sturtevant 2021). Bolivian social and indigenous movements have been widely analysed over the last two decades (Van Cott 2008; Yashar 2005). Identity politics, the process of negotiating territorial autonomies and the dynamics of the relationship between the plurinational state and local communities are frequently researched topics (Canessa 2006; Canessa 2014; Tockman and Cameron 2018). Surprisingly, relatively few studies have analysed the impact of anarchist ideas on the formation and strategies of social and indigenous movements (Cusicanqui 2020; Laforcade 2020; Laforcade and Hirsch 2020). Likewise, most studies have used a theoretical apparatus based on the Western academia tradition (Shilliam 2013) and have overlooked local theoretical currents that are primarily perceived as a subject of analysis, but not as a possible theoretical and analytical framework.

The aim of the following text is to analyse two currents of contemporary Bolivian decolonial feminism represented by the Mujeres Creando and Mujeres Creando Comunidad movements, using Cusicanqui's model of hybridity. Although many texts have been written about non-white, postcolonial and Latin American feminism (Alfaro 2010; Burman 2011; Caballero 2019; Day 2008; Ewig 2018; Guzmán and Triana 2019; Rousseau 2011; Rousseau and Morales Hudon 2015, Villaroel Peña 2018), my theorizing will be primarily based on the work of Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, an Aymara sociologist, historian of anarchism, and herself feminist and anarchist. As I discuss in detail below, Cusicanqui has formulated an alternative model of hybridity based on the local experience of Bolivian indigenous and social movements (Cusicanqui 2010; 2012; 2014; 2015; 2016; 2018). In my analysis, I will use Cusicanqui's concept of *ch'ixi.* For Cusicanqui, the concept of *ch'ixi* is an analytical tool for theorizing about the mixing of cultures that retain distinct aspects but enter a

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mutual creative dialogue and create new qualities through it (Cusicanqui 2012). Cusicanqui's *ch'ixi* world reflects the complementary heterogeneity of Andean societies and provide a theoretical framework based on authentic local indigenous experience.

Cusicanqui is one of the first generation of indigenous intellectuals who formed the Katarist movement.[1] She is also the first Quechua-Aymara radical anarcho-feminist. She was persecuted and imprisoned by the military regimes of the 1970s for her academic work, in which she pointed out the oppression of Quechua and Aymara peasants (Gago 2016). Cusicanqui is one of the first postcolonial Latin American thinkers. She rejects theories based on Western epistemologies and creates alternative perspectives based on the bodily experience of the unprivileged: indigenous peasants, poor working people and, primarily, indigenous women.

Cusicanqui rejects any form of (neo)colonialism. The central concept in her work is radical decolonisation: liberation from both the external (neo)colonisation and internal colonisation that permeate Bolivian society from the elites to the disadvantaged and oppressed. She has sharply criticised Bolivian academics in this regard for uncritically adopting Western concepts and theories, whose application to the Bolivian reality constitutes just another form of symbolic colonialism for her (Cusicanqui et al 2016).

In 1983, Cusicanqui and her students at Universidad Mayor de San Andrés founded the Andean Oral History Workshop (El Taller de Historia Oral Andina) in which they began to develop methodologies on how to do science using the oral construction of knowledge. For Cusicanqui, reconstructing history through the eyes of the oppressed and underprivileged is a form of decolonial practice. She rejects the linear concept of time as a concept implanted by hegemonic Western science. Instead, she advocates for a cyclical understanding of time based on Andean epistemology. "There is no 'post' or 'pre' in this vision of history that is neither linear nor teleological, but rather moves in cycles and spirals and sets out on a course without neglecting to return to the same point" (Cusicanqui 2012). For the underprivileged, history

[1] The katarist movement arose in the late 1960s. It promoted indigenous (mainly Aymara and Quechua) ethno-nationalist agenda (Van Cott 2008).

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therefore constitutes the cyclical renewal of various forms of colonialism (Cusicanqui 2010; 2015; 2018).

Figure 1: *Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui.*
Source: *Dulfano, Isabel. 2014.* "Decolonizing the Person, the Image and the Collective Global Psyche Through the Lens of Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui." *Cultural Survival Quarterly Magazine. Accessed [April 20, 2022]. https://www.culturalsurvival.org/publications/cultural-survival-quarterly/decolonizing-person-image-and-collective-global-psyche*

As such, Cusicanqui considers capitalism and consumerism to be just another form of patriarchal colonialism. Cusicanqui formed Tambo Colectivo 2 to diagnose and confront it. This is a subversive and emancipatory space where, together with 16 other social scientists, she produces alternative knowledge based on independent research into the contemporary social reality in Bolivia (Dulfano 2014). She is also involved in social activism: she promotes the use and revitalisation of indigenous

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languages, practices, and rituals within Tambo Colectivo 2, as well as traditional methods of subsistence, which she sees as one of the ways of dealing with environmental degradation (Dulfano 2014). Cusicanqui is currently involved in educational activities through the *Colectivx Ch'ixi*[2] (Cusicanqui 2015, 300).

For Cusicanqui, feminism constitutes a tool of decolonial practice. The oppression of indigenous people and the oppression of women are based on the same principles: both identities have been defined from the outside by oppressive colonial structures (Narváez 2019). Resistance therefore lies in self-definition and in the revitalisation of their own forms of thinking, knowledge, and epistemology (Cusicanqui 2010; 2018).

This text aims to contribute to this decolonial practice by analysing insurgent and anti-authoritarian Bolivian feminist currents through Cusicanqui's subversive theory.

Anarcho-syndicalism, anarcho-feminism and the *ch'ixi* world

Cusicanqui has been strongly influenced in her theorising and work by the ideas of anarchism. Anarchism had a considerable impact on the peripheral or semi-industrial zones of the postcolonial world in the first decades of the 20th century (Laforcade 2020, 21). In South America, anarchism influenced the formation, practices, and strategies of social movements to a greater extent than almost anywhere else. Anarchist practice enabled heterogeneous groups such as workers movements, ethnic communities, women's organisations and urban artists and intellectuals to link together into joint action. Anarchism thus left a significant mark on the anti-authoritarian politics of the local left. In this regard, the Andean regions are a good example of "the immersion of twentieth century anarchists in the struggles of indigenous societies against colonial structures of domination" (Laforcade 2020, 22). The anti-colonial discourses of anarchists and indigenous peoples were, in fact, very close to one another and them "cross-fertilised" each other (Laforcade 2020, 26). This was also the case with Bolivian social and indigenous movements (Cusicanqui and Knoll 2007).

[2] Cusicanqui intentionally changes the spelling of Spanish words by inserting the letter "x" into them. She symbolically colonizes the Spanish language by introducing elements used in transcription of Aymara language.

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The anarchist movement emerged in Bolivia in the early 20th century and peaked between the 1920s and 1940s. The first anarcho-syndicalist groups, the FOL (the Local Labour Federation - Federación obrera local) and the FOI (the International Labour Federation - Federación obrera internacional), were formed within the nascent Bolivian workers' movement. The Women's Labour Federation (Federación obrera femenina) was created as a part of the FOL group as early as in 1927. Indigenous urban migrant women became the main driving force in the anarchist movement (Cusicanqui 2014; Laforcade 2020, 19).

As Cusicanqui points out, Bolivian anarcho-syndicalism created a "public counter-sphere, formed by unions and guild communities, densely interwoven into networks of kinship, socio-territorial belonging and clientele" (Cusicanqui 2020, 125) that was able to question the exclusive oligarchic (state) power. These autonomous practices combined several levels of historical experience: in many of the craft-based guild communities, territorial and ayllu[3] belongings overlapped with a wide range of urban and mercantile practices. Cusicanqui refers to these symbolic spaces, within which different levels of belonging are combined, as *ch'ixi* anarcho-syndicalism (Cusicanqui 2020, 126).

The Aymara world *ch'ixi* plays a key role here. It expresses "the Aymara idea of something that is and is not at the same time, that is, the logic of the third included. A *ch'ixi* grey is white and not white at the same time; it is white, and it is also black, i.e. its opposite. *Ch'ixi* combines the Indian world with its opposite, without ever mixing with it" (Cusicanqui 2010, 69-70). According to Cusicanqui, however, there are great differences between *ch'ixi* and hybrid phenomena. Hybridity (Bhabha 1994; Canclini 1995; Gilroy 1993) presupposes the possibility that by mixing two different entities a completely new third entity may emerge, capable of "merging the features of its ancestors into an unprecedented and harmonious whole" (Cusicanqui 2010, 70). By contrast, the phenomena of *ch'ixi* "presuppose the parallel coexistence of many cultural differences that do not merge but antagonise or complement each other. Each of them reproduces itself from the depths of the past and is contentiously related to the others" (Cusicanqui 2010, 70). The term *ch'ixi* thus transcends the

[3] Ayllu is a synonym for a self-sufficient Andean community.

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binarism and historicism of hegemonic social science and captures the heterogeneity of the Andean societies and social movements (Cusicanqui 2018, 17).

Laforcade and Hirsch (2020, 11) point out that the principles of organisation that Cusicanqui calls *ch'ixi* anarcho-syndicalism were reborn in the structure of social movements at the turn of the millennium. These movements, defined ethnically, culturally, or socially, often created knowledge and experience "which bears little resemblance to European anarchist discourse, but communes with many of its concepts" (Laforcade and Hirsch 2020, 12). The emphasis on a horizontal structure, the principles of direct democracy, the affinity of the members of the movement, the cooperation of different belongings and identities, the rejection of the power of the state and a fundamental belief in direct action were "anarchistic without being explicitly anarchist" (Laforcade and Hirsch 2020, 12). Cusicanqui argues that the fundamental contribution of this *ch'ix*i anarchism lies in its "radical defence and respect for the freedom and autonomy of the individual, who can and needs to coexist within a community ethos, whether inherited or reinvented" (Cusicanqui 2020, 123).

Women, Indian hegemony and alternative modernity

The strategies of social movements at the turn of the millennium have had a *ch'ixi* characteristic. They have combined different levels of experience and knowledge based on indigenous and workers' struggles. A specific women's experience has also played an important role in both cases. Equipped with multiple experiences of oppression as Indians, as women and as poor workers, Aymara and Quechua women have been able to use a wide range of knowledge to form and use networks between organisations based on all these categories. Their different but complementary levels of belonging have created a *ch'ixi* space where seemingly antagonistic identities have been transformed into multifaceted means of combat.

During the gas war mobilisations in 2003, women took part in street fights using specifically female means: the use of kitchen utensils as weapons or keeping their spouses (police officers) at home and preventing them from participating in repressive actions against the protesters (Alfaro 2010, 225). However, they also mobilised as members of trade unions, professional associations, and indigenous and local communities. By engaging a multilevel web of identities and belonging in the struggle, women emerged as an important political entity (Alfaro 2010) and their

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participation in the uprising was crucial to destabilising the current political status quo.

Women also brought basic principles of Andean ayllu into play (Alfaro 2010, 225): i.e. consensus, reciprocity, and horizontality. The use of female means of combat meant that women made the ayllu principles of complementary balance visible in the public space. In this way, they created a space for what Cusicanqui calls the *Indian hegemony*, which paradoxically grows "in the spaces created by the invader's culture: the market, the state and the union" (Cusicanqui 2010, 73).

According to Cusicanqui, the spaces of *Indian hegemony* constitute a source of an alternative version of modernity, a key principle of decolonisation. The hegemonic concept of Bolivian modernity of the 20th century was based on the ideology of white-mestizo-patriarchal citizenship. Indians and women were excluded from the modernity in this masculine colonial project, and they were virtually erased from the narratives of the Bolivian elites (Moore Torres 2018, 245). The oppressed were reduced to "subjects of their own historicity" (Cusicanqui 2015, 96), which was the way of supressing and neutralising the autonomist demands of the indigenous groups, as well as the libertarian gestures of the anarchist and socialist groups in the cities (Cusicanqui 2015, 96). Cusicanqui insists that Morales' plurinational project has continued this internal colonialism by involving certain elements of "Indianness" in the construction of the Bolivian identity merely to exploit its symbolic value in support of state capitalism (Weinberg 2014). By creating spaces of *Indian hegemony* within the territory defined by the dominant patriarchal and (neo)colonial structures, the oppressed, women, indigenous communities or poor urban mestizo people have radically questioned the dominant power discourse, broken free from their imprisonment in historicity and reclaimed their own modernity (Goodale 2006). According to Cusicanqui (2015), the process of decolonisation consists precisely of the recognition of other modernities that allow the emergence of other epistemologies "that challenge the dichotomous logic of modernity-coloniality, thinking-doing, body-reason, nature-culture, occident – not occident" (Moore Torres 2018, 245).

Women have thus played a key role in the process of disrupting the state patriarchal and (neo)colonial hegemony by creating subversive networks of alternative versions of modernity. Their specific roles and professions mean that women are "the creators of languages and symbols that can seduce the "other" and establishing reciprocity and coexistence pacts between different social entities" (Cusicanqui 2010, 72).

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These practices of women "make it possible to complement the homeland – a territory with a dynamic cultural fabric that unfolds and reproduces itself until it encompasses the border and mixed sectors – the *ch'ixi* sectors – that contribute with their vision of the personal responsibility, privacy and individual rights associated with citizenship" (Cusicanqui 2010, 72–73).

Ch'ixi anarcho-feminism: Mujeres Creando

The Mujeres Creando (Women Creating) movement originated in one of the peripheral neighbourhoods of La Paz in 1992. Its founders, María Galindo, Mónica Mendoza and Julieta Paredes, combined their experiences from different social backgrounds, being both of Aymara and white middle-class origin. The movement arose primarily as a protest the neoliberal consensus spreading through Bolivian society in the 1980s. However, Mujeres Creando also sharply criticised the traditional Bolivian left for its machismo and patriarchal power structure that considered women "to be logistical support, a free workforce, sexual loot, a mass that operates the mobilisations, but which is not taken into account" (Mujeres Creando 2020a). The goal of the movement was thus not only to challenge neoliberalism, but also to fight against all forms of patriarchal oppression.

As a radical feminist movement, Mujeres Creando opened up topics that had been taboo in Bolivian society: the right of a woman to decide over her own body, the right to have an abortion and the right to reject the traditional role of a wife, mother and caregiver. At the same time, they also demanded legal recognition of the economic value of housework. The movement also promoted the rights of sexual minorities, which were harshly ignored in then Catholic-oriented, conservative, homophobic Bolivia.

Although they promoted an explicitly feminist agenda, Mujeres Creando opposed middle class feminist groups in Bolivia, as it considered them to be instruments of the traditional socio-economic elite that, instead of helping to improve the social conditions of indigenous and urban poor women, contributed to maintaining the patriarchal and racially unequal system that promotes the conservative family model and the traditional role of women within it (Falquet 2013; Galindo and Valdez 2020). Likewise, the movement also rejected the concept of gender equality and women's rights promoted by non-governmental organisations, for through it "the strength and

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work of women was used as a 'shock absorber' for the social costs related to the neoliberal structural settings of Bolivian society" (Galindo and Valdez 2020).

Figure 2: *Graffiti: "I don't come from your rib, you come from my crotch".*
Source: *Grafiteada. Mujeres Creando. Accessed [May 28, 2022]. http://mujerescreando.com/index.php/component/content/article/94-graffitis/133-grafiteada-de-semana-santa?Itemid=437#galleryd1a4e77218-1*

Mujeres Creando gradually developed several types of activities. The tool that they first began to use to spread their ideas was graffiti and different kinds of street performances. They used the streets and public spaces as a means of communicating with society (Morales, Patricio and Roque 2016). Their graffiti, written in characteristic handwriting and always signed with the movement's logo, often provoked sharp controversy by opening taboo topics in public spaces (for example the wall inscription "I don't come from your rib, you come from my crotch"[4] (Galindo 2021a). Currently, the movement also spreads its ideas through Radio

[4] *No vengo de tu costilla, vienes de mi entrepierna.*

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Deseo.[5] Mujeres Creando manages two autonomous community centres: La Vírgen de los Deseos (The Virgin of Wishes) in the city of La Paz and Los Deseos de la Vírgen (The Wishes of the Virgin) in the city of Santa Cruz. There, they organise cultural, political, and charitable events, provide accommodation and offer food based on traditional indigenous dishes (Mujeres Creando 2020b).

Figure 3: *13 Hours of Rebellion.*

Source*: 13 Horas de rebellion. 2015.* "13 Horas de rebelión, de María Galindo." *XXIV Muestra Internacional de Cine realizado por Mujeres-Zaragoza. [May 29, 2022]. https://www.muestracinemujereszgz.org/13-horas-de-rebelion-de-maria-galindo/*

Mujeres Creando's street performances or protest marches are often associated with various ways of masking or exposing women's bodies. As an example, it is worth mentioning the Feminist Catwalk (Pasarela Feminista) organised in the city of Santa

[5] http://radiodeseo.com/

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Cruz in 2014. Santa Cruz is the traditional centre of Bolivia's conservative socio-economic elite. There, Mujeres Creando prepared an improvised catwalk in front of the main cathedral as an ironic reminder of the patriarchal system's preferred standards of beauty. Several dozen activists paraded just like models and used provocative costumes to point to the objectification of women, double moral standards, and sexism. They promoted the right of women to be happy in their (indigenous) bodies, such as they are. A film called 13 Hours of Rebellion (13 Horas de la Rebelión) was made during the event and the movement subsequently presented it at several international festivals (Mujeres Creando 2020c).

Figure 4: The Blasphemous Altar (La Paz).

Source: *Díaz DE Oropeza, Adrián. 2016.* "El el día de la mujer boliviana arremeten contra la Iglesia Católica. Mural de protesta contra el catolicismo crea polémica en la Ciudad de La Paz." *La Izquierda Diario. Accessed [May 26, 2022]. https://www.laizquierdadiario.com.bo/Mural-de-protesta-contra-el-catolicismo-crea-polemica-en-la-ciudad-de-La-Paz*

In 2016, upon the occasion of the International Biennial of Art, Mujeres Creando created a mural called the Blasphemous Altar on the facade of the National Art Museum in La Paz, thereby "breaking the idea of the Museum as an interior space and intervening the narrative of colonial altars to install a feminist discourse" (Galindo 2017a). Mujeres Creando used traditional religious symbols in the Blasphemous Altar and gave them new, subversive meanings (Flores 2020). The mural was

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dominated by a crucified woman accompanied by the inscription "Hail Mary full of rebellion."[6] Next to it, a figure of Jesus was painted hunched under a cross of penises. At the base of the altar, there was a depiction of a masturbating pope in the middle of two inscriptions: "Your church crucifies women every day, feminism resuscitates them"[7] and "May God be an orphan without a mother or a virgin"[8] (El Desconcierto 2017).

Figure 5: *The Miraculous Blasphemous Altar (Quito).*

Source: *Mujeres Creando. 2018.* "Mujeres Creando Insert: La creatividad es un instrumento de lucha y el cambio social un hecho creativo." *Afterall. Accessed [May 29, 2022]. https://www.afterall.org/article/mujeres-creando-insert*

6 *Ave María llena eres de rebeldía.*

7 *Tu iglesia crucifica mujeres cada día, el feminismo las resuscita.*

8 *Que Dios se quede huerfano sin madre ni virgen.*

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The mural was supposed to be exhibited throughout the biennial, but it only lasted a few hours. It was considered too provocative and "excessively transgressive of the principles of Christianity" (Flores 2020) by some viewers, so they destroyed it and repainted it white. However, the mural was realised two more times. In 2017, the mural was exhibited at the Quito Metropolitan Cultural Centre. New figures appeared on the mural, whose graphic design was inspired by the drawings of Guaman Poma de Ayala: a bisexual Virgin Mary with female and male genitals, holding the Sun and the Moon in her/his hands as a symbolic expression of her/his bisexuality, and the Ovarian Virgin (Vírgen de los ovarios) stylised in the form of an ovary. The mural exhibition was closed after two days due to institutional censorship. The next realisation took place in Santiago de Chile, at the Salvador Allende Museum. There, a figure of a masturbating General Pinochet was added next to the pope on the mural, along with the inscription: "Opus Dei and the dictatorship singing hallelujah together".[9] The mural finally remained uncensored in Santiago (Flores 2020).

Figure 6: *The Miraculous Blasphemous Altar (Santiago de Chile).*

Source: *Flores, Pamela. 2020.* "Reflexiones en tormo a los murales blasfemos del colectivo Mujeres Creando." *Seminario de Estudios sobre Narrativa Latinoamericana Contemporánea. Accessed [May 29, 2022]. https://www.senalc.com/2020/06/01/reflexiones-en-torno-a-los-murales-blasfemos-del-colectivo-mujeres-creando/*

9 *Opus Dei y dictadura cantaron juntas Aleluya.*

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In addition to artistic performances, Mujeres Creando also engages in publishing and research activities. The publications by authors associated with the movement focus on the education and emancipation of women. Mujeres Creando's books help women identify and face domestic violence from their husbands (Gutierrez 2012; 2020), they remove the taboo of female sexuality and inform women about situations where it is legal to undergo an abortion, which is otherwise illegal in Bolivia (Mujeres Creando 2019, Ojeda Marguay and Quispe Paredes 2014). To promote women's rights at the political level, Mujeres Creando drafted an alternative Feminist Political Constitution of the State (Constitución Política Feminista del Estado) that enshrines the right of women to make decisions over their own bodies and to reject marriage, the maternal role and the obligatory heterosexual norms (Galindo 2010).

Figure 7: *Neither the Womb Open nor the Mouth Closed.*
Source: *Libros. In Mujeres Creando. Accessed [May 29, 2022]. http://mujerescreando.org/category/publicaciones/libros/*

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Independent social science research is yet another tool, through which Mujeres Creando explores the power inequalities of the patriarchal system. It is worth mentioning the series of interviews on the topic of sexuality that they did with members of the Bolivian parliament in 2017. The authors used this research to question and disrupt the dogma of social science research, which, in their opinion, is focused primarily on the lower social classes and ignores privileged groups. Mujeres Creando used independent research as a "weapon of the weak" (Scott 1985) to temporarily overturn the patriarchal power structure. It was underprivileged women who interviewed the members of the political class with power (Moreno 2017). Although the research was stopped prematurely by a parliamentary official, Mujeres Creando managed to interview almost half the elected officials. The researchers identified ubiquitous homophobic prejudices across the political spectrum (Galindo 2017b). According to Mujeres Creando, the attitude towards sexuality is a good indicator of how Bolivian political representation works. María Galindo states: "What happens, if the Guaraní indigenous deputy, for example, says the same thing as the white neoliberal deputy? Or if an indigenous woman adopts the discourse of the Church? It means that these people do not represent us, they replace us" (Moreno 2017).

The List of Irresponsible Fathers (Lista de Padres Irresponsables) is another tool used by Mujeres Creando to reverse the patriarchal power structure. Since 2010, Radio Deseo has published a monthly list of fathers who refuse to pay child support (BBC 2010; Radio Deseo 2022). They publish the names of men who have committed physical abuse against their partners on another list. In this way, Mujeres Creando exposes irresponsible men to public humiliation. Being published on the list is greatly feared, especially by middle-class men who worry about incurring damage to their social prestige. The list has thus become a weapon of the weak, a tool for otherwise powerless women to claim their rights and regain their dignity (BBC 2010; Radio Deseo 2022).

Mujeres Creando promotes a multi-level, *ch'ixi* agenda: they are artists, social and environmental activists, educators, researchers, radio presenters and promoters of radical feminism. They oppose neoliberalism at an ideological level, but also the patriarchal structures of Bolivian society across the political spectrum. The movement rejects power inequalities based on social class differences, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. In their struggle, Mujeres Creando combines different, often seemingly contradictory identities and belongings: they fight for the emancipation of

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women, indigenous people, non-heterosexual and non-binary people and the working class, using the tools of anarchism and punk subculture.

Mujeres Creando has created a subversive network connecting different, seemingly disparate groups. Galindo refers to these strategic alliances as "unusual alliances", (alianzas insólitas) (Kozak Rovero 2020). Rather than a unified movement, Mujeres Creando has created a social fabric that makes it possible to form political alliances between women "with whom it is forbidden to form alliances" (Morales, Patricio and Roque 2016, 226). One of the controversial pieces of graffiti by Mujeres Creando well describes these forbidden alliances among women: "We are Indians, whores and lesbians, revolted and twined together" (Galindo 2018). For example, Mujeres Creando has cooperated with the organisation OMESPRO (Organisation of Women in Prostitution) and jointly prepared a project on the law on self-managed brothels (Galindo and Valdez 2020).

Unusual alliances connect women of all ages and social classes: indigenous women, poor urban women, middle-class intellectuals, students, artists, trade unionists etc. This complementary heterogeneity is one of the features of Cusicanqui's *ch'ixi* world, in which seemingly opposing elements can coexist and cooperate without being mutually exclusive.

Through unusual alliances, Mujeres Creando uses its indigenous experience to create a network based on the Andean principles of horizontality, reciprocity, and complementarity. This network has emerged from a marginalised urban environment, a space created by colonial society, but it has the potential to subversively challenge the ideology of colonialism and to radically question the dominant discourse of power. In this regard, the network of unusual alliances has opened a space for Cusicanqui's Indian hegemony, through which Mujeres Creando promotes an alternative vision of modernity based on the experience of the underprivileged: women, indigenous people, poor working people or non-heterosexual people.

María Galindo

María Galindo, one of the founders of the movement and its most influential representative, embodies Cusicanqui's *ch'ixi* world. Galindo comes from an elite middle-class family, but she has resigned her social position and devoted herself to the underprivileged. She is greatly influenced by the ideas of anarchism and punk:

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"although I was born into an upper middle-class family, the direction I took in my life was socially downward instead of upward" (Galindo and Valdez 2020). She characterises herself as a "dweller in abnormality" (Galindo 2020). Her controversial opinions led her to break up with her family and she was forced to leave Bolivia in the 1980s (Galindo and Valdez 2020). Paradoxically, she fled to Vatican, where she also completed her university studies. Galindo is now a psychologist, university teacher, radio presenter, writer, and screenwriter. She has openly declared herself a lesbian and an atheist and she has been imprisoned several times and persecuted by the Bolivian police because of her controversial street performances (Morales, Patricio and Roque 2016). She is the author of several books, in which she has elaborated her ideas on what she calls bastard feminism (Galindo 2007; 2013; 2021b).

Figure 8: *María Galindo.*
Source: *Morales, Alana, Patricio, Mariana, and Tatiana Roque.* "Entrevista da vez Maria Galindo." *Revista DR. Accessed [May 29. 2022]. https://revistadr.com.br/posts/maria-galindo/*

For Galindo, *bastard feminism* is intuitive feminism, based not on an ideological, but on an existential basis (Galindo and Valdez 2020). She rejects what she calls Eurocentric feminism, but at the same time she also refuses to talk about Bolivian feminism. In her opinion, real feminism exceeds the category of a nation state. The

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state is an instrument of patriarchal oppression (Guzmán Arroyo 2019). Its very nature means that the liberation of women can never come from it.

For Galindo, there are two core principles in feminism: decolonisation and depatriarchalisation. Feminism is therefore not merely an ideology, but it is rooted in the everyday practice and struggle of women against oppression and exploitation in the family, against femicide and machismo. The promotion of sexual freedoms and the right of women to decide over their own bodies play a key role in this struggle. For Galindo, the body is the fundamental basis of our experience: "the body is the main reality that we live in, in a society without a body. Patriarchy is the annulment of the body, capitalism is the confinement of the body and tyrannies over bodies constitute the basis for the consolidation of all other tyrannies. The separation of the mind and the body, which lies at the very basis of patriarchal thinking, involves the subjugation of the body" (Galindo and Valdez 2020). The body, bodily experience and liberation of the body therefore lie at the centre of her feminist politics.

Galindo offers "a poetic counter-current" in her performances (Kozak Rovero 2020). She opposes "the racial and sexual purification of the body" (Preciado 2019) and questions the norms of beauty and normality set by colonial history and maintained by contemporary neocolonialism, capitalism, and consumerism by presenting indigenous bodies in their diversity and originality. She uses cheap and broken objects to create new symbolic meanings through their novel combination. Galindo also often uses traditional patriarchal and religious symbols and gives them new provocative and often disgraceful meanings (Preciado 2019). She believes that art should return from the commercial and commodified spaces of museums and galleries to public spaces, to the streets and squares, and should engage in serving the people (Preciado 2019).

Galindo criticises religious institutions and dominant centres of power. She strongly questions heteronormativity and denounces various forms of symbolic and physical violence based on homophobic prejudices. However, Galindo wants activism and the struggle to primarily be a joy and a pleasure. She opposes patrimonialization, "a practice that exalts heroism and martyrdom" (Kozak Romero 2020). Instead of celebrating the martyrdom of women who have suffered from femicide and abuse, she proposes to celebrate their lives and focus on improving the conditions of living people.

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Like Cusicanqui, Galindo is critical of the academic environment in her capacity as a staunch anarchist activist. She points to the epistemological hegemony that universities have created: "the academy, as an institution legitimised by society, submits to a process of translating the most diverse social movements and, especially, the indigenous communities into its own terms" (Kozak Rovero 2020). Although Galindo once worked as a university professor, she felt too limited in that position. She considers universities to be a space for the upper classes and the elite, distant from the daily struggles of unprivileged people (Morales, Patricio and Roque 2016). She is now continuing her pedagogical activities within the Mujeres Creando community. Mujeres Creando charges for any research interviews conducted with them by academics to fight against what she calls "epistemological extractivism" (Kozak Rovero 2020) and they use the acquired funds to maintain the activities at their autonomous centres.

Galindo and her *bastard feminism* personify Cusicanqui's idea of *ch'ixi* phenomena. Galindo is an atheist, lesbian, anarchist, artist, street performer, radio presenter and educator. She promotes sexual freedom, but also responsibility towards the partner, family, and community. She comes from a middle-class elite, but she fights for the rights of indigenous and poor women and men. She rejects the institution of the state, but she is also the co-author of the state's alternative Feminist Political Constitution. Galindo's bastard feminism transcends the symbolic boundaries of social groups, nationalities, and ideologies, but at the same time it is also anchored in the local cultural and linguistic tradition (for example, Galindo rejects the label LGBTIQ+ as a Western construct and prefers the local term "cuestión marica") (Torres Cautivo 2021).

Seemingly mutually exclusive experiences in Galindo's mottled *ch'ixi* identity conduct a creative dialogue with each other. Galindo's feminism is local and cosmopolitan, indigenous and non-indigenous, individual and communitarian at the same time. She challenges the dichotomous logic of Western thinking and presents a decolonial and depatriarchal epistemology, where opposites do not have to be mutually exclusive, but can coexist harmoniously and create new, non-dichotomous qualities.

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Julieta Paredes and Adriana Guzmán: Aymara Community Feminism

The Mujeres Creando Comunidad movement split off from Mujeres Creando in 2003. Its founder, Julieta Paredes, is an Aymara intellectual, writer, poet, singer and songwriter. She is openly lesbian (Falconí Trávez 2015; Guzmán and Triana 2019). She and Adriana Guzmán, a pedagogue and social activist (Guzmán Arroyo 2022), have become the main promoters of Aymara community feminism in Bolivia.

Figure 9: *Julieta Paredes and Adriana Guzmán.*
Source: *Paredes Carvajal, Julieta. 2013.* "Disidencia y Feminismo Comunitario." *Disidencia 10 (2). Accessed [May 10, 2022]. https://web.archive.org/web/20170805222058/http://hemisphericinstitute.org/hemi/es/e-misferica-102/paredes*

Paredes' feminism is rooted in the spaces of the Indian hegemony that emerged during the social protests at the turn of the millennium. Paredes participated in the street fighting during the 2003 Gas War and addressed the women who took an active part in the uprising. According to her, by fighting the neoliberal system, which she considers to constitute just another form of patriarchal colonialism, which (as Cusicanqui 2010; 2015; 2018) claims - constantly renews itself, these women were putting radical feminism into practice, albeit without considering themselves feminists. Together with these engaged women's groups, Paredes initiated the establishment of the Feminist Assembly, through which they became interconnected and able to coordinate their activities (Daly 2010).

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The Mujeres Creando Comunidad movement has followed the ideas developed by Mujeres Creando: they consider depatriarchalisation and decolonisation to be key principles of women's liberation. However, Paredes and Guzmán's feminism focuses primarily on community: they propose community feminism (feminismo comunitario), within which they emphasize the dynamics of the relationship between the individual and the community and women and men in community.

According to Paredes, the whole community is more than just the sum of its individual parts. The community is made up of women and men as two "necessary, complementary, non-hierarchical halves" (Paredes 2013, 87) that are autonomous from each other. The fact that the community is a systemically interconnected whole means that "the suppression and subordination of one-part harms the other as well" (Paredes 2013, 87). When women, who make up half the community, are not allowed to develop their potential, the whole community is damaged. And, because men are also part of the community, they oppress themselves when they oppress women (Paredes 2013, 87).

However, it is also possible to apply the same logic to other, not only gender, aspects of the community: a community can only function harmoniously, if none of its members is deprived of the opportunity to develop meaningfully as an autonomous, yet interconnected unit. From this point of view, any form of oppression has a destructive effect on the community, whether it is social, ethical, racial or other. In Paredes' view, the community is a *ch'ixi* space that challenges the Western dichotomy of the individual and the communal: the systemic connection between the individual and the communal creates a "third", non-binary aspect of the community.

Individual communities do not exist in a vacuum. By themselves, they represent autonomous, yet interconnected complementary units. Julieta Paredes presents the idea of the Bolivian nation as a community of complementary and reciprocally interconnected communities. However, this "fabric of complementarities, reciprocities, identities, individualities and autonomies" (Paredes 2013, 90) goes far beyond national borders. Communities defined locally, ethnically, professionally, and otherwise should be interconnected regardless of their nationality and should create together a community of communities that is, according to Paredes, synonymous with humanity.

Paredes has formulated a political proposal for the emancipation of women within her perspective of community feminism. The proposal is based on a conceptual

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framework built on the interconnected cycle of "5 fields of action for the struggle of women in rural and urban communities" (Paredes 2013, 99-100): body – space – time – movement – memory.

The body is the central principle in this cycle. Both Paredes and Galindo reject the dualistic understanding of the soul and body as an alien, colonial concept. On the contrary, Paredes understands body as a fundamental element that is the source of both corporeality and spirituality. Therefore, we should love our corporeality such as it is. However, Paredes points out that the current concept of corporeality has been strongly influenced by internal colonialism, which has created a racist ethical and aesthetic imagery (Cusicanqui 2015; Paredes 2013, 53) that determines the perception of beauty and social prestige. White women or women with European traits have become the norm, while women with indigenous traits "are considered ugly, dirty and uneducated" (Paredes 2013, 54). Community feminists are "tired of a colonial aesthetic of white as beautiful, tired of the frivolous spectacle of bodies that are exhibited for macho consumption" (Paredes 2013, 101). To liberate indigenous women's bodies from this symbolic violence, it is necessary to decolonise the imagery of the body and depatriarchalize the concept of the body as a mere object for the satisfaction of male needs.

Julieta Paredes has deconstructed the very concept of gender in this regard. According to her, socialisation and the learning of a male and female gender implies the internalisation of unequal power relations, as the male gender is perceived as being superior to the female gender and is built up at its expense. She considers gender to be a political category created by men to strengthen the patriarchal system regardless of whether this involves a colonial or neoliberal patriarchate. She therefore considers the idea of gender equality to be unrealistic, because by their very nature hierarchically structured roles can never be equal. In this sense, she has compared gender categories to social classes, which are "founded on the injustice of the exploitation of one class over another" (Paredes 2013, 65). Paredes thus suggests overcoming gender as an unjust historical reality and socialising children outside gender categories, because gender is a "prison built on the human body" (Paredes and Guzmán 2014, 74).

The body is closely connected with Paredes' vision of spatiality. Paredes' community feminism emphasises the body-territory metaphor. It is necessary to decolonise and depatriarchalize both the territory-body and the physical territory-land. Paredes deals

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with the extended physicality of the subject (Moore Torres 2018, 249) who is an integral part of the wider community in both a social and a territorial sense.

Neither the territory nor the body are commodifiable. The territory, Mother Earth, enables a harmonious community life, while the community must in turn take care of the Earth. In this sense, "sexual oppression and colonial dominance represent two sides of the same repression" (Moore Torres 2018, 249). Just as patriarchal capitalism plunders natural resources, it also exploits the bodies of women that are used as a source of unpaid domestic labour, a means of reproduction and caregivers in the same way (Moore Torres 2018, 249).

Paredes has drawn attention to the systemic abuse of women: as a witness to the social consequences of Bolivia's neoliberal transformation in the 1980s, she has pointed out that most of the social responsibilities relinquished by the state have been transferred to women's shoulders. Women have been forced to provide for their families in times of massive unemployment caused by the privatisation of state-owned enterprises. Women have been forced to work in precarious conditions as cheap labour without any social security and adequate overtime pay. Subsequently, it has been the women who have sustained the network of the informal economy, which is paradoxically the dominant sector in the overall Bolivian economy (Paredes 2013, 59). It was the poor indigenous women – the most vulnerable – who were the hardest hit by the neoliberal reforms. Paredes has therefore advocated for decolonisation, depatriarchalisation and the re-establishment of reciprocity: the fair redistribution of symbolic and physical values both within the community (whether local or national) and between the community and its natural environment.

In this regard, Paredes has also pointed to the unequal distribution of time, i.e. the dominant dimension that determines our existence, between men and women. Men, who usurp the public space, spend "important time" (el tiempo importante) there, while women are expelled to a private space, where they are forced to spend "unimportant time" (el tiempo no importante) (Paredes 2013, 109). Paradoxically, they use this unimportant time to provide all the activities that are indispensable for the preservation and reproduction of the family and the community. These daily, repetitive, and backbreaking activities are not remunerated or otherwise symbolically evaluated. Yet everyday life (attributed to women) and historicity (attributed to men) both form part of one continuum. Overemployed women would therefore regain their time for rest and regeneration, as well as for the purposes of organising politically in the movement.

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Paredes compares the movement to a social body whose goal is to achieve a good life (vivir bien). The movement is a never-ending dynamic process (Paredes 2013, 112), because the moment the set goals are achieved, new goals and requirements appear.[10] The movement should be based on the horizontal complementarity between women both within and between communities at different levels, be they local, regional, professional, or other. Through this network of horizontal and non-hierarchical relationships, women can achieve their demands at both the local, national, and international levels.

Memory is the last symbolic field that community feminists want to depatriarchalize and decolonise (Guzmán Arroyo 2019). Paredes criticizes the concept of a "long memory" (Cusicanqui 1984) that traces the source of contemporary indigenous identities to the pre-Columbian (pre-invasion) period and, according to her, glorifies it uncritically. Although this period is a source of pride for the Aymara identity, the "long memory" of women and men differs, because even in the pre-Columbian cultures there were patriarchal structures that were oppressive to women. The "long memory" of women should therefore be based not only on "the knowledge of our grandmothers and great-grandmothers and their technical, biotechnological and scientific contributions... to humanity" (Paredes 2013, 117), but also on the experience of the anti-patriarchal resistance of "female rebels" (Paredes 2013, 117).

Oppressive structures persist in today's indigenous communities, where the relationship between men and women is still often hierarchical, unequal, and unjust (Moore Torres 2018, 250). The ways in which the indigenous patriarchy interacts with modern forms of patriarchal oppression can be described in terms of the cyclical temporality used by Cusicanqui: from the point of view of the "long memory" of oppressed women, the patriarchy is repeatedly renewed and takes on new forms.

Julieta Paredes calls the layering of indigenous and (neo)colonial forms of patriarchy a "patriarchal connection"[11] (Paredes 2013, 71). She points out that pre-Columbian cultures are not a historical source of equality between women and men. She criticises the Aymara "chacha-warmi" concept of the complementarity of male and

[10] Trotskyist influences resonate in this view of the movement. In addition to Marxism and anarchism, Trotskyism was one of the ideological currents that influenced the Bolivian workers' movement.

[11] entronque patriarcal

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female roles. According to Paredes, this concept is based on vertical hierarchical complementarity, where women occupy lower and subordinate positions to men, who usurp the public sphere, while women are expelled to a private sphere and are a mere complement to men. The chacha-warmi concept is therefore "a scenario of strong sexist resistance, privileges for men and violence of all kinds towards women" (Paredes 2013, 82). Paredes also points out that a complementary couple is confused with a heterosexual couple at the political level. As a result, women's political representation has neither strength nor legitimacy: if a man is elected to a position of community authority, his wife automatically assumes the same role as a member of a complementary couple without being elected. Mandatory heterosexuality and the mixing of family and political roles thus weaken the political position of women in the community. The solution lies in replacing the heterosexual couple model with a truly complementary pair and in replacing vertical hierarchical complementarity with horizontal complementarity. This new form of complementarity, which Paredes symbolically refers to as warmi-chacha, implies the establishment of the warmi-pacha, the recapturing of women's time (Paredes 2013, 85).

Paredes and Guzmán's Aymara community feminism advocates decolonisation and depatriarchalisation through the community. In their view, the community is a symbolic *ch'ixi* space, to which the dynamic between the individual and the communal gives new qualities on a higher systemic level. The systemic interconnectedness of community means that any form of individual discrimination harms the community. From this point of view, individual rights and the rights of the community are not mutually exclusive, but on the contrary represent an indivisible whole. Community feminism thus challenges Western dualism and presents an alternative perspective based on the dialogue between indigenous and Western epistemologies. Within this perspective, the traditional and the millennial exist alongside the modern without any contradictions. Through this "paralel contemporaneity", "parallel experience of time" (Paredes Carvajal 2013) Aymara community feminists propose what Cusicanqui calls „other modernity" (Cusicanqui 2015), an instrument of decolonization.

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Towards a radical alternative?

Contemporary Bolivian decolonial feminism is remarkable for several reasons. Firstly, it is rooted in the long historical tradition of the Bolivian workers' movement, which has been strongly influenced by the ideas of anarchism and which has always been very closely linked to and overlapped with the indigenous movement sharing the same anti-colonial and autonomist agenda. Bolivian anarchist tradition that has decisively influenced the formation of Bolivian decolonial feminism, has been widely studied by local scholars like Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, but has long been rather overlooked by the dominant Western academia.

Secondly, Bolivian decolonial feminism is based on local alternative theories that have been put into practice. The main promoters of decolonial feminism are intellectuals who have used their structurally grounded educations to create subversive anti-structural knowledge. Both Cusicanqui and Galindo left academia and preferred to build independent, autonomous spaces of alternative knowledge and practice (the Tambo Colectivo, Mujeres Creando). These autonomous spaces are the embodiment of Cusicanqui's concept of the *ch'ixi* world, a mottled society in which individual, seemingly exclusive identities do not enter conflict, but on the contrary create a dynamic space for dialogue and creative cooperation. In this sense, Galindo's *bastard feminism*, existentially based feminism, emphasises the creation of a social fabric among women who are forbidden to form alliances and who share the lived bodily experience of the underprivileged. According to Galindo, only through this collective social fabric women can really use and fulfill their potential, for as isolated individuals they are doomed to mere survival (Morales, Patricio and Roque 2016).

The emphasis on the individual's right to decide with regard to their body and sexuality based on Western tradition and the Aymara understanding of the individual as part of a wider community network, loses its contradiction within the logic of the *ch'ixi* world that is "neither a claim of autochtony nor a rejection of the foreign, and certainly not a fusion or blending of both, but rather a space of dialogue and creative tension between linguistic, cosmological and ethical perspectives on everyday life, work and protest from different repertoires of experience in a spirit of cooperation, affinity, individual freedom and mutual aid" (Laforcade 2020, 35).

The emancipatory and modernisation project of Bolivian decolonial feminism uses the logic of the *ch'ixi* world: it understands history as a cyclical process in which

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colonialism and the patriarchy is repeatedly regenerated. Decolonisation and depatriarchalisation are thus the key processes for liberation from all historical forms of oppression: gender, racial, ethnic, or environmental.

Thirdly, Bolivian decolonial feminists have constructed a subversive network of micro-spaces in which they create and live a real alternative to the current political and economic status quo. Both Cusicanqui's Colectivx *ch'ixi* and the Mujeres Creando are autonomous networks that create alternative knowledge and translate it into everyday practice. Bolivian decolonial feminism has created an ideological space from which alternative modernity has emerged as a means of self-definition and political emancipation. At a time of a desperate need for the radical transformation of economically, socially, and environmentally unsustainable patriarchal capitalism, it is underprivileged Bolivian women, equipped with their experience of overexploitation and oppression, who are providing one of the visions for a possible alternative.

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Fragment of Story: An Otomi Woman from Hidalgo in Mexico (1886-1974)

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ABSTRACT

We present the life dynamics of an indigenous woman. Those dynamics, which took place mainly in the post-revolutionary era, have been taken from life stories. They have been built among fragments of memories and empty documentaries. The analysis approaches the sociocultural conditions of a region where ancestral knowledge was vital for family subsistence. This approach allows us to consider the actors, Ángela Tolentino and other *Otomí-Tepehua* [geographic and cultural region from Hidalgo State, Mexico] women natives

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of the state of Hidalgo, as products of history. We highlight decisive actions to make her life a unique story as an actor in her own social space. Those actions are the formation of a family without the guardianship and protection of a father, a brother, or a husband; becoming the sole economic provider of her children; migrating to experience the gradual abandonment of previous knowledge (including her mother tongue, which gradually became extinct among her descendants); and to live in a political context that fought for the assimilation of indigenous culture because it was considered as a restraint for the development of the country. We recover memories of her life from her descendants, such as experiences and discussions made while walking and traveling from one *ranchería* [small rural settlement] to another, far from rural and urban centers. In this sense, we consider her as the producer of her own story. This is how to interweave the image of an *Otomí*-speaking indigenous woman at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th.

KEY WORDS: indigenous woman, marginalization, migrant, poverty, vulnerability

Introduction

By the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, in the post-revolutionary era in Mexico, the indigenous communities that remained distant from envisioning a revolutionary ideology experienced a profound climate of poverty and hopelessness. Isolated from the progress of urban contexts, there prevailed a life of economic subsistence centered on working in small plots accompanied by null access to education. These conditions placed them in abandonment and vulnerability.

The culture of community and endogenous organization could not represent the unifying ideology but on the contrary, the post-revolutionary model proposed a model of acculturation and change in which the objective was the integration of the Indians through assimilation that implied *mexicanizar al indio* [Mexicanize the Indian] with symbolism of national identity. (Bartolomé 2004; Aguirre 1990). The indigenous issue represented a restraint and a problem for the country that had to be resolved. The mestizo represented the unity that was legitimized by science through cultural miscegenation. This ethnocide was represented as a civilizing crusade that looked for the indigenous people to renounce their culture and their mother tongue with the purpose of being part of the nation project. In this situation, indigenous women encountered the greatest inequality and vulnerability. The ideal of the Mexican Revolution sought an even land distribution and social justice, but this ideal was clearly directed only to a male and agrarian group.

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Being a woman has a sense of signification. As a premise, it leads us to a historical reflection, in which a voice is given to bring us closer to the voices and narratives of the indigenous women of the *sierra* [chain of mountains]. They are the path because their word is walking as well as their thought. Being an indigenous woman from the social dimension implied three meanings: the origin of her poverty comes from denying her the right to have *tierras ejidales* [communal lands mainly used for agriculture]. The privileged in the distribution and direct blood inheritance to male children were delegated to men. To poverty was added illiteracy. Due to her condition as a woman (either a daughter, wife, mother, or sister), she was placed hierarchically below the men in the kinship system. This signification also places her in the triple marginalization by being on the scale of a patriarchal subordination of ancestral founding and colonizing origin.

It is important the way in which the role of the indigenous migrant woman is highlighted because this trait is fundamental in the *Otomí* culture, the exodus, and the migration in search of better life opportunities. Such is the case exemplified in this text when we talk about forced migration due to factors of labor exploitation, sexual abuse, and discrimination. That leads us to deep reflection on those aspects of social life that are still current in our country.

That is why this work deals with a study of the sociocultural conditions of the *Otomí -Tepehua* region which is in the State of Hidalgo. We emphasize the case of women and the personal events of an indigenous woman in a post-revolutionary context. We analyze how this socioeconomic and political context determined her history with facts and events that can be replicated in other contexts, communities, and by other women. The document demonstrates how Ángela Tolentino was able to influence her own history after her descendants had reconstructed her past and found the meaning of her life.

The structure of the work is organized in three sections. First, we describe the post-revolutionary Mexico sociocultural conditions of the *Otomí-Tepehua* Region in the state of Hidalgo. We emphasize the case of women to place this woman as a product of history. The second corresponds to the biography of Ángela Tolentino. We highlight her roles as head of the family, provider, and migrant; we recount how some actions and decisions were decisive in making her life a unique story. Finally, we show how her descendants, who gave meaning to her life, reconstructed the personal history of this woman.

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Theoretical and methodological framework

The theoretical and methodological references motivate us to begin working on a Life Story. The aforementioned is justified on the grounds that it allows us to observe the thread and articulations that weave the tapestry of human life. Therefore, other academic methodologies impede us from achieving our goal (De Gaulejac 2006). Consequently, based on this academic perspective, we are positioned between anthropology and social history.

Life history consists of two aspects: The first one describes what "really" happened during the existence of an individual. It also identifies events and concrete elements that characterized and influenced the life, the family, and the environment of this individual, t. This is a factual reconstruction that was created using historical-sociological research. Obtaining biographical story narratives about a person's existence based on the tales that person has created for themselves or that person has been told by others is the second aspect. We aim to comprehend every aspect of those experiences related to an affective, emotional, cultural, family, and societal level based on what has been explained and from a research investigation. The conscious and unconscious levels are constantly impacted by these interactions. (De Gaulejac 2006, 30-31).

The individual is viewed as a product, an actor, and a producer of life, in accordance with De Gaulejac's (2006) theory. The person assumes, as a result, that his identity is the result of the personal experiences he has had, which give rise to his biography as a distinct and original tale. The social environment and characteristics shared by his immediate family have an impact on that identity as well. The individual believes that he can affect his own history as an actor in history. The person is also a maker of stories. Through both conscious and unconscious processes, the person reconstructs his past to give it a particular meaning.

The privileged way of accessing these stories in a biographical approach is through the narrative of life and the narrative of the story (Cornejo, 2006). For this reason, in-depth interviews were conducted with key informant descendants of Ángela Tolentino (a 95-year-old son, a niece, and other descendants). We also used other sources to associate the data obtained through the interviews. We seek to describe the phenomena of poverty and discrimination in the *Otomí-Tepehua* region that occurred during the post-revolution era and to know how they were perceived and

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appreciated by their inhabitants. We analyze these phenomena based on the approach of being a woman to complying with the attributes of her time.

The *Otomí-Tepehua* region: Delimitation of this history in time and space

This region is part of the *Sierra Madre Oriental* and is in the eastern part of the state of Hidalgo. It is formed by the municipalities of Huehuetla (with a *Nahuatl* and *Otomí* speaking population), San Bartolo Tututepec, Tenango de Doria, Acaxochitlán, Agua Blanca de Iturbide, and Metepec. The region is bordered by the state of Veracruz (Tlachichilco, Huayacocotla, Ixhuatlán) to the north and by the state of Puebla (*Sierra Norte*) to the east. This is one of the three regions where the conditions of poverty, marginalization, and emigration have historically been concentrated. These conditions prevail and still show components related to the indigenous population. (Vargas 2011, 95)[1]

Geographically, four bioclimatic regions stand out: semi-cold (high areas, coniferous forests, average annual temperature of 15.9 ºC, annual rainfall of 1,812.9 mm); temperate cloud forest (mean annual temperatures of 18.8 ºC, rainfall of 3,129.5 mm per year); temperate jungle (primary jungle vegetation, mean annual temperature 20.7 ºC, rainfall 1,891.1 mm); and warm humid with primary jungle vegetation. The average annual temperature is 24.0 ºC, and the precipitation is 1,478.0 mm per year (García and González 2014).

Valleys, as well as distinct canyons and ravines, are present in its mountainous topography, making it challenging to develop public infrastructure and services such as communication systems and other essential facilities. González and López (2018) emphasize that these physical features have perpetuated the isolation of its residents, who nonetheless uphold their traditions and customs. They also add that the lack of government initiatives has intensified marginalization and poverty.

In the pre-Hispanic period, the region was a multicultural conglomerate of people of different languages: Otomí, Totonaca, Tepehua and Chichimeca. At the beginning of the 16th century, they gradually decreased, leaving the Otomí population as the

[1] Such delimitation responds to a political need to differentiate it from the *Sierra Norte de Puebla* and the *Huasteca Veracruzana*, since both the geography and the population share history and common characteristics with their neighbors (Garrett 2013, 82).

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dominant population in San Bartolo Tututepec, Tenango de Doria, Acaxochitlán, and the Tepehua in Huehuetla. In this scenario, these remote communities have resisted the cultural onslaught (Guerrero 1986 as cited in Vargas 2011, 97).

During the Viceroyalty era, the inhabitants of the region resisted for a time but were finally subdued by the evangelization, *los repartimientos* [distribution of land], *las encomiendas* [a grant by the crown to certain Spanish officers and others of several indigenous people] and the congregations. The *Republic of Indians* people was formed based on the towns that survived the pressure of the Spanish, and many others were formed with a high degree of cohesion. These circumstances allowed them to defend themselves against abuses and at the same time, preserve a certain autonomy in favor of their political and religious organization, incorporating the cargo system (around the patronal festival) and the cult of oratories (Dow as cited in Garret 2013, 97).

Starting in the independent period, different subjugation mechanisms were implemented to control the towns that persisted in showing opposition to the constitutional town halls in charge of mestizos and whites. (Garret 2013, 104). From the proclamation of the Reform laws until the *Porfiriato* [period when Porfirio Díaz was president of Mexico], the accumulation of land in a few hands supported the growth and consolidation of the *haciendas* [plantation land with a dwelling house]. The appearance of the *haciendas* helped to dissolve the old *Republic of Indians*. They were forced to exchange their labor for little or no economic remuneration, which caused constant conflicts and rebellions that led to the Mexican Revolution. The indigenous peoples were enmeshed in poverty, which can be defined in various ways and extends beyond a person's poor income or lack of financial wealth. In a broader sense, poverty refers to the satisfaction of other needs that cannot be entirely met by the market. For instance, a person's ability to stay healthy depends on social factors and public services like vaccination programs and clean air; a person's capacity to go to school also heavily depends on factors outside the market, like the placement of schools close to where the students live (there are some aspects of education that can be purchased as goods). And the ability to travel often depends heavily on the existence of public goods such as roads, ports, and transportation vehicles (Macewan 2010, 19).

In the post-revolutionary period, government policies on the indigenous affairs were aimed at homogenization, mainly through the *castellanizacion* [general teaching of the Spanish language in the country] and imposition of national values. These

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policies were implemented through institutions such as cultural missions, town houses, *escuelas normales rurales* [rural normal schools], and *la casa del estudiante indigena* [the house of the indigenous student]. These policies presented a double discourse, on the one hand, it was emphasized that the indigenous people were descendants of the glorious cultures of the country. On the other hand, they were despised for their "primitive and out of date" ways of life compared to the national culture. (Margarito 2012, 94)

In 1935, when Lázaro Cárdenas oversaw the government of Mexico, he created the Department of Indigenous Affairs (DAI). This division oversaw defining indigenous people to give them special consideration and reported directly to the federal government. The definition of an indigenous person was based on biological, cultural, and historical factors. It was initially intended to conduct scientific research, particularly anthropological research, which would serve as the foundation for government initiatives to address their problems; however, the DAI implemented homogenizing measures through the establishment of agricultural and industrial schools, cooperatives (of consumption and production), as well as hygienic habits, sports, and civic measures into place. These procedures were viewed as an imposition because they were generally applied in urban settings. (López, 2013)

In this period, the greatest distribution of land was carried out throughout the country in the form of *ejidos* [portion of land granted to the indigenous people]; however, it was inconvenient for many indigenous people that lived in the regions we just talked about. The geography of these regions, as well as the poverty of its inhabitants to implement modern agricultural technology, not to mention the lack of other public policies, limited the possibilities of the now called *ejidatarios* [the person that receives in charge the *ejido*] to exploit their lands in a sustainable manner.[2] Instead, they sought "land clearing" for edible crops which led to excessive logging.

The contempt expressed throughout the history of Mexico by the authorities (political, academic, religious, etc.), or in other words, the members of the dominant

[2] Coffee cultivation was introduced as a state policy in the mid-20th century, under the argument that it would provide better income for families, compared to traditional staple crops. To guarantee his safety, the peasant kept a backyard cattle farm or fruit farming (beans, peanuts, and sugar cane). In general, fruit crops were cultivated in an associated or intercropped manner (González and López 2018, 29).

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culture, towards those ways of life that maintained some cultural traits of the pre-Hispanic era, translated into discrimination against such elements. For example, the original languages; food based on corn, beans, and sauce; *el pulque* [traditional alcoholic drink]; the blanket attire; the houses made of materials taken from nature; and others. The population of indigenous origin was particularly discriminated.[3]

Women of the region

Sherry Ortner assures that in all cultures there has been a subordination of women at the symbolic level. In the imagination of people, regardless of where they are located, women are less than men because they are associated with nature because of their biology. It has been interpreted that the woman is not able to dedicate herself to the production of culture because she spends more time caring for her own specie. This imagination supports the idea that the tasks carried out by women have less value than those carried out by men. The above-mentioned fosters the idea that women have a psychic structure closer to nature (Copred 2017, 2).

In the Viceroyalty period, both women and Indians were considered minors. They required the guardianship of a man and the Crown itself, respectively. Such conception persisted and increased in independent Mexico, especially during the *Porfiriato.* The proliferation of scientific studies asserted its lower capacity; they had moral weaknesses that made them prone to "vices" such as prostitution and alcoholism. The incidence used to be higher among "lower class" women (including Indians) because they were less subject to the control of society.[4] Some women had access to professional education but, because they were conceived only as wives and mothers, they were assigned professions related to educating and caring for

[3] I use the concept of "discrimination" to mean excluding through selection. In other words, giving inferior treatment to individuals or groups, in this case because of their ethnic origin (CDI 2009, 5).

[4] You can review these topics in Speckman, Elisa 2003. Morir a manos de una mujer: homicidas e infanticidas en el porfiriato. In F. Castro y M. Terrazas (coord. y edition), Disidencia y disidentes en la historia de México, pp. 295-320. México UNAM 1997. Las flores del mal. Mujeres criminales en el Porfiriato. Historia Mexicana, XLVII (1), 183-229; Flores, F. 1885. El himen en México. Study made of some observations presented in the chair of legal medicine at the School of Medicine in the year 1882. Mexico, Oficina Tipográfica de la Secretaría de Fomento; Carrillo, A. 2001-a. Los médicos y la degeneración de la raza indígenas. Ciencias (60):64-70 y; 2002. La profesión médica ante el alcoholismo en el México moderno. Cuicuilco. Revista de Ciencias Antropológicas, 9 (24): 313-332.

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future citizens. The opening of primary schools throughout the national territory was favored but remote towns were still excluded from such benefits.[5]

In the first decades of the 20th century, women lived and suffered the ambiguities of a new social regime still in the process to be born, and simultaneously of an old one that did not disappear yet; there was talk of freedom, equality, citizenship, but they continued under the tutelage of males. Such subordination was recognized as "related to their sex" and therefore "natural"; a "feminine identity" built from home and by the mothers themselves in childhood and lifelong, in a process of conformity and self-acceptance of this inequitable and unequal situation (Montes de Oca 2014, 151).

During the *Cardenismo* [period when Lázaro Cárdenas was president of Mexico], due in part to international conditions, work options for women increased. Although the State promised to reduce the inequality that they were experiencing, some textbooks in public schools persisted in reproducing the model of a woman in charge of the home and family: “Mamá no sale. Mamá está en la casa. Ella cose y lava. Ella sacude las cosas. Mamá cuida de todo en la casa. ¡Tan buena mamaíta!” [Mom doesn't go out. Mom is at home. She sews and washes. She dusts off. Mom takes care of everything in the house. Such a good mommy!] (SEP, as cited in Montes de Oca 2014, 159). They increased such inequality because the economy demanded their entry into the labour field, but at the same time, keeping their domestic duties. As the previous quote says, the good mother "sews, washes, dusts off" and the good mother “doesn't go out, she stays at home.” So, in order to be a good mother, she had to look for employment without leaving home!

Due to this succinct review, we can emphasize the subordinate position that Mexican women have historically held in relation to men. These men represent a woman before the social group; they could be a father, brothers, or a partner. If this was the case of an indigenous woman, the disadvantage is even greater. Inequalities due to

[5] The case of Professor Juana Ledesma shows that although, as a low-income woman, she had access to professional training, it was partly due to her physical features, as she herself stated. See Durán González, R. E. 2022. Educación y trabajo femenino bajo el modelo porfiriano, el caso de Juana Ledesma. Revista Universidad y Sociedad, 14(S1): 548-556.

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gender are a consequence of several cultural patterns expressed constantly in behaviours of primordial importance in people's lives. Even though these inequalities are not exclusive to indigenous groups, they place women at a greater social disadvantage. These unfavourable social circumstances of material and social deprivation that prevail in most populations, especially when being indigenous, make a woman to face a double disadvantage in her decision-making capacity: access to resources and capacity for action. (CDI; CONAPO; Inmujeres; SSA; 2006, 9)

Biography of Ángela Tolentino

She was born in Huayacocotla, Veracruz, Mexico in 1886 as stated in the marriage certificate of her youngest son; however, none of her descendants ever saw a record of a birth or christening certificate. She never went to school, and at a very young age, she married a man with whom she had her first son named Felix. In the revolutionary uprising, her family was dispossessed of their land, and her husband died. Without a man to "support her" and with scarce financial resources, she began her pilgrimage through the region in search of paid work to support her son. Following that, she had relations with another man, and then her daughter María Elena was born. Later, since she only had housework skills, she started to work in a *hacienda* as a domestic worker. It was probably either the *Hacienda* of Apulco, Huehuetla (which was an iron foundry), or the *hacienda* of San Pedro Vaquerías, on the north part of Atotonilco el Grande (which raised cattle), because both *haciendas* stood out in the region.

Since the colonial period, the *haciendas* in the area were mainly livestock and agricultural production centers. They met their own requirements; however, some had specialized in the *Porfiriato* to sell their products in the market. The *hacendados* [person in charge of the *hacienda*] had such control over their workers (both men and women), that they determined the condition of their marital unions (to whom and when); this control was also extended over their offspring, (Peniche, n.d.). Ángela already had two children, so it was impossible to arrange a marriage for her; finally, she had a forced relationship with her employer Hermelindo Durán. In these circumstances, she had her third son named Juan Ricardo. Hermelindo gave him his last name, even though he was married. Juan assures that it was because he had not had sons before. Ángela and her children lived in the boss's house as part of servants until Hermelindo died. Later, they fled because Hermelindo's widow and sisters wanted to take her son away from her. Felix, the eldest, decided to stay and

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work as a labourer. He was a violent young man who was constantly involved in fights, one of which he was killed in.

Head of family, provider, and migrant

Carrillo highlights that the peasant-indigenous family of the *Sierra Otom-Tepehua* is where social structure begins and develops. This is a source of socialization as well as information on political, economic, and religious issues. The social spaces where the family interacts as spaces for exchange are the kinship network - close relatives - the community, religious festivals, and *los tianguis* [street markets] (Carrillo 2014, 115). Nuclear families are generally formed by a father, a mother, and children. Families are large in indigenous communities because grandparents and uncles can also live in the home.

Unlike that model, Ángela formed her family without a man at the head, which for the community was equivalent to not having a family. This is how her descendants perceived that condition; they never felt they had a kinship network; María Elena, for example, does not know her father's name, and on her mother's side, she only remembers her uncle Rosendo Tolentino; they do not remember the names of their grandparents. Ángela did not belong to any community organization of a religious nature (such as stewardship or brotherhood), so she did not leave to her children any sense of belonging to a particular community. María Elena was born in Huayacocotla; Juan Ricardo did not know about the place of his birth: sometimes he said that he was born in Huayacocotla, and other times in Agua Blanca. She kept something from her indigenous origin, although “in secret”: the *Ñhañu* language. Her son Juan commented that while they were alone, she did speak to them in that language, but avoided doing that in front of strangers. Her descendants do not know where she learned Spanish or who taught her.

Notwithstanding that she was a homeless illiterate woman, had three small children, and lived unprotected by a man, she had to provide for her children in all aspects of their lives. They, as indigenous people, lived in precarious conditions. The country was in an ongoing process of economic and political reorganization, and from the State's point of view, the indigenous people were considered a problem for this modernization. After Félix's death, Ángela and her two children travelled through the mountains of the region; to survive, they adopted these migration patterns and moved from one place to another on a regular basis. Around 1949 they moved to

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Tlahuelompa, Municipality of Zacualtipán, Hidalgo. Then their children had grown up and emigrated to Mexico City; as soon as they settled down, they took her to live with them.

"Andariega, debido a sus raíces otomíes, caminaba de una ranchería a otra ofreciendo sus servicios de cocinera, lavandera o para realizar quehaceres del hogar; muchas veces sólo por la comida, aunque nunca recurrió a la caridad. Anteponiendo siempre su orgullo de raza y su trabajo, su mano de obra para poder llevarnos el sustento"

[Wayfarer, due to her Otomi roots, walked from one *rancheria* to another offering her services as a cook, as a laundress or to do household chores; many times, just for food, although she never resorted to charity. Always prioritizing her pride of race and her work; her workforce to be able to bring us sustenance] (E.J.R. 28 June 2010)

Ancestral knowledge to survive

The indigenous communities have maintained a strong relationship with the land. The nourishment they need to live comes from small-scale production and from a direct use of natural resources, or the processing of them as well. According to the above-mentioned, during the decade of 1930 Ángela Tolentino[6] and her children started to produce *comales*[7] so they can sell them to have an income and avoid dependence on the *patrón* [landlord]. De Gaulejac points out that the individual is continuously an actor in his own life; and that it is essential for him to understand how he has intervened in the events that shaped his existence, even when these actions are unconscious (De Gaulejac 2006, 35). Her children point out that she chose to make these products because "nomás había que ir por la tierra fina y mucha leña para hacerlos" [you just had to go and bring fine clay and a lot of firewood to make them] (EJT.). Indeed, manufacturing did not require specialized technology but

6 Primary information obtained from México bautismos 1560-1950, database, Family Search (https://www.familysearch.org/ark:/61903/1:1:NR97-ZQ3: 16 March 2022), María Ángela Tolentino, 1882.

7 The term *comal,* derives from the *náhuatl comalli* and is a basic device in Mexican kitchen. It has a round shape; originally made from clay (today we can find metallic *comales*) and that is place on the fire (firewood, coal or gas) to cook the corn *tortillas,* to toast seeds or roast chili. Larousse Cocina: https://laroussecocina.mx/palabra/comal/

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rather the ability to implement the skills transmitted from generation to generation. These skills were intended to be used for family subsistence and with the use of natural resources. Access to fine clay as a raw material required knowing the caves nestled in the mountains where water seeped into the interior and dripped.

As the infiltrated drops fell towards the fine clay, they generated an amalgam of mud ready to be kneaded. They just needed to remove the air and give it the shape of a *comal* using the hands as a tool. A way of attaining that is to spread the clay over a flat surface, which could be a dirt floor with overlapped leaves. With the help of their young children and enough firewood, they lit a fire to place the *comales* to cook. When she had two or three dozen *comales* ready, then she prepared a *huacal*[8] using thin rods that they previously collected and extracted from a tree called jonote located in the mountains. To make the *huacal* she proceeded to tie together the rods using a thread; then she arranged the *comales* placing branches between them, so that they would not break. On the day of *tianguis*, or community market, they got up early because they had to walk four to five hours before sunrise through a pathway. They lit the track with wood torches while they carried the *huacal* with a *mecapal* [tumpline] at the head[9] and "they had to get there before dawn." They came to sell to the town of Huayacocotla. "When they arrived at the market, they already found some women selling coffee and tamales, the first food they had eaten since the day before; a coffee costed five *reales* [usual currency in this region]. There, they installed their merchandise on the floor in an improvised way for sale" (E.JRT, 4 June 2010).

Without pinpointing a specific time, there were generalized economic crises, some of which were caused by poor harvests or rising prices. In the community where they lived, it was not possible to get corn, a basic grain of the Mexican diet; it was used mainly for making *tortillas* [a flatbread made of cornmeal]. Having her children begging for food, she made use of her knowledge and managed well the little corn she could acquire; "she made the *'nixtamal'*; to get most of the dough, she stirred it

[8] This is a kind of basket or cage, made from wooden rods that is used to pack in, protect and carry delicate merchandise. See https://ecortezza.com/que-son-los-huacales-en-madera-ventajas-para-transportar-y-almacenar-mercancias/

[9] This is a pre-Hispanic device used to carry *bultos* [loads] on the back. This is made from a strap of knit *ixtle* [natural thread] placed over the top of the head and attached at both ends to the load.

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with a previously boiled wild root called *pesma*; finally, it was added cooked *'biznaga'*[10] pulp to the corn dough."

The social world is built with meanings and symbols; that implies the search for this construction and its meanings. Ángela's descendants point out that this food scarcity motivated her to migrate to a ranch called *El Cimintei*. By then, her youngest son was 12 years old, and María Elena was a young woman mature enough to get married.

What they said about Ángela

Ángela's children indicated she "got married" and had her first child. They said this with a genuine attempt to offer us an image of a mother that corresponded to the current model in her context. With the intention of making an objective reconstruction, we looked for the corresponding civil or church certificate, but without success.[11] María Elena did not tell her father's name because she did not know it. Juan said he was the product of a forced relationship, which is very likely because a woman with children and no husband was stigmatized as an "easy" woman. Due to her needy situation, she could consider that she has no other option but to accept being the "querida" [boss's lover]. Ángela's case was to live with her children and without a partner; she was a woman who was not interested in having a consensual or legalized marriage. Her daughter María Elena never got married; she had three daughters, and used to say "this way they wouldn't quarrel one with another; each one had her own father." We perceived an attempt to justify her actions because of having suffered submission and discrimination in the previous years; her children fought for their recognition and revaluation knowing Ángela's adverse fate; she was

[10] *Pesma*, refers probably to a type of fern *Pteridium aquilinum*, que en varias culturas tiene usos alimenticios y medicinales. Ver Dennstaedtiaceae Pteridium aquilinu, en http://www.conabio.gob.mx/malezasdemexico/dennstaedtiaceae/pteridium-aquilinum/fichas/ficha.htm#8.%20Enlaces%20en%20internet; the *biznaga* is a type of globular shape cactus; the excessive use of this cactus, to produce a candy named *acitrón,* has cause to become endangered. See https://www.cocinafacil.com.mx/tips-de-cocina/que-es-la-biznaga-y-por-que-esta-en-peligro-de-extincion/

[11] Documentary research referring to the states of life of Ángela and her relatives was made in the states of Hidalgo and Veracruz, through *FamilySearch* webpage.

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an indigenous language speaker, illiterate and without their own resources since women were denied the possession of the land.

Ángela and her children migrated for reasons of subsistence; they searched for domestic work or the manufacture of artisanal products such as *comales.* Migration was firstly done on an itinerant basis between *rancherías* and towns and limited to the municipality borders.

The process of social construction that her children carried out to rebuild Ángela's way of life as a migrant, allows us to recreate and create a basic structure based on experience. This process lets us perceive the meaning through language and other symbolic constructions related to their knowledge and passed on by her ancestors. Therefore, we drew upon in-depth descriptions, reducing the analysis to limited areas of experience through immersion in the contexts in which it occurs (Chárriez 2012, 51); in this case, the scarcity of corn in the town. Juan did not remember where was located the aforementioned *rancho El Cimintei,* so the documentary research made to locate it and to be able to reconstruct that lapse of time was unsuccessful. In these remote communities, where the people belong to a community culture; have an indigenous identity; and speak indigenous languages; several people live without basic resources. They did not have formal education nor vital or identity records; their priority was daily subsistence. This real scenario places them in a vulnerable situation because they become invisible from the view of the institutions.

Ángela's story can only be built with the reports of her descendants and the coexistence of some already highlighted cultural elements. For example, using typical elements of the region to feed her family and to make their *comales*; social elements, such as illegitimate marital relationships; economic features, namely: their domestic work and subsistence based on resources extracted from nature; and emotional and affective issues, that includes what they reported about avoiding charity to palliate their poverty and being proud of her race and her work (even though, there has been underlined, that she spoke her language secretly and that one of her children was the product of sexual and labor abuse).

Although this individual history has nuances of singularity, it was socially determined; poverty and discrimination experienced by Ángela were conditioned by the social environment where she was born: the *Otomí-Tepehua* region. Nowadays, this is one of the regions in the state of Hidalgo that encounters high rates of poverty. For whatever reasons, the fact that she had no father, a brother, or a husband to support

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her, as well as the reality that she was a woman, indigenous, and poor, compelled that social relations were always unequal for her. Faced with such adversity, her descendants emphasize that she did not react passively. She chose the migrant life, something that they emulated. This became a reason for them to decide on a venture, and so be able to create their own business in which they could abstain from having a boss. After migrating to Mexico City, life changed for everyone. This change required them to renounce their original culture and their mother tongue, because in that big city, these two elements, were a sign of ignorance and shame. The assimilationist model argued that the indigenous population was a restraint for the country and that it is up to the new generations to make inequalities visible from Mexico's socioeconomic and political contexts.

Conclusion

Ángela Tolentino decided to undertake migration with her children to avoid discrimination and labour exploitation (mainly domestic work). This decision placed them in a position of greater vulnerability. Resources were out of reach; they have neither family (or kinship) networks nor education. Therefore, they faced a life of uncertainty. This decision created a gap between her and the community organization, which represented the protection of the kinship system and of the members of the community. Since the social structure of the community allows them to build a sense of belonging and favours the use of the language by recreating the customs and traditions of the group, this fact undoubtedly affected their children's ethnic identity.

As a result of the assimilationist policy and the Mexicanization of the Indians, the use of the language represented a symbol of shame and restraint. Therefore, Ángela and her children spoke their *Otomí* language in private spaces; they gradually renounced it to join the urban centres in search of better living conditions and with it the institutionalized ethnocide. On the other hand, the means of subsistence in a migration context from *ranchería* to *ranchería*, are equivalent to the expertise and use of their ancestral knowledge. They transform natural resources such as clay, tree branches, leaves, cacti, and other plants into supplies. Thereby, in a time of poverty and food shortages, they could produce handicrafts to obtain goods, food, and survive.

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Ángela's descendants, to recover and reconstruct the fragments of her life, shared with us facts and events that were integrated into this life story. The exhaustive search for documentary evidence in civil and church archives was not successful, so we concluded that Ángela, as many other people from remote regions, faced the indifference and neglect from the institutions. The only things left as a record are the actions implemented to survive by a poor indigenous woman and mother of two children in the adverse post-revolutionary context.

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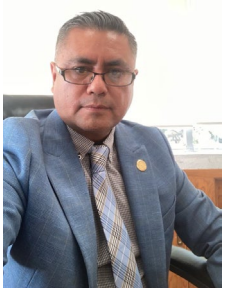

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Infanticide: A Survival Strategy among the Gweno People during the Early Colonial Period in Tanganyika

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ABSTRACT

Traditions and customs carry socio-cultural and economic values of the community where they are practised. Infanticide was a traditional practice among the Gweno people in Kilimanjaro, northern Tanzania. This practice had socio-cultural, political, and economic significance which persisted. As a global phenomenon, infanticide has attracted enormous scholarship from different disciplines covering mostly its practice, its associated beliefs, and its eradication campaigns. Despite the popularity of infanticide practices among the Gweno people, particularly during the early colonial period, little has been revealed and documented on how it was practised, associated beliefs and the socio-cultural, political, and economic significance it carried in this community. Benefitting from research findings collected in 2015 through historical and ethnological methods such as oral traditions, interviews, archival materials, and anthropological accounts, this paper uncovers the socio-cultural, political, and economic grounds of infanticide practices among the Gweno people. The paper is built on the argument that infanticide practices served as cultural, socio-political, and economic survival strategy of the Gweno people.

KEY WORDS: Customs, Gweno people, Infant, Infanticide, Traditions, Ugweno

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Infanticide: A Brief Review

There has been no homogeneous definition of infanticide practice among scholars. While other scholars refer to infanticide as an act of killing of an infant under the age of one year (Miller 1987, 96), the term is also used to describe an act of killing new-borns and children (Dallo-Green-Fellows 2005, 751). It is a deliberate and conscious act of killing of a child between the ages of birth and less than one year (Milner 2000, 15-16; Brewis 1992, 317). While scholars like Samuel Kimball consider infanticide as a fatal violence to an infant and children by the existing generation, Schwartz on the other hand insists on age criteria that infanticide is an act of killing of an infant immediately after being born to the age of one year (Kimball 2007, 15; Schwartz-Isser 2000, 1). Infanticide as used in this paper refers to deliberate and circumstantial killings of the new-born babies by the preceding generation. Oral testimonies, travellers' accounts, missionaries, colonial reports, and anthropological accounts show that infanticide was a common practice among the African societies. Societies such as Bemba (Zambia), Baganda (Uganda), Maasai (Tanzania and Kenya), the Yaudapa Enga of New Guinea, Nankani of Ghanai, Beng people of Cote d'Ivoire, Zaramo, Sukuma and Shambaa of Tanzania provide better examples. It has been found out that 80 percent of the societies globally had practised infanticide (Denham 2017, 21).

Anthropological accounts of Daly and Wilson reveal that out of sixty studied communities, thirty-nine practised infanticide (Daly-Wilson 1984, 489). Nonetheless, in these communities, the practice was not a problem, but rather a remedy to the challenges that were beyond traditional knowledge and technology. This is to say, infanticide was an accepted practice among the pre-colonial African societies. However, the practice does not debunk the fact that discontents existed within the aforesaid communities. Oral narratives, testimonies, and eyewitness accounts from the Gweno people uncover family, clan, and societal conflicts whenever this traditional practice was about to be carried out. Testimony from one elderly informant reveals the initiatives that were being taken among few individuals who rescued their infants from being killed. The woman attested that she hid her twins from being killed (Msami 2015). Likewise, missionary archive in Usangi documented a long list of baptised children who were brought to the mission in a bid to avoid the Gweno tradition. Intra-community, clan, and family conflicts developed whenever diseases, droughts, hunger, and social problems happened. These problems were considered as misfortunes which arose particularly after discovering that such tradition and customs were evaded. Social pain and humane concern might have been a reason

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for some individuals to get rid of such traditions. In fact, infanticide in Africa was carried out for heterogeneous reasons. For example, the Yoruba of Nigeria, Kedjon of Cameroon, Bunyoro of Uganda, and the Mende of Sierra Leone saw twins as having extra human power and a connection to the spiritual world. Thus, twins required special treatment to avoid societal calamities. The Kikuyu of Kenya saw twins as misfortune for the mother who gave birth to them. Hence, despite the mother's pity, it was decided that all the twins should be killed to save the respective society from disasters (Basden 1937, 183; Ball-Hill 1996, 856; Hobley 1922, 15).

The Zaramo were also known for killing unwanted children known as *Kibi*, a Zaramo name given to a child who during his or her birth, legs came first (breech birth) or a child who did not walk at the proper age or those who grew upper incisors before the lower ones. Unwanted infants also included twins. Most of these were killed immediately after the birth to save the tribe from calamities. Occasionally, the *kibi* were not killed. Instead, they were relocated to another ethnic group. It was traditionally believed that death would befall the tribe if the family did not kill the *kibi* or send them to another ethnic group (Mwaruka 1965, 62). However, the Zaramo and Luguru did not kill a baby girl with such noticed abnormalities. They were considered as benefits to the family because of the bride price paid to her parents when married (Swantz 1965, 35). Similarly, killings were also common among Sukuma, Kuria, Shambaa, and Bahaya societies (Cory 1955, files 17, 119). These communities considered such children as atrocious. They would therefore suffocate the child to death (Cory 1968, file 191). The event was perceived to bring misfortune, even the dead bodies of such babies were buried or thrown far beyond the boundaries of the community's settlement or tossed into a neighbouring pond or swamp. The parents of these children were deemed ritually unclean and had to undergo specific procedures for a ceremonial cleansing process.

Studies on infanticide associate the practice with the importance of a newborn at the adult age, potentials in production, accumulation, and consumption (Koponen 1988; Boserup 1989, 36-37; Drixler 2013, 1-22). The practices are also connected to lack of skills and technology, socio-political dynamics, poverty, food insecurity, limited health care options, and religious factors determined infanticide and a selection of which baby to be killed (Koponen 1988; Kasturi 2004, 117-140; Denham 2014, 157-164). Scholars such as Westhuizen, and Boserup show that in patriarchal societies such as Greece, Arabia and India, boys were more valued than girls in production and during wars. Thus, girls were more susceptible to infanticide than boys (Westhuizen 2009, 174; Boserup 1989, 36-37). Nevertheless, reasons for infanticide

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and the reactions of communities differ around the globe. The discrepancy stemmed from the fact that infanticide was heavily influenced by socio-political, economic, and cultural forces specific in each community, and were mirrored in pre-existing cultural beliefs (Denham 2014). Infanticide was further ascribed to population control, social immorality, and social burden (Heckmann 2002, 1; Spinelli 2003, XVI; Peek 2011, 4). Likewise, religious, and spiritual reasons figure out infanticide practices in different communities. Hans Cory demonstrates that spiritual beliefs based on traditional faith and philosophy made infanticide a cultural and respectable practice among the Sukuma, and Nyamwezi (Cory 1968, file 191).

Despite the detailed explanation and accounts offered by different scholars, little is available on how infanticide served as a socio-cultural, political, and economic strategy among the Gweno people of Kilimanjaro region in northern Tanzania. This paper therefore documents beliefs, uncovers the practice, and reveals the extent to which infanticide tradition was socio-cultural, political, and economic adaptation in this community. While achieving such objective, the paper also demonstrates the circumstances that contributed to the emergence of infanticide practices. Furthermore, it demonstrates how the socio-political and economic dynamics of the early 20th century resulted into the gradual decline of this practice. This study is limited to the Gweno people of Mwanga district in Kilimanjaro region. This study was motivated by the painful surviving memories and legacy left behind by infanticide practices among the Gweno people.

Infanticide Practices among the Gweno people

The Gweno speaking people refers to a small ethnic group found in Mwanga district in Kilimanjaro region in the northern part of Tanzania.[1] They have been identified as North Pare (Kimambo 1967, 25). They occupy the highland and lowland areas of the north Pare region. There has been a conflicting narrative regarding the origin of the Gweno people. The meta-narrative associates the Gweno people with the Pare. However, some narratives claim that the Gweno people originated from Taveta Kenya. Prior to the advent of the colonial period, the Gweno people were under the

[1] Tanzania is made up of two countries, Tanganyika and Zanzibar. Tanganyika gained its independence from British in 1961 and on April 26th, 1964, united with Zanzibar to form the United Republic of Tanzania.

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chiefdoms of Ugweno. The German colonial government named chiefdoms of Ugweno, Usangi, and Same in the north, and Mamba, Gonja, Hedaru, Suji, Chome, and Mbaga as Pare region (Kimambo 1967, 26). The Pare region was divided into two administrative districts: the north pare, administered by Moshi district, and the south Pare, administered by Usambara district (Kimmbo 1967, 25; 1991, 1). During the British administration period, the Ugweno area was put under the jurisdiction of the new Pare district from April 1, 1928, as an independent district (Kimambo 1967, 25). Recently, the Pare region has been divided into Same and Mwanga districts. Mwanga was founded in 1976, after splitting the Pare district into Same and Mwanga. Ugweno is one of the five divisions that make up Mwanga district. The Gweno people are concentrated in four wards within the Ugweno division, namely Shighatini, Msangeni, Kifula, and Mwaniko (Mwanga District Council Profile 2009).

Figure 1: *Huge stones commonly known as the stones of Children (Ighwe lya Vana/Mkumba Vana) where children were thrown during infanticide practice*.
Photo: author, 21.1.2015

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Due to the geographical location, the people of Ugweno, Usangi and South Pare are separated from each other. Similarly, the Gweno people isolate themselves from South Pare and Usangi. The Gweno people developed social structures and practices which were slightly different from the rest of other groups mentioned above. This explains why there have been no histories of infanticide among inhabitants of the Southern Pare, particularly the Usangi. The Gweno people are geographically close neighbours of the Chagga, the Taita of Kenya, and the Maasai who might have influenced the practices. Traditionally, the Gweno have been predominantly farmers who heavily rely on rain-fed agriculture for their survival. Crops such as coffee and bananas were also cultivated to supplement farming efforts.

Available records, oral narratives and colonial reports demonstrate that infanticide was a social norm among the Gweno people (Simeoni 1977, 8-12; Kimambo 1965-1966, 533; Tanganyika Territory Annual Report 1924, 17-18). The Gweno people held a variety of beliefs that influenced infanticide. Among the Gweno people, there have been two kinds of infanticide for centuries, the killing of a healthy, but unwanted children, and the killing of diseased, misshapen, weak, or sick children. In both types, newborns were killed based on long-held traditional beliefs and customs that had been passed down through generations. Just like other ethnic groups in Tanzania, the Gweno believed that keeping those newborn babies displeased the ancestral spirits. Displeasing the spirits was believed to cause curses, misfortunes, diseases and other social misery and calamities such as drought and famine to the community or a specific clan. It was therefore the duty of the socio-political structures to prevent the community from such difficulties by prohibiting disobedience to traditions and customs. The first category of killed infants were those born with abnormalities and those who were born out of wedlock. The later, just like the former, were believed to bring about curse to the community since they were a result of social immorality and they belonged to no clan. According to Gweno mythology, such newborns were thrown away. The abnormal new babies included those born with six fingers or toes, a malformed ear, or a sexual organ, two sexual organs, albinism, those who touched the soil during delivery, and those with scars appearing after birth. Oral narratives show that many infants killed in Ugweno fell into this group (Msuya 2015; Kimambo 1965-1966, 533; Habari za upare January 1952, 3).

The second category of infants who were killed include prematurely born babies, babies whose feet appeared first during delivery (*Mchwili*), and those whose upper teeth came earlier (*Kigego/ Vigego*) (Simeoni 1977, 8-12*;* Habari za upare February 1958, 2-3).; Koponen 1988, 327-328; Juma 2015; Msuya 2015; Msechu 2015;

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Kinanzaro 2015). This group also includes children born after the normal nine-month period. These were killed shortly after their birth. A child born before or after a typical period was considered to bring fear, bad lack and curse to the family and society. As a result, they were killed shortly after birth to protect the family and society from disasters. An older grandmother whose newborn was a victim explained the extent to which the practice was secretly and hurriedly conducted. She pointed out that the midwives were involved in the killing of her premature baby in the 1950s on similar grounds. Although at that point, the colonial government had already prohibited infanticide practices, the Gweno people secretly continued the practice (Kachenje 2014).

Another category includes the killing of infants who resembled people other than their biological parents and twins. The former were killed as part of the tradition to keep the community, clan, and the family pure from impurities and intrusion (Rev. Mwanga 2015; Rirayo 2015). On the other hand, twins were regarded as a social burden (Koponen 1988, 316; 327- 328). Killing of twins was also a common practice among the Gweno. However, in certain families, the killing was determined by the need of the family. For example, if a family needed a baby boy or girl and the newborn were hetero-gender, one of them was kept meeting the need of the family. Some other families killed both of them because they were afraid of calamities if they kept them (Kimambo 1965-1966, 533). Additionally, if the family did not want to kill both children, the first born was kept and the second born was killed (Rev Mwanga 2015; Rirayo 2015). As a result, after the twins were killed, a mother who had given birth to the twins was divorced by her husband to avoid giving birth to more twins. However, if her husband became deeply involved in love with his wife, traditional healers had to be found to solve the problem. Generally, the effects of killing twins among the Gweno made it difficult to find twins among the elder families who had survived to date.

Furthermore, Gweno traditions and customs forbade keeping a child born with a placenta and whose midwives spotted an opening space on the placenta during delivery. Such an infant was also killed shortly after birth. This abnormality during delivery was mostly associated with resentment, animosity, and envy on the part of the midwives, especially if they were from the same polygamous marriage (Kimambo 1965-1966, 533; Habari za upare January 1952, 3).

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Figure 2: *Another stone of children (Ighwe lya Vana/Mkumba Vana).* Photo: author, 10.1.2015

Moreover, as per the Gweno traditions and customs, if the midwives failed to carry a baby during delivery, it was a negative sign for the family and society. This midwife was given the task of killing such infant to save the family and society from disasters (Silayo 2015; Msuya 2015). Also, a newborn from a mother who had a bleeding nose during her pregnancy was susceptible to infanticide. It was generally believed that if the child survives would later incur epilepsy (Kachenje 2015; Msuya 2015; Kalerwa 2015). Epilepsy was regarded as a sign of curse in the family.

The killing of infants also targeted the newborns from the parents who did not attend the Gweno initiation ceremonial customs. This was the case when a man who did not attend initiation rite known as *'Ngasu ya Kighonu'* in Gweno language impregnated a woman. The newly born infant was named *'Mshundi'* in the Gweno language meaning “an egg without a cock.” This infant was also killed immediately after birth (Kimambo 1965-1966, 533). In the same vein, a woman who became

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pregnant prior to initiation was expelled from her home and named '*Kighiria'* in Gweno language which means "a woman who gave birth out of wedlock." When *'Kighiria'* was driven out of the house (*boma*), she was not allowed to pass through the common door used by the family. Instead, she had to pass through an opening space made at the back of the house. An elder member of the clan had to slaughter a sheep, and the offal contents were thrown at the opening space and sealed, implying that she would never see her relatives again (Kimambo 1965-1966, 533).

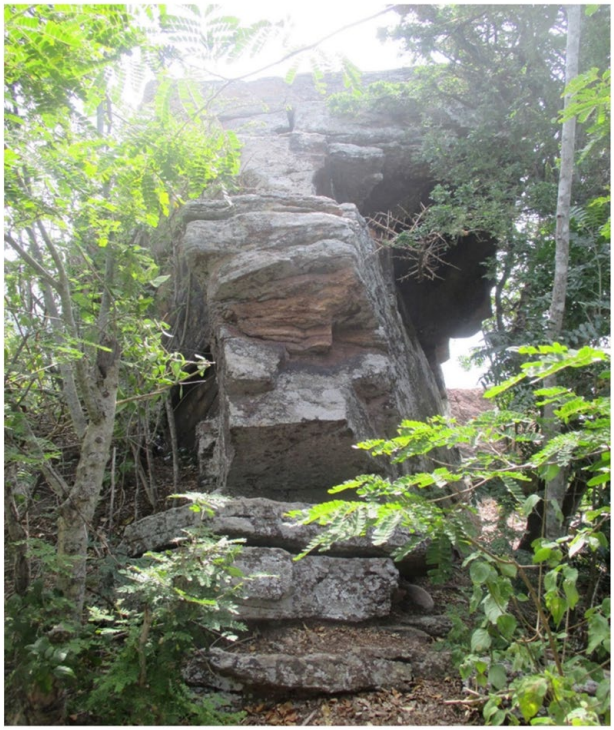

Figure 3: *A back face of the huge stone used as a way of climbing to the top of the stone where children with misfortunes were thrown*. Photo: author, 26.1.2015

Therefore, the socio-cultural beliefs among the Gweno people appeared to determine what child and how the killing was to be executed. It is evident that when the new-born was without any abnormality, free from socio-cultural barriers, condition, and circumstances, it was considered a blessing to the family. Such a baby survived. The newborn baby family had to prepare a big celebration. The

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celebration involved popular songs such as *'Mwana atoroka ikamba*,' which means a child has successfully crossed the rock (Habari za upare Februry 1952, 5). The belief systems were under the auspices of witchdoctors, spiritual leaders and elders who claimed that normal children were fit for survival and could not bring misfortunes and calamities to the Gweno society (Habari za upare Februry 1952, 5).

Executing Infanticide Tradition

As previously stated, Gweno traditions and customs required the killing of any deformed children, as well as any child that appeared to inflict misery in the family and society in general. All detected defective children were carried to the death location, known in Gweno language as *'Ighwe Iya Vana* or *Mkumba Vana*,' (a local word for stone of children) which were massive rocks where deformed children were dumped (Elihuruma 2015; Rirayo 2015; Elibariki 2015; Silayo 2015; Habari za upare February 1958, 3). The photos (see figure 1 and 2) illustrate some of the massive rocks found in Ugweno known as *Mkumba Vana* or *Ighwe Iya Vana* that portray scenes in which children were thrown.

At the top of these stones, (see figure 1, 2 and 3) there is a place that looks like a plate where a child was taken to and left there while asleep, and when it woke up, it rolled down and died.

According to oral traditions and customs of the time, a baby was taken to the death spot alongside the utensils used to feed it before being left there while soundly asleep. The utensils included the baby cot, cooking pot, spoon, and a bowl (see figure 4) (Elibariki 2015; Juma 2015; Mnzava 2015; Elihuruma 2015). Therefore, after ensuring that a child was well fed, parents also ensured that any risks that could lead to death were considered. Then they left the baby alone and did not look back after making all the necessary arrangements to ensure that such child would die. The parents would naturally be in excruciating discomfort because of this exercise. Traditions and customs, on the other hand, never allowed parents to mourn for a kid since they had thrown a child who was most cursed to save the family and society in general from calamity (Habari za upare February 1958, 3).

There was a narrative of a child named Nakijwa who was left on the *Mkumba Vana/ Ighwe Iya Vana* during the period when infanticide was beginning to decline. The matter was reported to the public after Nakijwa was thrown to the death spot, and

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good Samaritans went to pick her up before she woke up and rolled down, thus falling prey to animals.

Figure 4: *One of the traditional cooking pots used to prepare food for a child before being thrown away.* Photo: author, 26.1.2015

As a result, the good Samaritans, who were Christian families, adopted and raised Nakijwa. As time passed, her parents came to discover that their child was being reared by another family. Nakijwa was said to have a striking resemblance with her parents, which prompted her parents to seek for her. The parents decided to seek advice from a witch doctor regarding what they had witnessed. The witch doctor said:

“This child [Nakijwa] did not finish the required nursing period. She was terminated because of her mother's pregnancy problems, which resulted in a preterm birth. This disaster could have been the result of a purposeful error made by us [the Gweno]. We made a mistake by allowing Semsi [Nakijwa] to live with six fingers” (Habari za upare February 1958, 3).

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Due to this divination, Nakijwa's biological parents believed the witch doctor's claims that Nakijwa was their true daughter, and she was thrown into *Mkumba vana/Ighwe lya vana,* where a kid was adopted and reared by good Samaritans. In that regard, the church priests and good Samaritans resolved to tell Nakijwa and her biological parents the truth about her life. The priest said:

"The two were your biological parents. There is no question that they committed this heinous act because of the devil's infliction of absolute darkness on them. You must keep in mind, though, that you are not the only child who has been abandoned. A few children were also abandoned on the rock to die. Nashengena had thirteen children, but only two females survived the infanticide. One died of premature pregnancy difficulties, while ten were subjected to infanticide. Because of the difficulties, you were found to be responsible for the catastrophe and were sentenced to death. You were saved by God through Abraham [guardian], who was already a Christian convert. As your true father, respect Abraham. Love your father Sembua and mother Nashengena as well, because they, too, have abandoned their ancient ancestral gods. Forgive them; when they put you into the jungle, they were unaware of their wrongdoings. In the sense that they have repented, they are now different creatures. Formerly, you were being called Semsi, meaning, "born alone" (Habari za upare February 1958, 3).

Nakijwa's story illustrates how the colonial authorities and missionaries worked together to eliminate infanticide among the Gweno. The Gweno society had long been practising infanticide. However, infanticide began to decline immediately after the advent of missionaries and the establishment of colonial government that began to educate the Gweno, and the practice eventually came to an end in Ugweno in the 1930s.

Infanticide: A Socio-Cultural, Political and Economic Survival Strategy

Infanticide practices in many societies appeared to be rooted into the socio-cultural, economic, and political circumstances where the society evolved. To understand and make sense out of traditions, customs and beliefs that governed infanticide practices requires appropriate interpretation and contextual understanding of the tradition, belief, myth, verbal expression, local pre-existing knowledge of the people. This would enable us to avoid what Denham referred to as "misconceptions and mystification of infanticide". Thus, making sense out of infanticide practices among the Gweno people, studying the traditions, myth and beliefs by analysing and

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examining the local context and experience, is indisputable. To use Denham's words, making sense out of infanticide practices requires a proper examination of the societies' "social structure, history, myths, ancestors, the management of misfortune, and conceptions of deviance, illness, and well-being" (Denham 2014, 26). This would enable to establish proper dynamics of infanticide in relation to the socio-economic, political, and cultural factors. It is evident from the findings that infanticide among the Gweno people was potentially a socio-economic, political, and cultural survival strategy. By analysing and examining the traditional beliefs and customs, and making sense out of such beliefs, it is undeniable that the Gweno people strongly held this tradition due to the above-mentioned dynamics. The approach of making sense out of culture and traditional beliefs is not quite new. Scholars such as Smith, Lin, and Mendoza in their discussion about the influence of culture and belief in dealing with human health pointed out that:

"Humans in general have an inherent need to make sense out of and explain their experiences. This is especially true when they are experiencing suffering and illness. In the process of this quest for meaning, culturally shaped beliefs play a vital role in determining whether a particular explanation and associated treatment plan will make sense to the patient…." (Smith-Lin-Mendoza 1993, 38).

Although the context from which Smith, Lin, and Mendoza referred to was related to the treatment of mental disorder, it can be applied in different contexts. This approach is applicable only to health complications and treatment of diseases but also to every difficult phenomenon that the society or community cannot easily comprehend. This approach is in line with the concept of *space of multiple facets* which produces ideology in the society. The concept of *space* as developed by Lefebvre and as expanded by Karplus and Meir provides an understanding on how cultural values, customs, beliefs, tradition, and ideologies are created from lived experiences of such community (Lefebvre 1991, 83; Karpulus-Meir 2013, 25). According to Karplus and Meir:

"Space is simultaneously produced both as a concrete entity and as an abstract entity; it is both perceived and conceived, and it is also, and not least, emotionally, and poetically infused with symbolism and meaning derived from the lived experience of everyday life" (Karpulus-Meir 2013, 25).

Even though Karplus and Meir (2013) were correlating the concept of space and its influence on beliefs, values and customs, its applicability is also relevant to agricultural communities such as the Gweno people. In this perspective, the concept

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of multiple layers of space as put forward by Lefebvre (1974) includes the lived space where experiences of that society resulted into the development of beliefs, tradition and ideologies which bound the society and its space. It is from this ground that the Gweno infanticide practices and other related beliefs and traditions could not be without meaning and relevance because they were a result of the lived space where experience resulted into traditions, customs, and other related beliefs.

It can therefore be argued that the community's challenges and experiences necessitated what can be termed as societal accountability in adhering to traditions, customs, and belief systems. For instance, infanticide was directly linked to political tensions between the two Gweno clans, namely the Washana and Wasuya. These two clans had been at enmity for a long time. The first were iron forgers, whereas the second were farmers (peasants). Cattle confiscation, power mongering, and competitiveness were the main causes of the battle between the two (Maghimbi 1994, 24-25). Political tensions between the two clans which resulted into Washana being defeated by Wasuya (Maghimbi 1994, 24-25) left a living experience where infanticide emerged as a tradition. It was due to this Washana defeat that Wasuya controlled Ugweno and declared the killing of all baby boys from the Washana clan (Kimambo 1969, 50). The killings were meant to restrict and weaken the Washana politically that they would not have abled men to confront and fight wars (Maghimbi 1994, 24-25). Such killings might legitimize the expulsion of the Shana clan by impending new generation who would dominate the Ugweno. In this regard, infanticide practice was more of a political strategy that evolved out of political tensions between different clans in Ugweno.

In addition, the existence of political tensions and wars necessitated the presence of able-bodied men. For instance, a series of battles between the Ugweno and the Chagga over resources ownership and cattle confiscation demanded the presence of well-able-bodied persons in the society. These able-bodied persons in the society, as opposed to physically deformed or abnormal people, were expected to participate in wars for the survival and wellbeing of the Gweno society. For instance, the killing of illegitimate children, including those who were seen not to resemble their parents was done to avoid raising traitors who later would suffocate the Gweno community. Also, political tensions and wars increased the social difficulties such as shortage of food which made killing of twins, impaired, or infants with signs of illness a norm. This was partly because the families became unable to provide food for its members. This also informs why both male and female infants were killed (Stange-Oyster-

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Sloan 2011, 751). The motive behind such a decision was to lessen the burden of dependants.

Infanticide practices among the Gweno emerged and developed as a strategy against famine. Since famine had resulted into tremendous loss of able-bodied men, the society required the physically capable individuals who would be producers than consumers. The existence of phrases such as *'Njaa ya Mnyime*, barren hunger', *'Njaa ya Kigogo*, hunger of *kigogo*/banana roots,' *'Njaa ya Kilombero*, hunger from Kilombero,' and *'Njaa ya Mkebe'* (a local word meaning a tool for measurements) among the Gweno proves terrible experiences that the Gweno went through. According to the oral traditions, the Gweno people experienced the sorts of famine throughout the pre-colonial period. For example, barren famine was experienced throughout the pre-colonial period but came to an end in the early colonial period (Banduka 1994, 7; Msami 2015; Elihuruma 2015; Haikael 2015). As a result, the term “barren famine,” or *"Njaa ya Mnyime*," was coined to describe how people were compelled to eat anything they could get at the expense of their children. People ate banana roots because of prolonged famine during the kigogo/banana root famine which was unusual for the Gweno people. Therefore, the Gweno people were obliged to migrate to the plains in quest of irrigation schemes that would help them survive due to their extreme famine. The crisis pushed the Gweno people to develop a social, political, and economic ideology that allowed them to prevent the potential outbreak of famine. This justified the execution of all illegitimate children who were unable to participate in the production activities. As a result, all malformed children were subjected to infanticide, not only to reduce the number of dependants but also to prevent disasters such as wars, diseases, and starvation as they believed that the occurrence of dry seasons, for example, was due to the presence of deformed children in the household and the society at large (Msami 2015; Kinanzaro 2015). Even though Kilombero famine/*njaa ya Kilombero* was experienced at a time when infanticide had been abolished, the people felt that they were destined for wars, starvation, and other misfortunes because of their families' and society's treatment of the deformed infants. Since the government set out the rules against infanticide and other activities that influenced infanticide, the family and society abandoned it.

Furthermore, the infanticide tradition and the associated belief appeared to be constructed based on the lived space. The Gweno people drew the belief from difficulties and inability to deal with abnormality, mental illness, physical impairment, and any other biological and physical complications. Thus, to tackle many people with abnormality in the community infanticide was adopted as a community tradition.

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This was a social or community accountability for the survival and well-being of the community. For instance, low level technology and skills to handle premature babies, and those babies with deformations made the Gweno people to rely on tradition to decide the fate of such newborns. In the same perspective, Koponen pointed out that the challenges in birth spacing in the pre-colonial times made infanticide a social norm (Koponen 1986, 43; 1988, 323-324). This was because the cultural taboos created conditions that facilitated the presence of reasonable childbirth space. If social traditions were not followed, infanticide was an alternative way to overcome difficulties and health complications in keeping children with no significant interval in terms of age (Mvungi 2015; Rev Maeisa 2015). The Gweno people, for example, were operating to a four-year gap. If unwanted pregnancy happened and abortion was unmanageable, the unwanted newly born infant was subjected to infanticide (Koponen 1988, 327-328). According to oral traditions, it was a taboo for the husband to have sexual contact with his wife until the infant had been weaned, which took two to three years (TNA, NO 18881). Killing infants was the only technique justified under traditions, customs, and cultural norms. It can therefore be argued that the lack of scientific method to deal with complications of birth, diseases, and lack of knowledge justified the killings.

By examining the Gweno social structure in relation to its experiences of illness and misfortune on the one hand, and the interplay between the socio-cultural and psychological factors on the other, it is an undeniable fact that infanticide was the sole alternative to deal with incomprehensible circumstances by relying on socio-cultural sets of beliefs.

This explains why superstitious beliefs, as an important cultural element, played a significant role in influencing and shaping the infanticide practices. Tanganyika territory annual Reports of 1924 pointed out that infanticide among the Gweno was linked to traditional management of disasters, misfortunes, and wars (Tanganyika Territory Annual Reports 1924, 17-18; Mrema 2015; Msuya 2015; Kinanzaro 2015; Mvungi 2015). Moreover, a Gweno mythology signified psychosocial skills and community perception towards uncommon phenomenon such as irregularity during giving birth or child development. For instance, the myth that an elderly woman from Wafangavo clan of Ugweno, a traditional healer, turned Taita warriors into stones, intended to respond to the psychological motivation towards traumatic war experience that the Gweno went through. According to this myth, this traditional healer used her magical charms and succeeded in turning Taita warriors into stone. It is said that the medication worked so well that all of the soldiers turned into stones,

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putting an end to the battle between the Gweno and the Taita. The researcher visited the location, despite its remoteness. As the picture indicates (see figure 5), the site had fateful stones which appeared to relate to the narrative in appearance. They were several of them grouped in one area with no grains surrounding except one little tree that was thought to grow in an inhabited region. Despite difficulties in verifying the objectivity of this myth, the proper understanding of the political, social, and economic context that the Gweno people went through to derive their reliance in beliefs to handle incomprehensible circumstances such as drought, extended wars and diseases.

Figure 5: *Historical stones commonly known as Varavira's stones (Maghwe gha Varavira). These stones are thought to have been people from Taita who were turned into stones during the Gweno-Taita battle*. Photo: author, 10.1.2015

The further reflection that infanticide among the Gweno people was more rooted into the socio-cultural, economic, and political context was the arrival of missionaries and the advent of colonialism in the 20th century which led to the introduction of health

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services by the missionaries and colonial prohibition of the Gweno customs and traditions that encouraged infanticide practices (TNA, AB1/1733). Missionaries rescued some of the victims by abducting those infants. Most of them later became the earliest Christians in the Ugweno (KMRA Book 1, 1-11). Some of them also served as informants during fieldwork. Together with missionaries' religious teachings, solutions to unconceivable phenomenon, the changing of socioeconomic and political situation contributed significantly to the gradual abolition of infanticide. It is indicated that by the 1930s, the practice had significantly diminished. The 1931 census revealed that the population was 56.431 people. The number had quadrupled by the 1932 (Westhuizen 2009,174; 177-178). However, it should be noted that neither the missionaries nor the colonial authority had any indigenous Gweno who were willing to speak out against infanticide. As a result, the anti-infanticide campaigns were hampered by the Gweno's lack of collaboration with the missionaries and the colonial authority. Despite the difficulties, both the German and British governments continued anti-infanticide initiatives, as most personnel in the colonial governments and good Samaritans continued their struggle against infanticide. As a result, by the 1930s, missionaries and the colonial administration had succeeded in ending infanticide among the Gweno people.

Conclusion

This research uncovered Gweno infanticide practices. The paper demonstrates that infanticide was common in many communities, including the Gweno, from pre-colonial through the early colonial times. Prior to the arrival of capitalist ideas in African countries, social, political, economic, and cultural ideologies influenced the infanticide practices. The Tanzanian societies by the 19th century were the result of both structural continuity and change brought about by historically more recent circumstances. Structural variables such as environmental restrictions and culturally based social processes that had formed over the course of the society's history regulated the functioning of things critical to the society's continuity. Therefore, only internally developed structures could allow externally driven changes to take effect (Koponen 1988, 179).

Economically, the Gweno people mostly practised artisan/craft and peasant modes of production, both of which contributed in one way or another to the emergence of superstructure ideology that led to infanticide practices in the society. Due to this superstructure ideology, all defective children were expelled from the society, as the

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society only required capable people who could assist in production and fighting wars. Many pre-colonial African societies believed that retaining the deformed children in the family and society would lead to disasters such as famine, sickness, war, and other calamities beyond their control. As a result, the deformed children were killed by their parents in collaboration with those in positions of power, and the parents were not allowed to weep for their children despite their agonising feelings. This is because they believed that they were doing the right thing to protect their family and society from misfortunes (George-Abel-Miller 1992, 1156).

Infanticide practice among the Gweno people, on the other hand, has been a cultural and survival strategy because the society struggled to maintain safety and security of its people. As a result, superstructure ideology devised all techniques to ensure that the society stayed safe and that everyone was involved in both production and resistance against the neighbouring society. Similarly, poor technology contributed to infanticide among the Gweno people and all pre-capitalist communities because the societies lacked other technological methods of controlling pregnancies, hence infanticide was used as a population control strategy. Thus, infanticide was used to choose able-bodied members of society who would be valuable to their society rather than becoming dependants. Infanticide was eradicated in many pre-capitalists' African tribes, including the Ugweno, when missionaries and subsequent colonialists arrived in the early 1900s. Even though infanticide was officially abolished in the 1930s, it still exists in the minds of the people since it posed a threat to many families in Ugweno and other societies that practised it.

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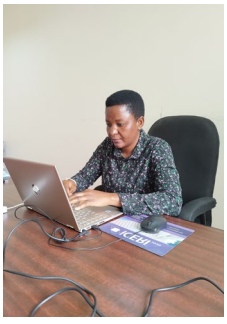

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Syrian Bedouin Lifestyle and Identity Concept in the Conditions of the Social and Cultural Changes of the 21st Century

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ABSTRACT

Since the beginning of the last century, there has been an increase in the number of Bedouins who prefer a settled way of life. As a result, their daily life is gradually changing, and clan and tribal ties are slowly being broken. Settled Bedouins born into a nomadic family strive to continue to apply the principles of Bedouin ethics and viable old traditions in the new environment, as they are deeply rooted in them from an early age. However, some traditions of their ancestors are gradually changing and being modified due to new socio-cultural and economic conditions. On the other hand, there are traditions that continue to survive, although Bedouins now must cope with rapid technological progress. Bedouin families tend to settle and adapt their lifestyles to the conditions of the 21st century. Bedouins are proud of their origins and even in the conditions of a settled way of life they try to keep their traditions. This study analyzes the way of life and the identity of Arab nomads in the process of social and cultural changes. It focuses on Bedouin communities living in the Syrian Desert. In the last decade, however, it has been the wars in the Middle East that have pushed the

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Bedouins out of their natural environment, restricting the application of their cultural traditions in everyday life. This study builds on previous findings of repeated field research stays in the Syrian Desert where the first author lived among Bedouin families with whom he currently maintains virtual contact as the war situation interrupted further planned research stays.

KEYWORDS: Arab nomads, Bedouin identity, Bedouin way of life, the Syrian Desert

Introduction

The Bedouins/Arab nomads are geographically linked to the Arabian Peninsula and have a history dating back to pre-Islamic Arabia. Most of them are professed Muslims, but there are also Christian Bedouin communities. They speak Arabic Bedouin dialects, which vary depending on the area in which they live. Natural and climatic conditions have forced most of its population to live a nomadic way of life. All nomads living in tents were not only shepherds, but according to historical sources, they were also involved in tillage, trade, services, or the army (Mundy-Musallam 2000, 1-5). The Bedouin cultural traditions have deep roots in the rich past of the ancient Arab tribes. Despite natural changes and social and economic upheavals, these traditions continue to survive, with Bedouins now having to cope with the new economic conditions and rapid technological progress. Although Western civilization has affected these parts of the world, their way of life in the past and today is very similar, especially in terms of the hierarchy of values, interpersonal relationships or customary law and ethical principles. There are some laws and traditions in nomadic tribes, the origin of which date back to the period before the rise of Islam. Since about the middle of the 20th century, the number of Bedouin families has been increasing, leaving the traditional way of life due to the penetration of civilization into the desert, as well as due to intense government attempts of enforcing sedentarization among the Bedouin tribes. In the last decade, however, it has been the wars in the Middle East that have pushed the Bedouins out of their natural environment and restricting the application of their cultural traditions in everyday life.

Natural conditions divided the ancient Arabs into Bedouins (Arabic *badu*), nomadic shepherds inhabiting the deserts, semi-deserts, or steppes; and a settled population (Arab. *hadar*), settling in cities, villages, and oases where the inhabitants began to engage in trade, crafts, or agriculture. The Arab society before Islam was characterized by a tribal organizational structure based on blood and kinship. Semi-nomadic and settled Bedouin tribes also preserved their tribal structure and tribal

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customs. The settled inhabitants were mostly of ancient tribal origin. The traditional division of the Arab society into the Bedouin civilization and the urban/settled civilization was presented by a medieval Arab Muslim philosopher and sociologist Ibn Khaldoun in the 14th century in his important work *Al-Muqaddima*, where he formulated methodological starting points for the study of man and the human civilization. In the second chapter of this extensive work, Ibn Khaldoun distinguishes between two main forms of organization of social groups creating the human civilization. The first form is the Bedouin way of life, in which Ibn Khaldoun includes nomads in the desert and rural people living far from the cities; the second form is a settled way of life associated with urban culture. The topicality of his work is also appreciated by contemporary authors dealing with the issue of nomadism and tribalism (Gombár 2005; Mitchell, Al-Hammadi 2020; Al-Haroun, Al-Ajmi 2018; Dayarante 2020).

The Bedouin society and its culture can be identified and understood through its specific cultural phenomena (Zakariya 2005; Musharqa 1988). This study does not address all aspects that characterize the cultural environment of Bedouin communities living in the Syrian Desert. It analyzes their current living conditions, tribalism, identity, customary law, and Bedouin ethics.

Methodology

Repeated field research[1] focused on the study of the specific culture of Syrian Bedouins living deep in the desert, who have not yet been exposed to vibrant tourism. For example, the Bedouins in Petra – a major Jordanian tourist destination – have gradually adapted their way of life to the needs of tourists, who have become the predominant source of livelihood. They are settled in the most visited Jordanian locality and daily show tourists the "authentic Bedouin culture" in a stylized form to meet their expectations and enrich them with unforgettable experiences of traditional

[1] Marwan Al-Absi carried out field research stays in 2006, 2008 and 2010 within Syria in the following provinces: Damascus; Damascus countryside (Douma district: Bedouin villages on the border of *Badiya*: Housh al-Farah, Housh Nasri, Al-Nishabiya, Al-Zamaniya, Al-Dawahira, Al-Shoufani; Al-Hamad Desert); Homs province (Palmyra district: Bedouin settlements deep in *Badiya*); Raqqa province (Bedouin villages in *Badiya*: Jubb Shuair, Tal Abiad, Ain Aisa); Daraa and Al-Swaida provinces (rocky desert area of lava origin Al-Lajat).

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culture. Here we talk about the so-called *neo-bedouinism* and its consequences (Weber 2011).

The first author had the opportunity to live with the Bedouins in their daily lives, while actively participating in the routine activities of Bedouin families from different tribes during the spring and autumn months.[2] If we aim to research the reality of the Bedouin life, and not a way of life stylized to attract tourists and meet their expectations, then an important condition for serious field research in this area is a sufficient distance of the researched tribes from vibrant tourist sites. Since 2011, war has been affecting the lives of Syrian Bedouins, and these have been the cause of the discontinuance of planned field research. The extent of how the Syrian crisis is affecting the Bedouin way of life in the Syrian Desert is now being learned from the stories of tribal sheikhs, which are being published in the Arab Internet media (e.g. Al-Araby; Al-Hal net.). We assume that in peaceful conditions it will be possible to continue to study the Bedouin issue.

A prerequisite for obtaining reliable information from the Bedouin environment is communication with them directly without a language barrier (without the use of a mediating foreign language) because Bedouins usually do not speak foreign languages. If we speak Arabic with them, we will gain their trust and they are more open to us. The language proficiency of the researcher significantly influences the course and results of the research because we usually obtain the most important information through interviews and narratives.

Living conditions of Bedouins

The Bedouin society was formed in the Arabian Peninsula. Natural and climatic conditions determined the way of life of its inhabitants. The free life of nomads was subjected to unwritten laws, which were necessary for survival and maintaining social balance in these harsh conditions. The civilization of nomads is thousands of years old and, despite natural changes and groundbreaking social and economic upheavals, it continues to survive. The question remains how the Bedouins will cope with rapid technological progress and the process of globalization, for which even an inhospitable natural environment is unlikely to be an insurmountable obstacle.

[2] These were the Bedouin tribes: Al-Sayyad, Al-Ramle, Al-Akidat, Al-Salout, Al-Maadid, Al-Mawali.

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Bedouin society is made up of nomads and semi-nomads. Their homeland is made of deserts, semi-deserts, and steppes. Specific natural conditions set the rules for their social, cultural, and economic life. Religion, first pagan and then Islamic, has significantly influenced traditional Bedouin culture.[3] Islam mastered their everyday reality and offered new patterns of behaviour. Nomads gradually adopted it thanks to the fact that this religion has preserved some cultural patterns and norms of pre-Islamic tribal society. On the other hand, there are some Islamic rules that Bedouins still do not respect, for example Islam has granted women inheritance rights, but to this day Bedouin women in most tribes do not have the right to inherit.

The life rhythm of the inhabitants of the desert and steppe depends on the alternation of seasons. After the winter rains, when the ground is green with low vegetation, the nomadic tribes set out on long marches. During the short spring, the Bedouins disperse in smaller groups to ensure sufficient grazing for their herds. During the hot summer, they move again through the arid desert or steppe to larger camps next to the underground springs, where they spend the harshest times of the year (hot summer and cold winter). They currently transport their herds on large motor vehicles. In the past, they used only camels for migration, without which life in the desert was not possible. These animals were highly valued, and still are valued, for their immense endurance and resistance to the harsh desert conditions. People were transported on horseback, but horses were bred only by the wealthier living in a more favourable natural environment, because horse breeding was dependent on the quality of water and food. In the past, the livelihoods of nomads also included robbery (Arab. *Ghazwa*) of other tribes, trade caravans and peasant settlements. The Bedouins lived in a harsh and inhospitable environment and the looted prey or ransom obtained for the so-called caravan protection was considered a necessary means of livelihood (Tauer 1984).

The way of the Bedouins' life has been mostly the same in the past and today, even though the expansion of Western civilization, in both positive and negative senses, has affected these parts of the world. Laws and traditions from the pre-Islamic period also apply in individual tribes. Today, some Bedouin families tend to settle down and adapt their lifestyles to the conditions of the 21st century. However, the Bedouin are

[3] There are also small communities of Christian Bedouins living in the Syrian Desert.

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proud of their origins, which are a distinctive feature of their personality. Even in the conditions of a settled way of life, he tries to keep Bedouin traditions.

The social organization of the Bedouin society (tribality and tribalism)

Specific living conditions affected the social organization of the Bedouins. Nomadic life in the desert and the constant threat of enemy invasions required larger groupings in the demarcated territory. The position of the Bedouin did not lie in his personal, individual strength, but in the strength of the collective, i.e., the whole tribe. Therefore, tribal organization became the most appropriate form of social organization. The tribe was usually formed by a group of people who derived their origin from a common ancestor. The tribe leader was responsible for the entire tribe. He resolved disputes, made peace or truce, represented his own tribe on the outside, and decided on the time and place of migration. The chief did not have unlimited power and consulted with members of the tribal council (the so-called council of elders) on serious issues in the life of the tribe, and only then made decisions. This procedure is still applied today.

The Bedouin society is governed by unwritten law, and it still respects most of its customary rights, the serious violations of which are punishable. The Bedouins have created their own judicial system that spans all aspects of their lives. Customary law has not been recorded in writing, but tribal judges have mastered it perfectly and applied it to all members of the tribe. Its original purpose was to protect the basic values of the tribal society – blood relatives, honour, and property. Judges dealt with issues of honour and violence, economic disputes – the breeding of camels or other animals, the occupation of pastures and water springs. Bedouin traditions and legal norms are passed down from generation to generation. To this day, the position of a judge is usually performed by the chiefs themselves, which increases their status even within their own tribe and beyond. A capable and respected judge increases the position of his own tribe.

The Bedouin judiciary is a system that allows to solve the problems of almost all activities of the tribe. Bedouins trust the judgments of their judges because they respect the traditions on which their own judicial system is based. Today's Bedouin society is already more open to the rural and urban population. The young generation of Bedouins is gradually expanding their knowledge of the majority society and its culture. Nevertheless, observance of unwritten laws and customary traditions among Bedouins continues to exist either in a modified form or in an identical way with the

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practice of past centuries. In the present, some civil law disputes can be entrusted by the Bedouins to a state court, but they deal with issues of dishonour and vengeance exclusively according to their customary law. It is worth noting that even when dealing with the issue of inheritance claims, Bedouins ignore civil and even Islamic law. These issues are governed in principle by their own customary law. Under this right, wives, daughters, mothers, or sisters never inherit, only male descendants or relatives in the paternal line are entitled to inheritance. These strict rules are based not only on harsh living conditions, the system of tribal hierarchy and the principles of Bedouin ethics, but mainly on the exclusive obligation of a man to provide for his family financially and materially.

Bedouin ethics are directly linked to the harsher and inhospitable natural and social conditions of life in the desert. They are based on the principle of protecting blood relatives, honour, and property. The Bedouins try to resolve inter-tribal disputes through negotiation and agreements. In the past, many tribes preferred to resort to violence and their actions were dominated by an unbridled passion for fighting, and therefore Bedouin communities were exposed to frequent raids and conflicts with neighbouring tribes. Militancy in this context was a recognized virtue. At present, there are no disputes over water resources or pastures, because the areas where nomads live temporarily always belong to a certain state. Militancy as a traditional virtue has lost its justification. The core of Bedouin ethics is formed by traditional ancient Arab virtues: hospitality, generosity, honour, courage, and pride, as well as respect for the elderly and the revered. To this day, these qualities form the traditional Arab notion of masculinity. Courage is one of the most important principles and represents a characteristic feature of a Bedouin nature. The Bedouin see their power in courage. Every member of the tribe desires to be able to show his courage and take the courageous act that decides the fate of the whole tribe. The Bedouin ideal is to keep a promise. The Bedouins consider the fulfilment of the word to be a kind of debt which must be repaid unconditionally. They ignore and disrespect anyone who does not keep what he promised. The performance of a good deed (Arab. *Hasana*), which Western societies call charity, has been part of traditional Bedouin ethics since pre-Islamic times. For Bedouins, the performance of a good deed is not limited to members of their society. It must not be differentiated whether it is a Bedouin or an urban or rural inhabitant.

Each Bedouin tribe inhabits a certain area for a transitional period, which it considers to be its temporary homeland. The Bedouins still live in tents, each representing one family line. A community consisting of several family lines is identified as a clan.

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Multiple clans form a tribe, the highest unit of Bedouin society. Tribes are sometimes hierarchized into major and minor tribes according to the number of members or the status of individual tribes in the Bedouin community. Tribe as a social unit and a verbal term are regarded as historicism in Western societies. In the Arab world, tribality and tribalism still persevere. Tribal solidarity and cohesion are the hallmarks of the tribal system. Cohesion and loyalty between family lines and clans comes first. It commits to a mutual assistance and support and guarantees security for everyone. Tribal cohesion has been a condition of survival in the past, as robberies have often taken place and the protection of the territory and herd had to be ensured. An individual could not have survived in such harsh conditions. At present, living conditions have changed and, although there are no plunders or fighting conflicts, tribal cohesion continues to be one of the main Bedouin principles.

In recent decades, wealthy nomadic Bedouins have been building stone houses in villages. Nevertheless, they often set up tents next to these houses, which they use mainly in the summer. The Bedouins consider the tent to be a symbol of nomadic origin, of which they are very proud. Bedouins who have settled permanently set up tents next to their homes only for a certain transitional period, for example when important holidays, weddings, deaths, as a large tent provides more space for usually many guests.

The Bedouin identity

It follows from the above that the main determinants of the Bedouin identity are the way of life (nomadism), the form of organization of Bedouin society (tribality and tribalism) and religion (mostly Islam, to a lesser extent Christianity). In constructing the identity of indigenous peoples (of any country), the nature of their indigenous society must be respected, regardless of where its members currently live. These are three dynamic and inseparable elements that ensure the Bedouin unity and solidarity. A Bedouin identifies himself primarily with his way of life and with the desert, which, for him, represents freedom. Most Bedouin narratives began with the words: *I am a true Bedouin; I have a flock of sheep...* The loss of mobility can weaken this layer of their identity, but the nostalgia for a free life in the desert is evident. The evidence for this is the tents set up in the gardens next to the houses of settled Bedouins. From an interview with Muhammad Al-Jasim (Khudr 2021), the mayor of the Bedouin village of Housh Nasri, I learned that he had kept a smaller number of sheep and goats and two camels that he keeps reminding him of his Bedouin origins,

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of which he is proud. Nomadic Bedouins emphasize nomadism and herd ownership as a major determinant of their identity. Settled Bedouins point to their inherited Bedouin origins, whether they still own sheep, goats, or camels or not. Thus, we can generally classify present Bedouins into two groups: the Bedouin and the population of Bedouin origin.

The Bedouin society is dominated by a collective consciousness and collective activities that take precedence over individual interests. A Bedouin is identified by the tribe from which he comes. Members of the tribe are united by a common awareness of their common origin, biological or fictional. However, what unites them the most is the phenomenon of tribalism. Ghazi bin Muhammad defines tribal identity as follows:

What traditionally makes a person belong to a tribe is not merely successive degrees of genetic relationship – which, after all, every family in the world has – but rather that a person and his/her tribe think the same way; believe in the same principles; assimilate the same values and ethos; act according to the same unique rules and laws; respect the same hereditary Shaykh (Tribal Lord); live together; migrate together; defend each other; fight together, and die together (Muhammad 1999, 13; comp. Lenovský et al. 2019, 62).

Tribalism is an integral part of the Bedouin identity and still resists the influence of social and cultural change. Bedouins are not attached to a house or a country but fixed on the local community – the people with whom they live and migrate. Strong dependence on the collective, respect for the authorities, a strong connection with traditions and the need to fulfil common responsibilities are phenomena that give members of the Bedouin community a sense of security and safety. These certainties have been and constantly are being undermined by exogenous influences, such as the discovery of oil, railway construction, agricultural development, phosphate mining, urbanization, and war conflicts. These profound changes are gradually destroying the traditional way of life of the nomads living in the Syrian Desert. They weaken the first determinant of the Bedouin identity – nomadism.

Belief in God is one of the factors that construct the identity of the Bedouins. The Bedouin begs God and is thankful to Him. He turns to Him for better or for worse. But in the end, in difficult times, he relies primarily on the help of his community. In the Arab world, Islam is a significant part of everyday life, but for the Bedouins, it is tribalism that plays the most important role in shaping the Bedouin identity. Within one tribe, Sunnis and Shiites can live side by side, but their dominant identifying

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factor will always be their tribal fellowship and loyalty. “The tribal bond was and still is the strongest link between the tribes. For example, members of the prominent Shammar tribe living in Syria are Sunnis, while those in Iraq are predominantly Shiites.” (Abda 2005, 26).

Bedouins are characterized by their ability to adapt to new natural, economic, and social conditions, yet their Bedouin identity remains very strong. Settled Bedouins have changed their way of life, but they still define themselves as Bedouins, even though they no longer live in a tent and migrate through the desert with their sheep. As a result of current exogenous influences (globalization of the economy, modern technologies and means of communication, better access to education and health care, etc.), young Bedouins are constructing their identity in a new, changed environment. The identity of nomadic Bedouins reflects their everyday reality. Young Bedouins perceive their identity as a cultural heritage - a legacy of their ancestors that needs to be protected.

Nomadism versus sedentarism (Bedouins and the influence of the modern era)

The young generation of Bedouins is not isolated from the world of settlers – domestic or foreign. A satellite TV dish and a diesel generator used to generate electricity became parts of the tent’s facilities. In this way, Bedouins can acquire knowledge about the majority society and its culture. Nevertheless, customary law and customary traditions continue to be practiced among Bedouins. Only some civil law disputes are entrusted to Bedouins by state courts, but they deal with honour issues exclusively according to their customary law.

Since the beginning of the last century, there has been an increase in the number of Bedouins who prefer a settled way of life. As a result, their daily lives are gradually changing, and gender and tribal ties are slowly being broken. Settled Bedouins born into a nomadic family strive to continue to apply the principles of Bedouin ethics and viable old traditions in the new environment, as they are deeply rooted in them from an early age. Those who have already been born into settled families have no direct relationship with traditional Bedouin culture, and therefore it can be assumed that the traditions of their ancestors will gradually modify because of new socio-cultural and economic conditions.

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Since about the middle of the 20th century, the number of settled Bedouins has been constantly increasing due to the penetration of civilization into the desert. Unusual droughts, which have occurred at irregular intervals since the 1960s, have contributed to this. The Syrian government has been intensely interested in the sedentarization of the Bedouin tribes since 1963 and subsequently launched a major land reform. Most of the land owned by the tribal leaders has been divided into small plots for poorer Bedouin families. In this way, the government wanted to motivate nomads to settle and engage in agriculture. The next two decades were very dramatic for Syrian Bedouins.[4] Many Bedouin families have left Syria or settled involuntarily.

Since the 1990s, trucks transporting Bedouins, their portable dwellings and animals have appeared more and more frequently in Bedouin settlements (Grant 2013; Chatty 2013). The shepherds and the herds did not travel for water, the tanks came to the sheep directly for grazing. In some areas of the desert, the state had wells dug to feed the animals. The Ministry of Agriculture regularly sent veterinarians to vaccinate cattle free of charge. During periods of drought, the government provided financial and in-kind assistance to Bedouins (animal fodder, etc.).

A new situation has arisen in the field of health care and education. For example, traditional healing practices began to disappear in connection with health care that was available to Bedouins in the nearest village or town. Mobile schools and boarding schools have been set up for the Bedouin children, which are attended by both boys and girls throughout the school year. The government also provided a third education opportunity by designating a teacher who lived and travelled with Bedouins and taught their children in the meantime. The introduction of compulsory schooling for Bedouins has created a need to change the usual division of labour in the family. Although children continue to help their parents with animal husbandry or other work, they have to set aside some time each day for school and learning.

The traditional Bedouin way of life in the Arab East has now been preserved mainly in an area called *Bilad Al-Sham.*[5] In the Gulf region, such a way of life is now rare.

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4 Syria´s Bedouin Tribes: Interview with Dawn Chatty (July 2, 2015).

5 *Bilad Al-Sham* is the Arabic historical name of the area known as Levanta (present-day Eastern Mediterranean), located in present-day Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, and the former Palestine, used until the end of Turkish rule in the 20th century.

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The modernization and raising of living standards associated with the discovery of oil deposits have caused economic and social changes, which have caused the gradual settlement of the nomadic population. As a result of urbanization and the creation of new job opportunities, the population of villages with which Bedouins traded is also declining. The desert is a source of oil, and it is in this industry that many Bedouins are employed. Their way of life has changed radically, and family members live in markedly different conditions compared to their ancestors. The road construction and refurbishment, development of agriculture and food industry, and especially, the war conflict have also led to a reduction in the number of nomads.

In recent years, fighting in Syria has been concentrated in the Syrian Desert. Bedouins lose the opportunity to migrate and thus lose their main source of livelihood. Many of them have moved to neighbouring countries, notably Jordan, where the conditions are suitable for a nomadic way of life (Hamdu 2019). In this way the Bedouins lose their property, their dwellings/tents and their livestock is exterminated, stolen, or lost. From interviews with Yaser Aloush (Sheikh of the Al-Saab clan) and Nader Jaweed (Sheikh of the Bousheikh clan), which were published in the Al-Araby newspaper (Khudr 2021), we learn that property losses were huge during the bombings. The Bedouins were forced to flee and live in camps. They sent their children to work in Turkey and other surrounding countries, or to Europe, i.e. that they now work in a different environment than the one they were used to. However, Sheikh Aloush adds that despite such a situation, they try to preserve their traditions, such as the respect for guests, help in an emergency, sharing joyful and sad events with relatives and neighbours. Sheikh Jaweed described the situation in a similar way. Bedouins, like other Syrians, seek refuge in resettlement camps. They lost all their property (tents, livestock). Suddenly they had to abandon their daily habits, receiving guests in a tent, the traditional preparation of Arabic hot coffee on the fireplace, etc. Several Bedouins today have become sheep traders in northern Syria. One of the rich Bedouins owned hundreds or even thousands of sheep, did not sell them, was proud of such a large flock. Today, however, the Bedouins own barely a hundred sheep.

Conclusion

The traditional Bedouin way of life is on the decline due to political, economic, and technical developments. Bedouins settle near or directly in villages. They live in houses (especially in winter), but in the yard they have tents set up with traditional

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Bedouin furnishings to drink Arabic coffee, receive guests or watch TV. They are engaged in agriculture, irrigating arable land, and raising cows. Some have, out of nostalgia, kept a few sheep, even camels, as a symbol of their Bedouin origin. One of the reasons for the transition to a settled way of life (especially in the city) is the vision of a better and more comfortable lifestyle. The young generation is moving to cities for education and better job opportunities. Bedouins who have settled in cities perform various professions, the more ambitious one's work in higher political and governmental positions. They are proud of their nomadic origins. Semi-settled Bedouins live in the countryside in houses and go to the desert with their herds to graze. In this context, one can agree with Dawn Chatty, who states:

However, regardless of their multiple occupations and residence patterns, they remain culturally Bedouin if they maintain close social ties with pastoral kin and retain the local linguistic and cultural markers that identify them as Bedouin. (Chatty 2010: 47).

Interviews conducted with Bedouins of various ages during previous field research stays have shown that for many of them the desert represents the notion of freedom and limitless freedom of movement. They cannot imagine a life other than that under a tent. Others consider life in the desert to be harsh and uncertain and they would not want to go back to it. They identify themselves as Bedouins and are not ashamed of their origins. Surprisingly, not all young Bedouins want to settle in one place. On the contrary, they remain in the desert, although they realize that life there is more difficult. But the sense of belonging is strong, amplified by infinite freedom.

Bedouins make up about 12 to 15% of the Syrian population.[6] This is a rough estimate made before the war. Despite the predominant trend of sedentarization, deserts and semi-deserts are inhabited by real nomadic tribes. They continue to maintain their traditional way of life, but with the help of modern technology, which makes their work easier (cars, tractors, generators) or makes their free time more pleasant (satellite television, radio, etc.). The rate in which they apply customary traditions is the highest among them in comparison to the settled and semi-settled Bedouins. Lifestyles and livelihoods are changing faster than maintaining old traditions. Here we mean the situation up until 2011, when the crisis began in Syria. So far, there is a state of war in the country, which also affects the daily life of the

[6] Syria´s Bedouin Tribes: Interview with Dawn Chatty (July 2, 2015).

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Bedouins. Their economic organization has changed, many Bedouins have settled involuntarily, and the tent has lost its original meaning as a symbol of freedom. Nevertheless, their culture is still firmly rooted in their daily lives, especially in terms of kinship, tribal ties, ceremonial customs, and their traditional customary law. It is not possible to estimate what the consequences of the war for the life and position of the Syrian Bedouin communities are and will be. Only subsequent field research carried out in peaceful conditions will show this.

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Taiwanese Identity - a Done Deal? Understanding the Contemporary Consolidation of Taiwanese Identity

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ABSTRACT

Taiwanese identity has been the subject of much scholarly inquiry in recent decades. The rapidly changing political, social and international environment around Taiwan has made the question of what it means to be Taiwanese both more complex (in terms of aspirations for the future of Taiwan) and simple (that being Taiwanese is different from being Chinese). The purpose of this study is to explore the intricacies of Taiwanese identity in the face of recent developments such as changes in education, shifting attitudes towards China as a result of ongoing tensions between Taiwan and the mainland. The study posits that the previously ambiguous Taiwanese identity, which might have been a subject of contention during the 1990s, has now become a distinct and unified construct. This can be attributed to the maturation of Taiwanese society following decades of martial law, leading to a clear consensus among the majority of Taiwanese citizens that they do not wish to be absorbed by the People's Republic of China. In order to understand the Taiwanese identity, it is essential to examine the collective aspirations and hopes of the Taiwanese population for the future of their nation. This can be seen through the active involvement of individuals in various civic movements and volunteer initiatives. The way in which the Taiwanese people envision their society, government, and place in the world is heavily influenced by their past and present experiences.

KEYWORDS: , digital activism, g0v, “gov zero”, “China Model”, identity formation, Taiwan-China relations, Taiwanese identity, “Taiwan Model”, Ukraine and Taiwan

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Introduction

Taiwan is an island located off the coast of southeastern China, with a rich history despite the fact that its recorded part is brief compared to other Asian countries. Chinese settlements started appearing on the island in the early 17th century. The Dutch traders established forts and built a colony on Taiwan in 1622, followed by a brief Spanish incursion and a pirate kingdom of Zheng Chenggong known to westerners as Koxinga. In 1895, Taiwan was ceded to Japan by the Qing dynasty as part of the Treaty of Shimonoseki, following the Sino-Japanese War. Before the arrival of the Japanese troops, the Taiwanese made a bid for independence by declaring the Republic of Formosa, but its forces were eventually overcome by the Japanese (Manthorpe 2005). Taiwan was handed over to the Chinese mainland rule when Japan lost in the Second World War.

Figure 1: *Republic of Formosa flag in the National Taiwan Museum.*
Source: *林高志 (Lin Gao-zhi), Wikimedia Commons*.

Since 1912, Republic of China was ruled by the Chinese Nationalist Party or Kuomintang (KMT). They were involved in a fierce civil war with Mao Zedong's communists. Instead of becoming one of the provinces of China, Taiwan became Republic of China's final outpost when Chiang Kai-shek, his defeated nationalists and their army arrived in 1949. The KMT rulers imposed the mainland culture and

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Mandarin language on the predominantly Hokkien-speaking majority. The mainland Chinese rulers were often seen as more brutal than the Japanese. Even before Chiang Kai-shek's arrival, tens of thousands of people were killed in the unrest following the "228 incident." The years of “White Terror” followed.

Figure 2: The 228 incident. “The Terrible Inspection”, a wood cut by Huang Rong-can (1916-1952). Source: *Wikimedia Commons.*

The educational system in Taiwan became skewed against people born on the island, as admissions to high schools and universities were based on provincial origin. Additionally, the KMT government imposed Chinese culture on the local population. Their goal was to retake China and that required instilling a sense of Chinese identity in the local population.

In 1987, the martial law (which lasted from 1949) was lifted and Taiwan developed into a world's industrial powerhouse producing over 60% of the world's computer chips, with just one company: Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC) holding over 50% of the world market share (Y. N. Lee 2021). Taiwan also developed into a unique, vibrant and open society, one in which there is a cultural consensus across the board supportive of a Western-style democratic system of governance and anti-authoritarianism (Huang, Liu, and Chang 2004, 160). Taiwan's

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late president Lee Teng-hui (of the KMT) (1988-2000) called all Taiwanese, regardless of their background, a "community of shared fate," while president Chen Shui-bian's (of the DPP) (2000-2008) a "community of shared destiny." Whether it is “of fate” or “of destiny,” the issue of China always casts a big shadow over it.

Taiwan was the first country in Asia to legalise same-sex marriage in 2019. Taiwan’s openness towards the LGBTQ+ people is in stark contrast to China where the government decided to censor the LGBTQ+ depictions, as well as removed the community and activists’ social media accounts (“LGBTQ in China Lament ‘Dark Day’ after Social Media Crackdown | LGBTQ News | Al Jazeera” n.d.).

The proximity of China is both a threat and a reminder of the direction Taiwan should not go, as the Taiwanese people construct their identity acknowledging Chinese history, language, and culture, but in opposition to China's authoritarian rule. According to Barth (1969), the formation of a distinct identity is accomplished by setting boundaries that distinguish between members and non-members of the group. Increasingly, the old divisions within Taiwan are giving way to a new boundary between the Taiwanese and mainland Chinese.

Due to the educational system under the KMT regime being geared towards promoting Chinese culture and history while marginalising native Taiwanese identity, a generation of Taiwanese, who are now in their 50s, had to actively construct their own sense of identity separate from the dominant narrative of Chinese culture and history. Frequently, experiences of visiting or working in China had a pivotal role in fostering the realisation of being different from Chinese. However, it appears that the younger generations in Taiwan possess a more clear and natural understanding of who they are, indicating a shift towards greater recognition and validation of the native Taiwanese identity. During my fieldwork, I found that there was a marked generational gap in thinking about the subject of Taiwanese identity and political sympathies. Respondents told me how they would nod in agreement to their elders on how to cast their vote (for KMT – more pro-China) and would do the opposite (DPP – more pro-independence) at the ballot box. I have only met only one person under 30 who unequivocally identified as Chinese. But he too was not interested in becoming the subject of the CCP, but rather saw Taiwan’s mission as one of, not so much “liberating” the mainland (which used to be KMT’s rallying cry), but helping to guide it out of its current totalitarian state. In his words, the Taiwanese people should not be so “selfish” as to hoard the culture they have saved from destruction, and abandon China, which clearly needs it, by seeking independence. As peculiar and

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outlying as such views are, it is worth pointing out that the big draw for this particular respondent was the ancient Chinese culture and not the current police state run by the CCP.

This generational shift in attitudes is certainly visible in the civic and civic-digital movements that are going to be discussed later in the article.

Taiwanese Identity - Trends

Since 1992 National Chengchi University's Election Study Center has been conducing regular polls on how the citizens of Taiwan self-identify, as well as the attitudes towards unification with China and party sympathies.

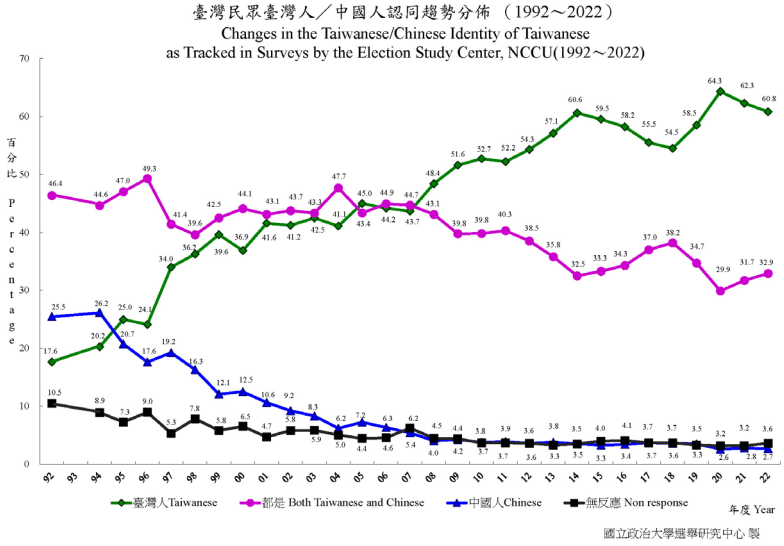

Figure 3: Source: *Election Study Center, National Chengchi University n.d.*

In my previous article (Sendyka 2020) I explain which historical events formed a background to the data points on the graph and how the respondents may differently understand the questions presented to them. The updated survey results show a slight uptick of the "both" Taiwanese and Chinese identity at the expense of the Taiwanese only identity (of about 3%) from 2020. Anthropology is a discipline that

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offers a way to gain an increased granularity of such aggregate figures and this is what this article will attempt. “I’m culturally Chinese, but politically Taiwanese” would be a response I would sometimes get that could go a long way towards explaining some of what is happening in the graph.

It is interesting to note that the same survey also shows that the party preferences shifted away from the KMT in the last two years, yet it is the party who just celebrated its local elections victory in 2022.

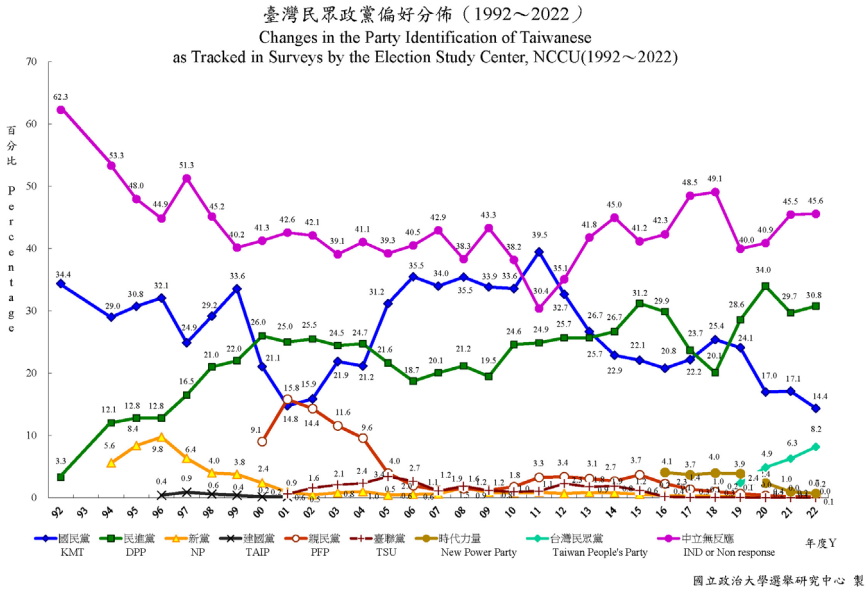

Figure 4: Source: *Election Study Center, National Chengchi University n.d.*

The KMT's victory is largely attributed to voter concerns over economic issues. This highlights the fact that there are different priorities among the Taiwanese electorate. The DPP's failure to convince voters to re-elect them, despite their strong stance against unification, shows that the China issue can be overshadowed by the daily hardships of living. Out of the two major parties, KMT is more likely to be a party that would seek unification with China. However, the electorate's current views on this

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issue are not in line with the party's stance, making it an interesting point of contention for the future.

Taiwanese Identity and Chinese Culture and Language

The decades-long martial law and authoritarian rule of the KMT had a significant impact on the cultural identity formation of the Taiwanese population. The KMT government, driven by its goal of retaking the mainland from the communists, made a concerted effort to assimilate the Taiwanese society to its Chinese origin and worldview. This was achieved through a variety of means, including coercion, education, restructuring of social status, and the creation of a new pro-Chinese identity for the Taiwan-born population (Chen 2008, 188).

Figure 5: *Zhuyin and Pinyin keyboards with a sentence: "In China, homosexuality is still a taboo topic" typed in Traditional and Simplified characters. The Taiwanese use the Zhuyin input method. Most Taiwanese can read Simplified, while the Chinese overwhelmingly cannot read Traditional.*

One notable aspect of the KMT's efforts was the imposition of Mandarin as the primary language of instruction in schools, while the use of Japanese and local dialects was disallowed in public. Chinese teachers, who had arrived with Chiang Kai-shek from the mainland, became the primary educators, while local teachers were relegated to supportive roles (Chen 2008, 201). The songs taught to children

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in schools during this time are telling of the government's agenda: "Fight our way back to the Mainland," "I am a Chinese," "China will be Strong," and "I love China" (Chen 2008, 201).

As the seat of the Republic of China government, Taiwan was, in theory, an ark for all the people of the mainland, which consisted of 35 provinces prior to the civil war. Admissions to high schools and universities were based on provincial origin, leading to a disproportionate representation of mainland Chinese in better schools and universities (Chen 2008, 203).

The Mandarin language in Taiwan is noteworthy for its differences from the Mandarin used in mainland China. Besides the obvious differences in accent, the usage of traditional Chinese characters instead of simplified characters, as well as the traditional phonetic alphabet Zhuyin (bopomofo) in contrast to the Roman alphabet-based Pinyin, serves as a visible marker of the ongoing influence of pre-revolutionary Chinese culture in Taiwan.

Figure 6: *National Palace Museum.*
Source: *photo by CEphoto, Uwe Aranas via Wikimedia Commons.*

Today, Mandarin remains the official and dominant language in Taiwan, and many younger generations of Taiwanese are more comfortable speaking it than their once-

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native Taiwanese (Hokkien), Hakka and other tongues. This can be seen as a lasting legacy of the KMT's efforts to impose Chinese culture on the local population.

Mao Zedong's Cultural Revolution had catastrophic effects not just in terms of loss of life, but also in the destruction of priceless historical artefacts during the campaign to eliminate "the Four Olds" (old customs, old culture, old habits and old ideas). In stark contrast, the books, scrolls, artefacts, and works of art brought to Taiwan by Chiang Kai-shek now rest in the National Palace Museum for all to see. Artefacts include items from the Palace Museum in the Forbidden City in Beijing which were taken by the KMT to Taiwan as they have retreated.

Chinese culture and PRC culture are not one and the same, and cultural heritage of Taiwan serves as a unique window into the richness of the pre-revolutionary Chinese culture. This is the cultural heritage that the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the People's Republic of China (PRC) now share. The presence of Chinese cultural influence in contemporary Taiwan does not lend legitimacy to PRC claims over the island and the presence of ancient Chinese cultural influence on the island does not negate Taiwan's distinct cultural identity.

Taiwan’s Past and Present and Identity

The way in which the Taiwanese envision their society, government, and place in the world is heavily influenced by their past experiences as well as present circumstances.

For example, the traumatic White Terror era, which saw thousands of political dissidents killed or imprisoned by the KMT regime, serves as a constant reminder of the dangers of authoritarian rule, and shapes the Taiwanese desire for a democratic government that respects human rights. For a list of other important events in Taiwanese history please refer to Sendyka (2022).

On the other hand, most recent events include the Hong Kong protests, the pandemic, politics and the military aggression and intimidation by the PRC which most recently, in 2022, culminated in a furious display of force after the US House of Representatives speaker Nancy Pelosi’s visit.

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Figure 7: *Hong Kong's "Umbrella Revolution".*
Source: *Wikimedia Commons.*

Figure 8: *Demonstrations in Taiwan in support of protesters in Hong Kong.*
Source: Wikimedia Commons.

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What happened in Hong Kong serves as a constant reminder to the Taiwanese of what would happen if China ever got control over the island. Many of my sources pointed to the events in Hong Kong as proof that the CCP cannot be trusted, and any agreement reached with them would not be worth the paper it would be printed on. China's plans to "reeducate" the Taiwanese to become "more patriotic" after the invasion, as laid out by China's ambassador to France Lu Shaye ("China Would Re-Educate Taiwan in Event of Reunification, Ambassador Says" n.d.), understandably do not make the prospect any more attractive.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine and Putin's assertion that Russians and Ukrainians are one people showed how totalitarian regimes can try to impose their will on reality. The Taiwanese public took notice of that, but also of what a smaller yet determined adversary defending its own territory is capable of. The civil defence movement dramatically gained in popularity. Taiwanese billionaire Robert Tsao vowed that he he "will not let Taiwan become Hong Kong" and pledged 100 million USD of his personal funds to help to eventually train a 3 million strong self-defence force, 10% of which would be snipers, and a million military drones whose usefulness has been shown recently in Ukraine ("Taiwanese Billionaire Robert Tsao to Support Anti-Beijing Resistance Fighters. See How - The Economic Times" n.d.) ("Inside the Battle for Taiwan and China's Looming War Threat | 60 Minutes Australia - YouTube" n.d.).

Taiwanese Identity Through Actions

The rapidly changing political, social and international environment around Taiwan has made the question of what it means to be Taiwanese both more complex (in terms of aspirations for the future of Taiwan) and simple (that being Taiwanese is different from being Chinese).

I propose that identity, particularly as it relates to Taiwanese population, can be understood through an examination of the way in which the Taiwanese people envision their society, government, and place in the world. A nuanced understanding of Taiwanese identity can be obtained through careful observation of the aspirations and hopes of the Taiwanese people, as reflected in their participation in civic movements and volunteer efforts. To this end, the article examines samples of activism that has emerged along the vectors of labour movements, the Nylon Cheng Liberty Foundation (which both bear strong links to Taiwanese history) and digital

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activism (with an exploration of ways in which technology is reshaping the expression of identity among the youth). The digital sphere is very important in Taiwanese democracy as, through a quirk of history, the country's democratisation coincided with the birth and growth of the Internet.

Taiwan Labour Front

Taiwan Labour Front (TLF) is a labour movement founded in 1983 with the goal of promoting the rights and well-being of the working class in Taiwan. The organisation is considered to be "centre-left" and advocates for the fair distribution of wealth and resources. The question of Taiwan's independence is closely tied to the TLF's mission, as they believe that the distribution of resources should take place exclusively within the borders of Taiwan. The TLF's philosophy is rooted in the belief that workers should be independent and that unions should also be independent. Therefore, they believe that an independent Taiwan is, for them, a logical goal. This is a key aspect of their political stance.

TLF has been involved in various movements and campaigns aimed at improving the lives of workers in Taiwan. One notable example is their involvement in the 2021 occupation injuries insurance campaign of the Tsai government, as well as their efforts to raise the minimum wage in Taiwan. According to them, both the ruling Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) and the opposition Kuomintang (KMT) believe in a fallacy that low pay and long working hours give Taiwan a competitive edge in the global market. TLF believes that the current economic model needs adjustment and is working with the concept of "economic democracy" through the promotion of cooperatives for which it would like to see a creation of a legal framework. It is currently promoting the issue of whistle-blower legislation.

In contrast to the TLF, there is another labour movement in Taiwan. The Labour Party supports unification with China but because this is a fringe view, it lacks popular support. The Labour Party is seen as prioritising China-centric identity over class movements, as manifested by their condemnation of the Sunflower Movement in 2014 in which the student protesters occupied the parliament in protest to a free trade agreement with China (explained in more detailed later).

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Nylon Cheng and the Nylong Cheng Foundation

The life and legacy of Nylon Cheng serves as a testament to the complexities of Taiwanese identity and the role it plays in shaping the lives and destinies of individuals. Nylon Cheng was a prominent pro-democracy activist and the founder and publisher of Freedom Era Weekly. Born to a mainlander father, Nylon's family was protected by their Taiwanese neighbours from retaliation following the 228 massacre. Throughout his journalistic career, Nylon constantly challenged the authority of the KMT government and became the first person to openly advocate for Taiwan independence.

One of Nylon Cheng's most notable acts of defiance, and as it turned out, one his his last, was the publication of Hsu Shih-kai's "Draft for a Taiwan Republic Constitution," which resulted in the KMT pursuing him on charges of sedition. Nylon Cheng vowed: "The KMT will only take my body, they will never take me alive." He stayed in his office for over 70 days before ultimately setting himself on fire when the police attempted to force their way in.

Figure 9: *Nylon Cheng with the covers of his magazines.*
Source: *Nylon Cheng Liberty Foundation*.

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Today, the Nylon Cheng Museum and Foundation seek to preserve and disseminate Nylon's writings and philosophy, with the goal of educating the younger generation about Taiwan's fight against dictatorship and its long way to a democracy it is today. The foundation views Nylon's legacy as a valuable perspective on the ongoing issues facing Taiwan, such as the CCP missile threat, its military aggression, corruption in the army and other institutions, and the need for long-term independence. Nylon's philosophy advocates against making any deals with the CCP.

Nylon's story is not only significant in and of itself, but also because it sheds light on the opposing forces within Taiwan. The man tasked with arresting Nylon in 1989 was one Hou You-yi, who went on to have a successful police and political career. Hou defended his past actions with the "I was only following orders" argument. The fact that he remains consistently popular is significant. The story of Nylon Cheng and Hou You-yi can be seen as a microcosm of the larger dynamics at play in Taiwan with the ongoing tensions and conflicting perspectives within Taiwanese society.

Figure 10: *Hou You-yi as Director-General of the National Police Agency and New Taipei City Mayor.* Source: *Police Department of the Ministry of Interior and New Taipei City Government via Wikimedia Commons.*

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Open Society (but with a Dark Past and an Uncertain Future)

The open nature of Taiwanese society is evidenced by the fact that today, even radical voices advocating for immediate submission to CCP rule are allowed to openly air their views and try to persuade voters. This is in stark contrast to the White Terror era, during which the heuristic that it is better to kill 1000 innocents than let one communist get away (attributed to Chiang Kai-shek but actually spoken by another KMT politician) was enthusiastically acted upon. Today, on the one hand, the Nylon Cheng Museum and Foundation work to preserve the memory of Taiwanese revolutionary and activist, on the other, the former head of the police operation that led to his death now serves as mayor of New Taipei City and harbours presidential ambitions ("Cop, Philosopher, and President? - The News Lens International Edition" n.d.). However, this level of openness is not without controversy. The Nylon Cheng Liberty Foundation points out the flaw in Hou You-yi's defence by citing the case of Oskar Groening, a former SS member who was convicted of being an accessory to the murder of 300,000 people (not personally killing anyone) and was sentenced to four years in prison for his role in the Auschwitz concentration camp genocide ("KMT's Hou You-Yi Criticized over Deng Nan-Jung Comments - Taipei Times" n.d.) It may be seen as a weakness but perhaps it is Taiwan's secret to long-term survival that such differing attitudes can coexist. By allowing all the divergent currents in society to have a voice, no one is forced underground, except those actively breaking the law, like the pro-Beijing Chung T'ien Television (CTi) which was taken off the air for repeatedly spreading misinformation.

The station had also been named by Wang Liqiang, a former CCP spy (who defected to Australia) as one of the stations paid by the PRC government to broadcast negative coverage of the DPP before the 2020 election ("Pro-China TV Station in Taiwan Ordered off Air over Disinformation | Taiwan | The Guardian" 2020). Although the Taiwan's National Communication Commission found no evidence of the money exchanging hands, it is not inconceivable that Beijing would resort to all sorts of steps to sway the voters towards the more Beijing-pliable KMT. However, the Taiwanese public is not just passively receiving the information from the media. There are activists who seek to actively filter out harmful and false media content.

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Cofacts (Collaborative Facts) - a Civic Cleanup of the Web

The issue of disinformation is not just Taiwan's problem, but is of concern globally. However, government intervention can often lead to mistrust of their motives by the public. This was exemplified by the withdrawal of the planned media law in Taiwan in 2022, as the Taiwanese society, having vivid memory of the past dictatorship, reacted strongly to possible freedom of speech implications.

Some see engaging ordinary citizens in the effort to combat disinformation as crucial. One such successful initiative is Cofacts, a project aimed at purifying the information space. Cofacts operates as a chatbot on Line (an ubiquitous messaging app with over 90% market saturation in Taiwan).

Combating disinformation, given the end-to-end encryption of the Line platform, is more challenging than on open platforms such as Facebook or Twitter. It is difficult for users to verify the credibility of messages and links they receive in private chats.

The Cofacts system works by allowing anyone to add the chatbot as a friend and send questionable messages to it. Cofacts then checks its database to see if the message has already been verified, and within a few seconds, it sends back a credibility evaluation. The user can then share it in the original chat room, preventing the spread of fake news. The bot can also be added directly to a chat room to provide automatic credibility ratings for previously unmasked disinformation. In addition to determining the accuracy of information, Cofacts also enables fact-checking volunteers to distinguish between facts and opinions thus further educating the public on how to critically evaluate the information received. Other possible perspectives on the same issue are also shared as a response.

Personal motivations behind the creation of Cofacts are noteworthy. One of the original creators shared with me their journey and what led them to join the g0v collective and propose this project. In 2016 there was a significant amount of misinformation regarding the gay marriage proposal, which became particularly relevant in the lead-up to local elections. The proliferation of such disinformation was of particular concern to them. Christians were protesting and there were other culturally-based arguments used against it. Claims were made that gay foreigners would marry Taiwanese to access the country's excellent healthcare (and bring their horrible diseases with them). The misinformation around this issue was particularly divisive and in my interlocutors' opinion contributed to a rise in teenage suicides at the time. With the spotlight shining a negative light on these issues, many Line and

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Facebook groups became echo chambers, further perpetuating false information. As an unmarried woman, President Tsai Ingwen, was criticised for pushing the issue she could not understand.

Figure 11: *"Do you think you've received a rumour?" Cofacts project seeks to help to clean up Taiwan's information space.*
Source: *Cofacts project website (https://cofacts.g0v.tw/).*

Over 2,000 volunteers have participated in the Cofacts project since its inception over 6 years ago, and the database now contains over 87,000 suspicious articles. The name "Cofacts" is derived from the collaborative nature of the project, as it emphasises the importance of working together to tackle disinformation.

Cofacts' database is utilised by journalists and research institutions for analysis and insights into the disinformation landscape in Taiwan. Cofacts is one of the projects that have originated from the g0v community. What g0v is and how it came about are both noteworthy from the identity perspective and will be discussed later in the article.

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War in Ukraine: Report on Disinformation

One of the organisations utilising Cofacts data is the IORG team (originally stands for Information Operations Research Group though the full name is rarely used anymore), a civic think-tank that regularly publishes reports on the state of disinformation campaigns in Taiwan, which are often correlated with events on the Taiwan-China front and on the global stage. China, of course, has a particular role in the influx of false information as a source or propagator.

During the Russian invasion of Ukraine and immediately after, the Taiwanese internet was flooded with threads related to the event. Based on the Cofacts database, the IORG report details the types of narratives and who promoted them.

For example, posts comparing the Russia-Ukraine relations to those of husband and wife were amplified by the Chinese government media. Similarly, the clearly false information that the United Nations had voted on a resolution to fight fascism, with only Ukraine and the United States opposed, was promoted by Russian government media and spread by their Chinese counterparts. To these disinformation narratives local flavours were added. To the story that Americans trained the neo-fascist Azov battalion the add-on was that was also the Americans who pushed the protesters in Hong Kong to violence.

Other "news" had the subtext of frightening Taiwanese from considering independence or resisting the CCP because "no one came to help Ukraine, and no one will come to help Taiwan." This message was repeatedly spread by Chinese state media. As was the victim-blaming that the war was Ukraine's fault for allowing itself to be used as a pawn by the United States. The conclusion was that Taiwan cannot afford to be an American pawn. Finally, there was the morale-destroying slogan "Ukraine today, Taiwan tomorrow."

As IORG notes, anyone can become the target of manipulation, especially under the influence of surprising events and accompanying emotions that favour the suspension of common sense. Based on its own research, IORG observed that during important events in US-Taiwan relations, sceptical narratives of the US appear. "These narratives, often amplified by the Communist Party of China, can divide our society and negatively impact Taiwan's relations with our important allies. Let us be vigilant," the report concludes.

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G0V: a Citizen-Led Movement for Digital Governance in Taiwan

The g0v (pronounced "gov zero") community where the Cofacts project originated is a central player in the civic digital movement. It was established in 2012 as a result of the Yahoo Open Hack Day. The hackathon was intended for solving business-related problems but one of the teams abandoned their commercial project and instead created a website that visually presented information about government spending. This was in response to a strange advertising campaign and somewhat insulting statements by President Ma which claimed that the state's economic policy was too complicated for the average citizen to understand and that therefore they should just trust the ruling party.

The aim of the project was to make the state budget accessible and easy to comprehend, as the document was a 500 page pdf written in a difficult language and thus not easily accessible to the public. After the hackathon, which earned them an honourable mention and some prize money (M.-C. Lee 2020, 58), the activist programmers purchased the ".g0v.tw" domain and transformed themselves into auditors and critics as well as a source of new ideas on how to run the government. On the "g0v.tw" (instead of "gov.tw") this hacker collective delivers an interactive and open-source vision of the public services (“Audrey Tang: Digital Social Innovation to Empower Democracy | TED Talk” n.d.)(The National Budget Visualisation project continues until today and can be accessed at budget.g0v.tw).

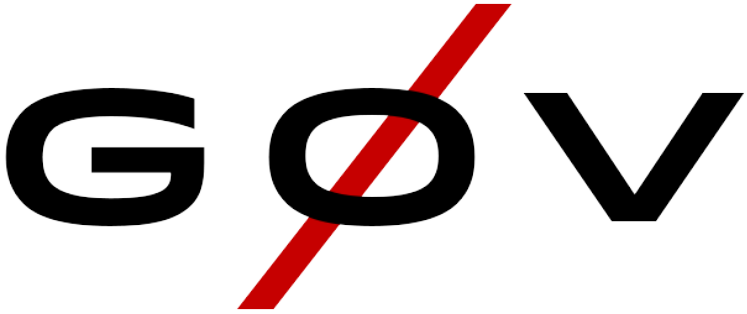

Figure 12: The logo of g0v. Source: g0v.tw.

The g0v community rose to prominence after the 2014 "Sunflower Movement", in which young people took to the streets (and even occupied the parliament for a

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while) to protest the signing of a free trade agreement with China. During this time, g0v provided protesters with internet access to live stream their arguments to the public. (It is a testament to the nature of Taiwanese democracy that the protests were peaceful and so was the police response and no lives were lost during that turbulent time.)

The g0v community was formed as a result of the complex recent history of Taiwan and the need for citizens to participate in the political and social life of the country. Despite the country's assumptions of freedom and democracy, citizens felt they were not really able to effectively participate in the existing system.

G0v has been described as an attempt to "hack governance" by creating alternative forms of social solidarity and cooperation (M.-C. Lee 2020, 18). It remains a dispersed collective that organises hackathons every two months and focuses on specific projects as a central form of political action. Anyone who has a particular interest in a project, or proposing one, can join.

"China Model" vs "Taiwan Model" during the pandemic and Taiwan's digital affairs minister Audrey Tang

The g0v movement in Taiwan has produced several notable figures, but none more prominent than Audrey Tang. In 2016, at the age of 35, she was appointed as the minister without portfolio for digital affairs in the government of President Tsai Ingwen, making her the youngest government official in Taiwan's history. In 2022, she was named the head of the newly established Ministry of Digital Affairs.

Tang, a trans woman, hacker, open-source activist, and start-up entrepreneur, brings a unique perspective to her role in the government. In the Western world, there is a lot of scepticism towards the Internet and new technologies due to the post-truth campaigns (like Brexit and the Trump election) and emerging knowledge on totalitarian regimes using them to their own nefarious ends. But in Taiwan, they actively try to leverage the power of the Internet for good.

The COVID-19 pandemic served as a prime example of the potential benefits of this approach. While China touted the success of its COVID-19 strategy (the "China Model"), using it as proof of the superiority of the Chinese-Marxist political system over liberal democracies, Taiwan showed that virus prevention and control can be achieved while respecting individual rights and protecting privacy. This has been

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referred to as the "Taiwan Model," with Audrey Tang as one of its prominent advocates.

Thanks to the effective use of technology and prompt action, Taiwan managed to prevent local transmission of the virus during the first two years of the pandemic, until the vaccines became widely available. This was largely due to the collaboration between civil society and government bureaucracy. Most notably, a digital contact tracing system initiated by private individuals (which balanced public welfare and privacy protection issues) was adopted and implemented on a large scale by the government for the entire island.

The "Taiwan Model" demonstrates the potential for a harmonious combination of the energy and talents of civil society with the administrative powers of the government bureaucracy. The successful pandemic experience is a source of pride of the Taiwanese and the “Taiwan Model” further underscored that the Taiwanese are different from Chinese and that this difference is based on the diametrically opposed value system. As such "Taiwan Model" is deeply rooted in Taiwanese identity and reflects its core values of democracy, freedom, and human rights. In contrast to the “China model”, “Taiwan model” has demonstrated how these values can be upheld in practice, even during the most challenging of circumstances, like the pandemic.

Conclusions

Taiwanese identity is inextricably linked to the values that the Taiwanese people hold dear. Democracy, human rights, freedom of speech, and civic rights are at the core of what it means to be Taiwanese today.

The history of Taiwan's journey to being a vibrant, Western-style liberal democracy is key in understanding Taiwanese identity. Historical events of the White Terror era, when Taiwan was under military dictatorship, are particularly significant. During this time, freedom of thought was stifled and many people were imprisoned, killed, or disappeared, simply for being suspected of opposing the KMT regime. In a sense, Taiwan was a giant prison. The aforementioned motto that it's better to kill 1000 innocents than let 1 communist get away speaks to the horrors of that time.

The situation has changed dramatically since then. Generations of Taiwanese have grown up free, both physically and intellectually. They live in a society where they can express their ideas and live their lives as they see fit, a freedom that their

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grandparents could never have imagined. During my fieldwork, I found that there was a marked generational gap in thinking about Taiwanese identity and political sympathies. This shift in thinking and the rise of Taiwanese identity will undoubtedly strengthen resistance to Chinese infiltration and aggression.

What makes Taiwanese identity strong, is not that it is "anti-China" but that being Taiwanese goes hand-in-hand with core values of democracy. To insist on Chinese identity for the Taiwanese is to ignore not only history but also the values and wishes of the people. The invasion of Ukraine reminded the Taiwanese the constant threat that they face, but also showed them what a smaller, determined adversary defending its own territory is capable of.

The importance of the values that make up Taiwanese identity cannot be overstated. The fact that the regime across the Taiwan Strait poses a threat to these values only underscores the importance of safeguarding them and the Taiwanese way of life.

For decades of martial law, Chinese nationalism was the official doctrine, which sought to impose a sense of Chinese identity on the island. Today, the Chinese propaganda machine continues to try to undermine and subvert Taiwanese democracy by disseminating a message that Taiwan is merely a province of China, and that resistance is futile.

However, paradoxically, these attempts to undermine Taiwanese identity only serve to reinforce it. The answer to the question posed in the title of this article, in anthropological terms, is “yes”. Taiwanese identity is a done deal. The younger generations do not face the same struggles to find their identity as the older generations who experienced the White Terror era of Chinese nationalism. And, as the older generations start to shrink in numbers and influence, these attitudes will only become more prevalent.

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BOOK REVIEW

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Religions in Contemporary Africa

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Religion is an indispensable factor which explains the development of the sub-Saharan African continent as well as linking Africa with other continents. Religious transformation in Africa went hand in hand with human history, social, political, and economic experiences. Over time, African Indigenous Religions (AIR) spread to the other parts of the world through human migrations such as slave trade. The external oriented religions such as Christianity, Islam and religions originating in Asia diffused to Africa from the 1st century. (pp.5, 35, 51) These religious traditions are co-existing and affecting each other while being shaped by African environment. (p.12) Recent studies on religion address, among other aspects, new religious practices in Africa and diaspora (Aderibigbe-Medine 2015), religion and reconciliations in Africa (Chapman-Spong 2003), relationship between religion and sexuality (Van Klinken, 2019; Chitando-Van Klinken 2016) and religion and politics in Africa. (Abink 2014) However, there has always been a need of updating sources to capture new trends, methodology and perspectives conducted in African context.

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BOOK REVIEW

Religions in Contemporary Africa: An Introduction by Laura S. Grillo, Adriaan Van Klinken and Hassan J. Ndzovu responds to the demand for an inclusive and comparative monograph of major African religions to cater for the needs of the undergraduate learners in African religions courses. The book addresses the significance and the interaction of traditional African religion, Christianity and Islam in African context and its impacts on spheres of African life. The authors' theoretical backgrounds in interdisciplinary fields of African religions and research experience in different parts of Africa culminated to the coverage of major religious traditions, themes, and the position of religion in several communities in each region of sub-Saharan Africa. This, in turn, makes the book valid for anthropology, history, sociology and theology students. The book uses simple and direct language suitable for undergraduate students. Themes are well elaborated through case studies, figures, and tables. Also, a rich table of contents and index as well as cross referencing for linking or elaboration of concepts added the value of the textbook. The book is organized into fifteen chapters divided into two parts. Interestingly, the book lacks a concluding chapter for what the authors acknowledge that it is introductory, and religion is too dynamic hence leaving it open-ended allows for further development (p. 12).

The first six chapters deal with religious trends in Africa. Whereas the three first chapter's hint on the onset and history of traditional African religion, Christianity, and Islam respectively, chapters four to six cover the contemporary movements, namely Neo Tradition Religion Movement (NTRM), Pentecostalism and Salafism. The authors provide an alternative understanding of the African religions in sub-Saharan Africa as historical, diverse, practical, and dynamic. This is opposed to western missionary constructions which treated African religion as rudimentary and backward. Thus, understanding and presentation of religion in this book is done in the "ways practised and manifested in African context" (p. 2). African indigenous religion, for example, is understood in this book as a meaningful belief system which is ethnically oriented, but more world centred (pp. 22, 25, and 31). Also, the authors revelled that Islam has a long history from 7th century and has many adherents in East, North and West Africa. There have been local syncretism of African tradition and Islam including the Sufi tradition and the global Islamic development such as reforms to Salafism. Christianity, on the other hand, is Africanized by its long history from 1st century in North Africa to the contemporary Pentecostalism. The three religious traditions dealt with in this book have co-existed and shaped each other. The book shows, for example, that the emergence of NTRM which began during the

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colonial period created a balance between the previous African beliefs and the new religions. Some of these movements such as Dozo of Ivory Coast and Kimbanguism of Congo overlapped with Islamic and Christianity teaching in a selective way to suit the needs of the religious community. Also, African agency is explained in Christianity using translation of liturgy to different languages, using African teachers and later African church leaders as well as formation of African initiated churches with the taste of Christianity and indigenous aspect. The authors show that the overlapping of indigenous religion with Christianity and Islam suggests that the dividing line between religious practices among Africans is not easily drawn. For example, while in one time or the other Muslims and Christians engaged in traditional religious aspects, the degree and perception of involvement differ from one person to another. Though Christianity and Islam have co-existed with indigenous African religion, they have also been a source of tearing it down as the followers are made to see African traditional religion as sinful and backward.

The remaining nine chapters (7 to 15) enlighten the readers on the role of religion in Africa as an aspect to understand other spheres of life. Themes in the second part focus on cross-cutting issues related to religion which reveal the impact of religions in Africans daily lives. They articulate the multiple engagement of religion with the themes such as politics, health and healing, media, gender, sexuality, and witchcraft. Regarding diseases, health, and healing, for example, the authors show that the three religions on one hand affect health and healing process. Sometimes patients absconded medication due to spiritual healing. On the other hand, “both Christian and Muslim faith-based hospitals and clinics are estimated to provide over 30 per cent of Africa’s healthcare” (178). Also, while African religion is given the same status as witchcraft by the Muslims and Christians, it is also highly consulted secretly and openly for social problems such as diseases or when one wishes to retain political powers or gain leadership position.

Also, the authors have been able to show the relationship between religion, conflict, development, and well-being of the continent. Whereas religion is a source of conflict such as Rwanda genocide of 1994, Salafi jihadist groups wars such as Boko Haram in Nigeria and Al Shabaab in Somalia (pp. 139,142), it is also the weapon for peace resolution. Religious organizations such as Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims and Liberia Council of Churches in Liberia acted against conflict minded groups (p. 145). In another instance religious organizations contribute to social and economic welfare. They provide teaching which connects poverty and material prosperity with religion which in one way or the other boost or hinder development in Africa.

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Moreover, the authors managed to unveil the meeting and diverging points of the three religions in Africa. This work shows great correlation of three religions and how Africans position themselves in religion or switch from one understanding of religion to another based on their problems. Mobutu Seseseko, a Christian, abandoned Christianity for indigenous African religion for political reasons (p.137).

The authors' initiatives to include major religious traditions and their dynamic themes in one monograph is the other success of this book. The book eases the task and opens the field for undergraduate students who are still positioning themselves. The consulted literature, author's experiences and research in Africa provide practical rather than theoretical understanding of religion. The authors also have succeeded in creating a balance between three religious' traditions. Each chapter addresses the involvement of each tradition both positively and negatively and the impact they have been making in Africa. In addition, the addressed themes mirror the expertise and research areas of the authors, hence making them deep and interrelated. However, these choices affect the case studies as they mostly fall on the authors respective areas of studies. Thus, some chapters such as chapter 15 on media and popular culture have, to a large extent, examples, and case studies from West Africa. Again, the identified themes such as witchcraft, politics, disease, health, and healing have many commonalities which could be treated together to avoid repetition. In addition, some areas deserve more attention. For example, Islam in South and Central Africa is mentioned in passing reference due to minority of Muslims. Also, other Islamic traditions such as Shiism which are glossed over because of its minority status could be hinted on.

Overall, the book provides a general picture of history and practices of religions in Africa. This book is recommended for the beginners of religious subject, ideologies, and practices in African context. The author's initiatives to address contemporary issues in African context have not only updated and contributed knowledge to the field of religion and African studies but they have also positioned the book in the current debates such as religion, poverty and underdevelopment or religions and conflicts in Africa. As the authors admit in their introduction, one monograph cannot exhaust the rich and diverse African religions, but it offers a direction and signposts for those interested in research and deep studies on themes and study areas highlighted in this book. Monographs on specific religions and specific themes for undergraduate students are also important to widen their understanding and choices.

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CONFERENCE REPORT

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Student conference KSA FF UPOL Conference Report

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After the omission of the conference in 2020, the 6th year of the Student conference KSA FF UPOL took place on April 22-23 2021. This two-day conference was organized by the members of The Department of Sociology, Andragogy and Cultural Anthropology of the Palacký University in Olomouc, Czechia. As a result of the current situation, the 6th annual conference had to be organized online on Zoom. Due to the high interest of the participants this year, for the first time the event lasted two days, during which the total number of 32 contributions were presented. Unlike the previous 5th year of the conference in 2019, this year the contributions were thematically divided into several panels. Since the conference was not focused on any specific topic, the panels were divided according to topics of interest of

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participants into sociology, andragogy, cultural anthropology, ethnology and religion studies.

The aim of the student conference was to support the meeting of students from various universities in related fields and to inspire each other. Moreover, the experience of presentation and getting feedback from participants and experts could find possible imperfections of the research and offer solutions on how to improve it. The conference was not exclusively focused on the presentation but by the systematic division of the contributions the organizers wanted to encourage smoother discussions of the presented topics within each block.

The first day was divided into four panels in which seventeen participants introduced their researches. The following day another fifteen speakers presented their topics in assigned three pannels. After Matěj Drda gave the initial instructions to the attendees, the welcome address continued with the speech of Helena Kubátová, the head of The *Department of Sociology*, *Andragogy and Cultural Anthropology of the Palacký University Olomouc.*

The sociology panel was opened by Olga Vlasová *from the* Charles University whose contribution bore the name *Nepodmíněný základní příjem - nová utopie moderny?* **(**Unconditional basic income - new utopia/dystopia of modernity?). Martina Zboroňová from the Comenius University presented her contribution named *Teoretické prístupy a tolerancia rodovo podmieneného násilia na ženách (*Tolerance of Gender based violence on women). She was followed by Tereza Svobodová from the Charles University with her presentation called *Sdílená ekonomika v kontextu postmateriálních hodnot: případ segmentu ubytování v Praze* (Shared economy in the context of post-material values: the case of the accommodation segment in Prague). Paula Ivanková from the Comenius University / Institute of Sociology SAS concluded sociology panel with her speech named *Vývoj triedne podmieneného voličského správania na Slovensku po roku 1989* **(**Development of Class-Based Voting in Slovakia After the Velvet Revolution in 1989).

The andragogy panel was opened by Justin Turzík from the University of Constantine the Philosopher whose contribution bore the title *Edukácia dospelých so sociálnym znevýhodnením* (Education of Adults with Social Disadvantages) Pavlína Sitařová from the Palacký University presented the results of her research named *Navození blízkosti a důvěry v internetovém prostředí* **(**Creating Interpersonal Closeness And Trust in Internet Environment), followed by Bianka Hudcová from the same university with her contribution named *Psychická první pomoc v kontextu self-*

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efficacy speciálního pedagoga (Psychological First Aid in the Context of Self-Efficacy of Special Education Teacher). Martina Pustková from the Charles University made her speech which bore the title *Spirituální coping v akademickém prostředí - případová studie* **(**Manifestations of Spirituality in Coping with Stress Caused by University Exams – Case Study). The last participant from this pannel was Oldřich Čepelka, again from the same university, who introduced his research topic named *Osobní copingové strategie seniorů* (Personal Coping Strategies of Older Adults)

The third panel was dedicated to topics related to cultural anthropology and ethnology. Tereza Vašíková from the Masaryk University commenced this panel with her contribution called *Spolky a osobnosti stojící za vznikem regionálního periodického tisku na Hřebečsku a Jihlavsku a jejich vnímání etnické identity* (Associations and Personalities behind the Establishment of Regional Periodicals in the Hřebeč and Jihlava Regions and Their Perception of Ethnic Identity). She was followed by Monika Soukupová from the Charles University with presentation entitled *"Návrat ke kořenům": představení a specifika české podoby hnutí mesiánského judaismu - etnografická studie* ("Return to Roots": an Introduction and Specifics of the Czech Form of the Messianic Judaism Movement – an Etnographic Study). The panel was concluded by Diana Hurbanová from the University of Ss. Cyril and Methodius in Trnava (UCM) who presented her research of scandinavian fairy-tales under the title *Archaické zvyky a predstavy reflektované v nórskych čarodejných rozprávkach* (Archaic Customs and Ideas Reflected in Norwegian Tales of Magic).

The last panel of the first day, focused on religion studies and ethnology, was opened by Daniela Ngyuen Trong from Greek Catholic Faculty of the University of Prešov with her contribution called *Dekompozícia náboženského kapitálu na pozadí migračných procesov v Európe* (Decomposition of Religious Capital on the Background of Migration Processes in Europe). The next speaker was Šimon Grimmich from the Charles University with his presentation which bore the name *Meditace jako rituál, rituál jako meditace* (Meditation as Ritual, Ritual as Meditation). Lucia Bistárová from UCM introduced her research dedicated to Maoris in her presentation named *Formovanie kultúrnej a etnickej identity Maorov prostredníctvom príslušnosti ku gangu* (Forming the Cultural and Ethnic Identity of Maoris through Gang Membership). She was followed by Klára Hedvika Mühlová from Masaryk the University in Brno which presented her research under the name of *Relativita hudebního času – evropské a mimoevropské konfrontace* (Relativity of Musical Time - European and Non-European Confrontations) The last contribution of the day was presented by Ludmila Janásová from the Masaryk University in Brno

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who concluded the panel with her speech which bore the title *Výrobci tradičních i netradičních hudebních nástrojů ve 21. století* (Traditional and Untraditional Musical Instruments Makers in the 21st Century)

After the welcome address by Matěj Drda, the second day of the conference was officially opened. It was divided into three panels – Sociology, Cultural anthropology, Ethnology, Religion Studies and Andragogy. The first panel focused on Sociology, was opened by Nikol Kubátová, who presented the contribution in cooperation with Kateřina Štancová from the University of West Bohemia called *Podvod jako legitimní nástroj při dosahování vzdělání?* (Deception as a Legitimate Tool in Achieving Education?). They were followed by two students from the Charles University, Ludmila Böhmová, whose contribution was named *Postsekulární konflikt konkrétně v případě Pro-Life / Pro-Chive hnutí v Chorvatsku v rámci protestní akce "Hod za život u Zagrebu"* (Postsecular Conflict? Prolife / Prochoice Conflict in Croatia, Case of March for Life in Zagreb) and then Linda Coufalová introduced her theoretical paper called *Změna v občanské společnosti. Jak souvisí globalizace se vzestupem far-right* (Change in Civil Society. Connecting Globalisation with the Rise of Far-Right). During this year's conference, two participiants presented their contributions in the English. The first was presented by Amna Shafqa from Masaryk University called *Czech Policies for Integration of Refugee Children in Education: Application of the Holistic Model.* The first panel was concluded by Markéta Kopecká from the Palacký University with her paper which bore the title *Vnímání problematiky sexuálního a genderového obtěžování z pohledu studentů a pedagogů na vysoké škole: definice, prevence a řešení* (Perception of the Issue of Sexual and Gender Harassment from the Perspective of Students and Teachers at the University: Definition, Prevention). The second panel was focused on Cultural anthropology, Ethnology and Religion Studies. It started with Barbora Sekerášová from the UCM, who presented her sociolinguistic research under the named *Etnojazyková situácia Goralov na hornej Orave* (The Ethnolinguistic Situation of Gorals in Upper Orava Region). She was followed by Marie Pavlásková from Charles University with her interesting contribution from ethnolinguistic field entitled *Význam jako kulturní artefakt: etnolingvistická analýza podle Anny Wierzbické* (Meaning as a Cultural Artefact: Anna Wierzbicka's Ethnolinguistic Analysis). The second panel continued with Ester Topolářová from the Palacký University with her speech called *Transformační potenciál uznání a přerozdělování v postkoloniálních solidárních společenských hnutích: Praxis mezi původními obyvateli Ameriky kmenu Duwamish a hnutím Real Rent Duwamish na území Seattlu, USA* (The Transformative Potential

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of Recognition and Redistribution in Postcolonial Solidarity Movements: The Praxis between the Duwamish tribe and the Real Rent Duwamish Movement in Seattle, USA). She was followed by Filip Maroši from the Masaryk University who gave his presentation called *Řecké organizace v Brně a jejich význam* (Greek Organizations in Brno). The last contribution of the panel was presented by Tadeáš Vala from the University of Pardubice who concluded the panel with his speech named *Berberofóbie a convivencia: Odkaz muslimských protiberberských postojů v al-Andalus u teoretiků tolerantního soužití* (Berberophobia and Convivencia: The Legacy of Muslim Anti-Berber Attitudes in Al-Andalus among Theorists of Tolerant Coexistence).

After the lunch break, the conference continued with the last panel focused on Andragogy. Gréta Marosán from the University of Debrecen commenced this panel with the second contribution in the English called *The Cultural Consumption of the International Students in Debrecen.* She was followed by Martina Muknšnáblová from the Jan Amos Comenius University in Prague with her presentation named *Možnosti ovlivnění kognitivních funkcí učením v dospělosti* (The Potential for Learning to Affect Cognitive Function in Adulthood). After that, Michaela Pachelová from Charles University introduced her exploratory case study of teaching strategies under the name of *Prosociální výchova v kontextu výuky etické výchovy na 1. stupni základní školy* (Prosocial Education in the Context of Teaching Ethical Education in Primary School). Following presentation by Roman Buchtele from the University of South Bohemia was called *Nabídka pracovníků s environmentálními znalostmi a odbornostní požadavky podniků na trhu práce* (Supply of Workers with Environmental Knowledge and Companies‘ Demands for Expertise in the Labour Market). The two-day conference was concluded by the last presentation named *Konceptualizace případu v logopedické intervenci poruch hlasu* (Case Conceptualization in Voice Disorders Treatment – Speech and Language Therapists´ Perspective), by Martina Tumová from the Palacký University .At the end of the event, participants could vote for the best contribution.

This year’s conference created a space where people from different fields, universities and countries came together and introduced plenty of interesting topics and their researches . During the event the students could share their knowledge, find possible imperfections in their works, practice public speaking and get feedback from both participants and experts. We also have to appraise that the 6th annual Student conference KSA FF UPOL, which was for the first time held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic, was without any major technical problems. Only small

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technical inconveniences occurred, such as running the presentations or sound quality issues, but organizers were able to handle the whole situation with ease. Despite the fact that the conference took place online, it was a great opportunity for both organizers and participants to gain valuable experience from the comfort of their homes.

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