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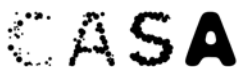
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EARGO seeks to present materials that are innovative, challenging, and sometimes experimental. Texts are published in Czech, Slovak, and English.

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O plnoletosti časopisu Cargo a životních tématech Zdeňka Salzmann

Zdeněk Uherek

Vydáváme letos 18. ročník časopisu a rád bych napsal, že je Cargo 18 let. Je to ale sporné. Možná, že je starší. První Cargo vyšlo v roce 1998. Toto Cargo ale nebylo počítáno jako ročník a ročník 1 je uveden teprve na Cargo vyšlém v roce 1999. Pokud by Cargo vycházelo každoročně, měli bychom tedy nyní 22. ročník.

Strategie časopisu i způsob jeho publikování se od jeho počátků změnily. První ročníky vycházely pouze v listinné podobě a neměly žádnou systematickou distribuci. Jeho cílem, jak píše Jakub Plášek v editorialech k prvnímu číslu, tehdy bylo, kromě odborné diskuse, též vyplňovat informační vakuum v rámci studia našeho oboru zprostředkováním nejzajímavějších příspěvků „z aktuálních čísel zahraničních odborných časopisů“ (Plášek 1998: 2).

Cargo rychle nabývalo standardů odborných periodik. V jeho dlouhodobou životaschopnost ale řada lidí nevěřila zejména proto, že nemělo institucionální zázemí. Když jsem se jako tehdejší zástupce ředitele Etnologického ústavu AV ČR o časopisu pochvalně zmínil tehdejšímu šéfredaktorovi nejstaršího etnologického časopisu v Čechách, Českého lidu, Zdeňkovi Hanzlovi (s nímž jsem byl jinak dobrý kamarád), označil Cargo výsměšně jako „řev septimy“. Zařadil ho tak na úroveň amatérských středoškolských studentských časopisů. Předpokládal jeho zánik s okamžikem, kdy jeho zakladatelé dostudují. Že se tak nestalo, je i z toho důvodu, že řada jeho zakladatelů zůstala i nadále v oboru, viděla smysl ve vedení odborného dialogu na stránkách odborných časopisů a uvědomovala si, že by zastavenou kontinuitu mimo jiné též částečně znehodnotila svoji dosavadní práci. Tvůrci Carga vytvořili společnost Cargo Publishers a pokračovali ve vydávání na soukromé bázi. Ani to by ale asi časopis nezachránilo, kdyby ho hned po svém založení nepřevzala Česká asociace pro sociální antropologii (CASA). Časopis tak získal institucionální zázemí a dotaci od Rady vědeckých společností, kam CASA vstoupila. Jako tehdejší předseda CASA jsem o tento časopis velmi stál a zájem

o něj byl i v blízké cizině. Na jeho vydávání pod hlavičkou CASA přispěla prostřednictvím tehdejšího předsedy Martina Kanovského krátce po svém založení Slovenská asociace pro sociální antropologii a z textů, které od té doby v časopisu vyšly, vidíme, že o časopisu má povědomí v podstatě celý antropologický svět (vyjmenovávat, kde všude jsou autoři alokováni, snad ani nemá cenu – nejdále je pravděpodobně Nový Zéland). Publikování Carga v elektronické podobě a jeho celosvětová dostupnost z něho dělá jeden z nejvýznamnějších komunikačních prostředků, který CASA a česká antropologie má.

Diskuse o podobě časopisu je proto významná a asi bude permanentní. Souvisí s postavením sociální a kulturní antropologie v Česku, s tím, zda se chce prezentovat jako samostatná disciplína, do jaké míry se jednotliví antropologové působící v ČR zde také cítí institucionálně zakotveni a v neposlední řadě také na nejrůznějších vnějších tlacích, jakými jsou dotační politiky ve vazbě k veřejným financím. Existence hmatatelných důkazů o aktivitách vědní disciplíny, jakými jsou vědecké výsledky, absolventi vysokých škol a jejich další působení ve veřejném prostoru a publikování světově uznávaných textů, jsou jedněmi ze základních podmínek pro veřejné financování, které se odehrává především na národní úrovni.

Na jedné z redakčních rad předcházejících vydání tohoto dvojčísla jsme probírali návrh na upomenutí si, že dne 10. 5. 2021 zemřel v americké Sedoně v Arizoně ve věku 95 let významný lingvistický antropolog Zdeněk Salzmanna. Společenská kronika je u standardních vědeckých časopisů málo obvyklá, a proto redakční rada navrhla, abych vzpomínku začlenil do editoria. Jde to snadno. Právě Zdeněk Salzmanna byl jedním z antropologů, kteří pomáhali, po svém působení v zahraničí do roku 1989, vyplnit informační vakuum v českém prostředí 90. let 20. století stejně jako Cargo. Narodil se 18. října 1925 a byl pamětníkem Pražského lingvistického kroužku, který navštěvoval ještě jako gymnazista a po válce jako student Filozofické fakulty Univerzity Karlovy v oboru obecná lingvistika, angličtina. Do USA odešel v roce 1947 na pozvání World Students Service Fund, aby zde uskutečnil sérii přednášek o válce v Evropě. Při té příležitosti požádal o studijní pobyt na Indiana University v Bloomingtonu. Získal ho na základě doporučení svého učitele profesora Skaličky a profesora Romana Jakobsona, který tehdy již působil na New School for Social Research v New Yorku. Spojené státy se pak staly Zdeňkovi (Dennymu) Salzmannovi hlavním působištěm na celý život, přestože po roce 1989, dokud mu síly stačily, pravidelně přijížděl přednášet i do České republiky.

Pravděpodobně nejvýznamnější aktivitou Zdeňka Salzmannova věnovanou české antropologii byla, kromě řady drobnějších článků a mnoha přednášek, spolupráce na jeho překladu učebnice lingvistické antropologie *Jazyk, kultura, společnost*,

kteřá vyšla jako suplement časopisu *Český lid*, rok před vydáním prvního čísla časopisu *Cargo* (Salzmann 1997). Velkou zásluhu na publikaci této knihy, kterou dodnes používám při výuce Úvodu do sociální antropologie má právě zmiňovaný šéfredaktor Zdeněk Hanzl, který *Cargo* nedával šanci k přežití.

Přestože se jednalo o významný publikační počín, není tato učebnice ústředním bodem Salzmannovy tvorby. Možná, že by dnes již ani nebyla překládána, přestože se jedná o dodnes používanou učebnici, Salzmann ji celý život doplňoval, získala spolutvůrce a v roce 2018 měla již 7. vydání (Stanlaw, Adachi, Salzmann 2018). Pravděpodobně bychom ji studentům navrhli ke stažení a nechali ji číst v angličtině stejně, jako bychom nepřekládali do *Carga* texty z jiných časopisů. V 90. letech jsme však žili v jiné době, a i možnosti k získání informací byly jiné. Salzmannovým ústředním bodem bádání však nebyly obecné principy lingvistické antropologie, ale jazyky nativní Ameriky a mezi nimi měl pro Salzmannu nejdůležitější místo jazyk Arapahů, skupiny, kde dělal první terénní výzkum, a ke kterému sestavil gramatiku publikovanou jako svou dizertační práci. Na téma lingvistické antropologie a jazyků nativních obyvatel Ameriky publikoval Salzmann stovky prací. Jejich výběr sestavil se Zdeňkem Hanzlem u příležitosti svých 80. narozenin (Salzmann, Hanzl 2005). Laudatio mu k tomu napsal Josef Kandert (Kandert 2005). Některé jeho publikace jsem ve výročních textech též referoval já (Uherek 2020).

Jako řada jeho kolegů pracujících se zanikajícími jazyky Zdeněk Salzmann svou činností nejen přispěl vědeckému poznání, ale i tomu, aby tyto jazyky neupadly zcela v zapomnění a aby se prodloužila jejich aktivní existence. Ta může pokračovat jen tím, že se tyto jazyky budou v komunikaci používat. V roce 2010 napsal Salzmann pro časopis *Historická antropologie* článek *Jak jazyky vymírají nebo ztrácejí na životnosti a do jaké míry je možné je udržet při životě*, kde svůj úhel pohledu na celý proces objasňuje. Říká zde, že když se „hovoří o stavu životnosti jazyků světa, je na místě rozlišovat několik jejich stupňů: bezpečný, životaschopný, potenciálně ohrožený, ohrožený, vážně ohrožený, vymírající a mrtvý.“ (Salzmann 2010: 76) Důvodů ohrožení jazyka vyjmenovává velmi mnoho. Symptomů ohrožení uvádí naopak jen velmi málo. Jazyk se přestává předávat jako mateřský jazyk a přestává se aktivně používat. Ztrácí se jeho kontinuita jako živého nástroje komunikace. A ještě před zánikem může též nastat negativní postoj k vlastnímu rodnému jazyku nebo tak zvaná folklorizace, čili jeho užívání „jen pro zcela nezávažné účely“ (Salzmann 2010: 77).

Škálu ohrožení jazyka ze Salzmannova textu lze použít pro velmi mnoho témat. Pokud bychom ji aplikovali na téma sociální antropologie jako oboru, asi bychom museli za současné globální situace konstatovat, že stav „bezpečný“ bychom nenašli nikde na světě. Pro střední Evropu se stavu „životaschopný“ však Česká

republika přibližuje možná více, než mnohé jiné sousední státy. Je tomu mimo jiné i proto, že si vybudovala životaschopnou institucionální základnu, vyučuje se ve školách, je financována z veřejných prostředků a má i profesní organizaci, která dává nejen svým členům, ale i širší veřejnosti k dispozici časopis Cargo, jež nyní dosahuje plnoletosti. Není to Cargo jen pro členy, je to služba antropologické obci jako celku a platforma též pro ty její části, kde se sociální a kulturní antropologie dostává do ohrožení a málo se komunikuje nebo dochází, slovy Zdeňka Salzmann, k její folklorizaci. Tím, že Cargo přestalo být v očích pochybující veřejnosti „řevem septimy“, stalo se vážnější, formálnější a přesahuje dosahem své zakladatele a je připraveno se zařadit do prestižní skupiny časopisů, které nejsou publikovány komerčními společnostmi, ale udržuje si svou vědeckou nezávislost díky České asociaci pro sociální antropologii, dotaci z veřejných financí, práci redakční rady, jejich spolupracovníků a autorů a recenzentů, kteří časopisu důvěřují.

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About the Maturity of the Cargo Journal and the Lifelong Topics of Zdeněk Salzmann

Zdeněk Uherek¹

This year, we are publishing the 18th volume of the journal, and I would like to say that Cargo is 18 years old. But I realize that it is debatable. It may be older. The first Cargo was published in 1998. However, this Cargo was not counted as the 1st volume, and volume 1 is imprinted on the Cargo released in 1999. If Cargo was published annually, we would now have 22 volumes.

The journal strategy and the way it was published have changed since its inception. In the first years of its existence, the journal was published only in printed paper form and had no systematic distribution. Its goal, as Jakub Plášek writes in the editorial of the first issue, was, in addition to generating academic discussion, to also fill the information vacuum by mediating the most interesting contributions “from current issues of foreign academic journals” (Plášek 1998: 2).

However, Cargo was rapidly acquiring the standards of an academic periodical. Still, many people did not believe in its long-term viability, mainly because Cargo did not have an institutional home. I remember that as the then Deputy Director of the Institute of Ethnology of the Czech Academy of Sciences and I once praised the journal to Zdeněk Hanzl (with whom I was otherwise a good friend), the Editor-in-Chief of the oldest ethnological journal in Bohemia, *Český lid*, who responded by derisively describing Cargo as “*Řev septimy*” (Roar of the Septima).² He thus placed it on the level of an amateur high school student magazine, assuming its demise at the moment its founders would graduate. It did not happen because many of the students around the journal remained in the academia, saw meaning in conducting a professional dialogue on the pages of an

¹ Many thanks to Professor Hana Červinková for valuable comments.

² Class of the seventh grade of an eight-year secondary school.

academic journal, and realized that discontinuation would also partially devalue their current work. They launched Cargo Publisher's corporation and continued to publish the journal on a private basis. But even that would probably not have saved the journal if the Czech Association for Social Anthropology (CASA) had not taken it over immediately after its establishment. The journal thus received an institutional home and also a subsidy from the Council of Scientific Societies, which CASA joined. As the then president of CASA, I was keen on publishing the journal and received encouragement from different institutions. The Slovak Association for Social Anthropology financially contributed to its publication under the CASA banner through the then chairman Martin Kanovský shortly after its establishment. From texts that have been published in the journal since then, we see that the journal is known throughout the world of anthropology, showing global spread of authorship. The publication of Cargo in an electronic form increased its availability, making it one of the most important means of communication that CASA and Czech anthropology has.

The discussion about the format, content and role of the journal has accompanied Cargo since its inception and has been linked to the position of social and cultural anthropology in the Czech Republic, its status as an independent discipline as well as financial status. The existence of tangible evidence of the activities of the discipline, such as academically recognized research results, university graduates and their further work in public space and the publication of world-renowned published texts in the disciplines' own journals is one of the basic conditions for public funding, which takes place mainly at the national level.

At one of the editorial boards preceding this double issue, we discussed a proposal to commemorate the passing on May 10, 2021, of a prominent linguistic anthropologist Zdenek Salzmänn (he died in Sedona, Arizona, USA, at the age of 95). As Cargo does not publish In Memoriam, the Editorial Board suggested that I include remembrance in the editorial to this issue. It was an easy task. Zdeněk Salzmänn was one of the anthropologists who helped fill the information vacuum in the Czech milieu of the 1990s, a role also played by Cargo itself, as well as several other prominent Czech anthropologists who had worked abroad until 1989.

Salzmänn was born on October 18, 1925, and was a witness to the Prague Linguistic Circle, which he attended first as a grammar school student during WWII, and then after the war as a student of general linguistics and English at the Faculty of Arts of Charles University. He left for the United States in 1947 at the invitation of the World Students Service Fund to give a series of lectures about the war in Europe. On that occasion, he applied for a study stay at Indiana University in Bloomington. He was admitted on the recommendations

of his teacher, Professor Skalička, and former Prague Linguistic Circle member, Professor Roman Jakobson, who was already working at the New School for Social Research in New York having left the Czech lands before WWII. The United States then became Zdeněk (Denny) Salzmänn's central place of work and life, although after 1989, as long as his strength sufficed, he regularly came to the Czech Republic as a visiting lecturer.

Probably the most important activity of Zdeněk Salzmänn devoted to Czech anthropology was, in addition to many smaller articles and lectures, cooperation on the translation of his textbook in linguistic anthropology *Language, Culture, Society*, published as a supplement to the *Český lid* journal a year before the first issue of *Cargo* (Salzmänn 1997). *Český lid*'s Editor-in-Chief, Zdeněk Hanzl, who declared that *Cargo* had no chance of surviving, put much effort into publishing this book, which I still use in my introductory classes in social anthropology.

Although it was an important publication deed, this textbook is not the focal point of Salzmänn's work. Perhaps it would not even be translated today, even though it should be said that the textbook is still in use and Salzmänn supplemented it all his life, inviting new co-editors and authors (its 7th edition was published in 2018) (Stanlaw, Adachi, Salzmänn 2018). Instead of translating, we would now probably suggest that students read it in English, just as we would not translate texts from other journals to be published in *Cargo*. In the 1990s, however, we lived in different times, and the possibilities for obtaining information were different.

The focal point of Salzmänn's work was not the general principles of linguistic anthropology but the languages of Native America. Among them, Salzmänn's most prominent interest was in the language of the Arapaho, the group where he did his first field research based on which he compiled a grammar published as his dissertation. Salzmänn has published hundreds of texts on the native languages of America. The selective bibliography of his work was compiled with the help of Zdeněk Hanzl on his 80th birthday (Salzmänn, Hanzl 2005). The *Laudatio* was written for him by Josef Kandert (Kandert 2005). I also reported some of his publications in the texts of his later milestone birthdays (Uherek 2020).

Like many of his colleagues working with disappearing languages, Zdeněk Salzmänn's activities not only contributed to scientific knowledge but also helped these languages not to fall completely into oblivion and sometimes prolonged their active existence. Languages can only survive by their use in communication. In 2010, Salzmänn wrote an article *How languages die or lose their longevity and to what extent it is possible to keep them alive* for the journal *Historická antropologie* (Historical Anthropology). In the text, he clarifies his point of view, arguing that "when we speak about the state of life of the world's languages, it is appropriate to distinguish several degrees: safe, viable, potentially endangered, endangered,

seriously endangered, extinct and dead.” (Salzmänn 2010: 76) Salzmänn lists many reasons for the threat to a language. On the other hand, he provides only a few symptoms that indicate a threat. The language ceases to be transmitted as the mother tongue and is not actively used. Its continuity as a living tool of communication is lost. Moreover, even before its demise, a negative attitude to it among the language speakers is frequently indicated or so-called folklorization, i.e., its use “only for completely insignificant purposes” (Salzmänn 2010: 77).

The language threat scale from Salzmänn’s text can be used for many topics. If we apply it to the field of social anthropology, we will probably have to state in the current global situation that we would not label a “safe” level anywhere in the world. However, for Central Europe, the Czech Republic is perhaps closer to the “viable” level than many other neighbouring countries. It is partly because social anthropology has built a viable institutional base, is taught in schools, is publicly funded, and has a professional organization with its own journal which is now coming of age. *Cargo* is a service to the anthropological community as a whole and also a platform for those parts of the academia where social and cultural anthropology is in danger or, in the words of Zdeněk Salzmänn, where its folklorization is taking place. *Cargo* has ceased to be the “Roar of the Septima” in the eyes of the doubtful public. It has transcended its humble beginnings, becoming a serious and formal publication outlet on the brink of joining the prestigious group of journals not published by commercial companies who maintain their scientific independence. In case of *Cargo*, this is thanks to the support of the Czech Association for Social Anthropology, grants from public finances, the work of the editorial board, its collaborators, authors, thematic issue editors and reviewers who trust and are dedicated to the journal.

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Editorial

Zdeněk Uherek

O plnoletosti časopisu Cargo a životních tématech Zdeňka Salzmann 1

About the Maturity of the Cargo Journal and the Lifelong Topics of Zdenek Salzmann 5

Stati | Articles

Ignacy Józwiak

Navigating the opportunities and constraints. Migration as a local response to non-local political developments 11

Tereza Picková

To become a Pilgrim: Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela as a Construction of the Pilgrim Body 35

Tanja Bukovčan

“Irresponsible, incompetent, inadequate?” Narratives and Practices of Parenting in High-Conflict Divorces in Croatia 66

Barbora Stehlíková

“The Aim is always Joy!” The Hybrid Gift as an Anchor for Morality 86

Zprávy | Reports

Luděk Jirka

Etika v sociální antropologii: Křehké rámce 105

Recenze | Book Reviews

Lukáš Senft

Spolupráce organismů: mimo-lidští inženýři ekosystémů

(Lorimer, Jamie. 2020. *The Probiotic Planet: Using Life to Manage Life*.

Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press)

108

David Pergl

Etnografie nebo špionáž? Státní dohled v socialistickém Rumunsku

(Verdery, Katherine 2018. *My Life as a Spy: Investigations in a Secret Police File*.

Durham: Duke University Press)

116

Navigating the opportunities and constraints. Migration as a local response to non-local political developments

Ignacy Jóźwiak

Abstract: The article describes the ways national and international political developments translate into migration patterns. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in a small town in Transcarpathia region in Western Ukraine, it offers an insight into the livelihood practices of its inhabitants. Labour migration is presented in the context of political and economic developments in Ukraine as well as the regional and local specifics of Transcarpathia (geographical location, ethnic composition, historical legacy). The politics of Ukraine's neighbouring countries are also considered an important factor in shaping migration patterns. Russia's aggressive politics have posed a threat to Ukraine's territorial integrity and left a mark on its economy and labour market. Hungary allows the inhabitants of the region to apply for its citizenship and Poland's simplified regulation on access to its labour market attracts the visa applicants. Ethnographic description is centred around migratory experiences, applied strategies and the changes in these strategies in the face of the national and international political and economic developments. The article concludes that these locally observed phenomena reveal individual and collective agency in subverting social and political conditions to one's benefit. It also points to the limits of this agency and the sustaining of social inequalities within and beyond migration.

Keywords: agency, labour migration, transnationalism, Transcarpathia, Ukraine

Introduction

The aim of this article is to describe the way national and international political developments and policy measures impact migration patterns. Using the process of ethnographic case study, I reveal the way these political and economic phenomena occur on the small scale and are experienced and reshaped on the local, grassroots level. In territorial and empirical terms, I focus on one particular location, a small town of Solotvyno in Transcarpathia region (*Zakarpatska Oblast*) in Western Ukraine, where I conducted my fieldwork in the years 2009–2011 and 2016–2017.

In order to capture the phenomena of interest in the reader-friendly way, present ethnographic vignettes which illustrate these phenomena with examples of particular individuals whose names I have changed. These individuals were selected due to their characteristics associated with the specifics of each town and the region as well as the methodological relevance carried such characteristics. As Solotvyno can be characterized as multi-ethnic site, I also acknowledge local diversity based on my informants' self-identification and declarations.

The regional migratory and transnational specificities related to geographical location and common legacies with and cultural links to other countries are also presented. I describe the complexity of Ukrainian labour migration which includes regional specificities and the position of Ukrainian migrant workers in the international migration movements. I discuss the way migration practices are embedded in the local and regional specifics such as the history of the region and its geographical location, ethnic, and linguistic composition of the town, the policies of other countries regarding citizenship, visas, and access to the labour market. This perspective aids in grasping the complexity of migration patterns and prevents the perception of Ukrainian labour migration-not to mention Ukrainian society at large-as a monolith.

Transcarpathia (or The Transcarpathian District; Ukr. *Zakarpats'ka Oblast'*) is an administrative unit in Ukraine with its headquarters located in the city of Uzhhorod. The region borders Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania, as well as the Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk Districts (*Lvivs'ka Oblast'*, *Ivano-Frankivs'ka Oblast'*) of Ukraine. Unlike the two previously mentioned districts (which in the course of history were a part of Red Ruthenia, the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Habsburg Galicia and Poland), from the Middle Ages until the First World War, the territories comprising Transcarpathia belonged to Hungary, Austria and the Hungarian part of Austro-Hungary. In 1919, after the Treaty of Versailles, they were ceded to Czechoslovakia, annexed by Hungary in 1938, and again in 1944 by the Soviet Union. Apart from ethnic Ukrainians, the region is characterized

With its history of relatively frequent statehood changes, this region serves as a prime site for the study of phenomena of political transformations and historical legacies. Through the 20th century and into the 21st, the region has been marked by peripheral positions within the larger political entities (cf. Batt 2002). As for Soltvyno, its industrial and late post-industrial character links this small town to the legacies of the so called “post-socialist transition” (cf. Burawoy and Verdery 1999; cf. Kürti and Skalník 2009). Its ethnic and linguistic composition appears as a potential resource which can be translated into livelihood strategies, including labour migration.

The article proceeds as follows. I begin by explaining the research methodology and data. Then I present an overview of concepts from the study of labour migration and transnationalism. In addition, I describe migration processes in Ukraine in general and in Transcarpathia in particular, each in their particular social and political contexts. Subsequent sections will present insight into Soltvyno and the livelihood practices of its inhabitants with particular focus on experiences of work abroad. I conclude that experiences of local inhabitants contribute to the global phenomenon of individual and collective subversion (or attempts of subversion) of existing social and political conditions. This approach helps embed migration in the broader social structures and political changes as seen through “local lens.”

A note on methodology and data

Applying the extended case method (Burawoy 2009) as well as the concept of strategically situated ethnography (Marcus 1995), I link the locally observed phenomena with wider social and political processes. This approach allows me to describe a two-fold process of the macro-forces shaping and being reshaped by the local reality, daily practices and livelihood strategies of the local inhabitants (cf. Burawoy 2009; Marcus 1995; Buchowski 2012). In the tradition of participant observation and deep hanging out (Geertz 1998; Wogan 2004; Driessen and Jansen 2013), I accompanied research participants throughout their daily lives: at work (when possible), at home, in their free time, and at family and social events. My aim was to study the local occurrences in the time and space of the local inhabitants. I took daily handwritten notes while systematically maintaining a diary on my laptop. The research would not be possible without support of certain key-informants who helped me in pragmatic matters and introduced me to others. Throughout the fieldwork, there were 13 individuals whereas the total number of informants is 52. Meeting some only once, typically I regularly met and spent time with the majority of them, in some cases more than once a day. The conversations were

held in Russian, which serves as a local lingua franca (even though it is gradually giving way to Ukrainian). Between November 2009 and May 2011, I held 5 fieldwork visits each lasting approximately a month. I stayed in occasional contact with some of the key informants between 2011–2016 and re-visited the site in 2016 and 2017 reaching the same people and places. These enabled understanding the local changes and macro forces shaping them (cf. Marcus 1995; Burawoy 2003).

Although focusing on the results of territorially and temporally bound ethnography, I also draw from my broader interest *in* and *intimacy with* Transcarpathia which has lasted for a decade and a half at the time of writing this article. This includes: a fieldwork in locations other than Solotvyno, networking at the regional academic institutions, holiday visits and actual friendships. Some of the information and description comprises a common knowledge of the inhabitants of the region. This knowledge is what a frequent visitor (an outsider) is exposed to, and an ethnographer embedded in the studied milieu simply gets to know. I also refer to existing estimated but incomplete data on the economy and demography of migration in the region which serves as illustration and background information for the processes under study. It is not my goal to evaluate this data or fill its possible gaps.

Beyond centre and periphery: transformation and transnationality

Migration to Central and Eastern Europe carries certain characteristics of labour movements between the peripheries, semi-peripheries, and core of the global economy. Peripheral countries and regions have long served as a cheap labour reservoir for the countries of the core colonial and neo-colonial powers, and industrial and financial centres where wealth has been accumulated (Castles and Miller 2003; McKeown 2004). In the Soviet Union industrialization was accompanied by the acceleration of the labour resources' mobility. Large-scale state programs were introduced for the purpose of regulating the migration flows. Regulations were based on the passport systems which imposed limits and restrictions for various social and professional groups (Zaslavsky & Luryi, 1979). This corresponds with the phenomena of the state monopoly over the means of movement (Torpey 2000) and control over the “dangerous classes” (Balibar 2004: 113) associated with the capitalist societies. Political and economic transformations resulting from the collapse of the Soviet Union and The Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON) enabled various forms of postsocialist mobility fuelled by economic difficulties experienced in the countries and regions of emigration. Therefore, regardless of the political and economic regimes, migratory processes appear embedded in the broader processes of societal change.

In the core-periphery framework, contemporary Ukraine, as an exporter of the raw materials, semi-products, and workforce, appears on the peripheries of the European economy (Malyuk 2010; Malyuk 2014; Ishchenko 2013; Bojcun 2016). This positioning appears noteworthy in the context of international and domestic political developments concerning and shaping economic situations and social relations in Ukrainian society. Noting that *within* and *beyond* this framework, the “surplus extraction via migration” from the periphery to the core is also accompanied by the movement of both money and commodities in the other directions).

The concern about this two-fold process together with a step beyond centre-periphery approach can be seen in the transnational approach (cf. Glick-Schiller, Basch, & Blanc 1995; Brettell 2007). However, the fact that people “operate in social fields that transgress geographic, political, and cultural borders” and maintain social relations in the countries both of origin and destination (Glick-Schiller, Basch, & Blanc 1995) does not eradicate inequalities and exploitation. For the migrant workers and their social milieu *at home* and *abroad*, settledness in mobility (Morokvasic 2004) is often accompanied by the settledness in exploitation and hierarchy. Under such conditions people are more mobile with their work life and personal life becoming more “unstable.” This corresponds with the global trend in the framework of the precarious conditions of labour in the countries of origin, requiring workers to be more flexible and spatially mobile in turn putting more pressure on transnational mobility and work abroad (Böröcz, 2014a: 91). This in turn contributes to inequalities and economic dependencies between entire *sending* and *receiving* societies (Faist 2016). Financial remittance-an important part of livelihood among transnational communities and significant part of the emigration countries’ GDP-contributes to the phenomenon of “remittance-dependent economy” (Faist 2016: 334). Quoting József Böröcz, this phenomenon appears as an

...aspect of the dependence of a society on the economic, political, and social conditions (...) which results from value transfers by its own citizens who sell their labour power abroad. Just like dependency on aid or on foreign direct investment, remittance dependency is a process whereby external structural conditions are internalized so that the migrant emitting society loses much of its control over its domestic economic, political, social, etc., processes (Böröcz 2014b: 14-15).

Country in crisis, people on the move

The 2014 developments in Ukraine significantly impacted an economy already struck by the 2008/2009 global recession. The country faced devaluation of the national currency (Ukrainian Hryvna), record inflation rates, and the fall of its GDP (Eröss, Tatrai, Kovally 2017: 208).¹ Even though these trends began stabilizing in 2016, the initial recession left its marks on the country's economy. Most affected were the heavy industries, metallurgy, and mining – all partially related to the Russian market – as well as foreign trade and agricultural production (Iwański 2015; Kravchuk 2016). In the face of such social and economic difficulties, pressure on migration increased around the country.

Even before the post-2014 turmoil, Ukraine appeared on top of the list of European “countries of origin” in terms of migration. Ukrainian citizens also contribute to a significant share of immigrant populations in the receiving countries (Fedyuk & Kindler 2016: 1). Due to the lack of cohesive definitions, sources and applied methodologies, the available data appears as imprecise and the numbers of Ukrainian citizens working abroad vary between 2 and 7 million (Fedyuk & Kindler 2016; Leontiyeva 2014). Financial remittances from labour migrants are important for many Ukrainian households and trigger the local economies. According to the World Bank, estimated at 16 billion USD in 2018, financial remittances contributed to 13.8% of Ukrainian GDP,² more than the total sum of foreign investments (less than 2.5 billion).³ Over the last decade, the main destinations of Ukrainian migrant workers have changed, but the most common destinations were Russia, Poland, Czech Republic, and Italy. According to the International Organization for Migration, 905,000 Ukrainians resided in the EU in 2015 (this appears as the most recent data published by IOM so far); 37% of them in Poland, 26% in Italy, and 12% in the Czech Republic and Germany (IOM 2016). At the same period 2.5 million Ukrainian citizens were registered in Russia, 900,000 more than just a year earlier (Mukomel 2017). Although, in 2014 and 2015 29% of Ukrainian migrants went to Russia, “...increased labour migration is accompanied by a nascent reorientation of flows from east (to Russia) to west (to the EU)” (IOM 2016: 15). Various networks between employers and employees,

¹ For data on exchange rates and the changes in GDP, see also: <http://www.xe.com/currencycharts/?from=USD&to=UAH&view=10Y> (accessed: 31.12.2019) and <http://www.trading-economics.com/ukraine/gdp> (accessed: 31.12.2019).

² World Bank Annual Remittances Data: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/labormarkets/brief/migration-and-remittances> (accessed: 31.12.2019).

³ World Bank Foreign direct investment, net inflows: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.KLT.DINV.WD.GD.ZS> (accessed: 31.12.2019).

cultural factors such as common history of certain territories, long-established tradition of mutual contacts, and legal regulations in receiving countries influence directions of labour migration.

Before 2014 with those coming from Transcarpathia, the most popular destinations were the Czech Republic and Russia, and to a lesser extent, Slovakia and Hungary (Kychak 2012: 69-70).⁴ This situation has changed not only in the course of the political and military developments in Ukraine but also with changes in some neighbouring countries' policies. In 2010 Hungary introduced an amendment to the Law on Citizenship (Act XLIV 2010) entitling former citizens and their descendants to apply for the citizenship (Kovacs & Tóth 2013). In practice, it means that inhabitants of the historical Hungarian territories, regardless of their ethnic identity, are eligible for Hungarian passports as long as they speak the language. As dual citizenship is not recognized by Ukraine and Hungarian state, they do not provide official statistics regarding that matter and the exact number of Hungarian passports granted to Transcarpathians is not known but estimates are approximately 160 000 (compared to the region's population of 1 260 000) as of 2016 (Eröss, Tatrai, Kovally 2017). Possessing the commonly called "EU citizenship" makes it way easier to work and travel within the EU than it is for Ukrainian passport holders.

Tense Ukrainian-Russian relations along with the devaluation of the Russian currency has changed the migratory landscape of Ukraine. This shift can be observed in Transcarpathia. Nevertheless, it is difficult to assess the number of Ukrainians, including Transcarpathians, who still work in this country. The Czech Republic still remains the most popular destination for the inhabitants of the region but there is a shift to other areas due to policies introduced in Poland and Hungary. Transcarpathian migration to the Czech Republic can be described as the most diverse in the scope of strategies in terms of getting there and finding employment. Hungarian passports often used for travelling to countries other than Hungary appear useful in this regard. This is similar to the Polish policy of temporary access to the labour market officially known as a "declaration of intent to entrust work to a foreigner (*oświadczenie o zamiarze powierzenia pracy cudzoziemcowi*)" (cf. Górny et al. 2018: 4). Many Transcarpathians (as well as immigrants from other regions) reach Czechia having Polish visas in their Ukrainian passports. Relatively easy to obtain, it serves as a means of getting to the Schengen zone. In this so-called "Polish pattern" (Drbohlav and Seidlova 2016: 109) the work is either unregistered or done by Polish companies who post

⁴ Importantly, the two latter are rather invisible on the map of destinations on a nationwide scale.

their Ukrainian workers to the Czech Republic, raising certain social and legal concerns (Trčka et al. 2018).

In the meantime, new destinations have emerged. The United Kingdom has become within the reach of Hungarian passport holders, while at the same time inaccessible for Ukrainian citizens. Thus, work in the UK has become possible for some of the inhabitants of the region following the 2011 amendment to the Hungarian Law on Citizenship. It has become particularly popular after an increase in migration pressure beginning in 2014. Transcarpathians can now be met on the British construction sites and warehouses.

Poland, a popular destination in other parts of Western Ukraine since the 1990s appeared as a destination country in Transcarpathia – although limited in its popularity – only after 2014.⁵ Polish salaries and work conditions are not appealing to the inhabitants of this region who already have well developed networks in the Czech Republic. Although Poland is not a common destination for work, it appears popular for other activities. Apart from aforementioned “gate” to the Czech Republic, the country is attractive for its market of second-hand cars. At the time of my fieldwork, the “European-plates” (*evroblahy*), vehicles registered not only in Poland but also in Slovakia, Hungary, Czech Republic and others, were popularly driven without their re-registration in Ukraine in order to avoid taxation. This practice has largely decreased (however there is no data on that at the moment of writing this article), since in February 2019 certain measures were taken in order to simplify the re-registration on the one hand and increase fines for failing to do so on the other (UNIAN 2019). According to the individuals involved in this practice, these regulations do not apply to foreigners and Hungarian passport holders are more likely to manoeuvre between the given laws in order to keep their cars “European” (as they are often called) while saving money on registration. Even if work in Poland is not a reality, cars with Polish license plates and adverts of brokers offering Polish visas still contribute to the increased Polish presence in Transcarpathia.

Transnational and cross-border links to Hungary are limited largely to those Transcarpathians who identify, along with their spouses, as Hungarians. Even though Hungarian labour market is not as attractive as the Czech or British ones, it is still relatively popular among Hungarian speakers who not only do seasonal work but – and necessarily the same people – invest in properties in Eastern Hungary and share their lives between the two (or more) countries as well.

⁵ I have no knowledge on Solotvyno-to-Poland migration and I have not seen any adverts offering work in Poland. However, this kind of adverts can be spotted in the towns of Mukachevo and Uzhhorod. During my fieldwork in the latter, I interviewed one person who used to work in Poland.

Solotvyno: crisis and mobility on the grassroots level

As stated in the introduction, since the very beginning of its existence, Solotvyno was a salt mining centre. Surface mining dates back to ancient times and the underground mining to the Middle Ages, while industrial methods began in the 18th century (Dyakiv 2012: 69; Privalov & Panova 2008: 155). The Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 had its impact on economic policy, capital relations and the further development of modern industry and capitalist modes of production. Salt mining was not the main branch – or even one of the major ones – of a Hungarian economy dominated by agriculture, cattle breeding, and in terms of mining, coal (Butschek 1994; Hanák 1975). Still, the town served as a significant salt resource not only for Hungary but for the Habsburg Empire as a whole. Further in the course of history, authorities of the interwar Czechoslovakia invested in the mines as well as in local infrastructure. After the Second World War the town faced intensive industrial and technological development due to serving the demands of entire Soviet Union⁶ (Dyakiv 2012; Makara 1982; Privalov & Panova 2008). Now in the 21st century, with the salt mines closed and infrastructures dismantled – its metal parts, including large pieces of towers, rails and equipment ending on a scrap-heap – the busy industrial landscape has turned into an apocalyptic site with scenes of deserted ruins testifying to a bygone industrial “radiant past” (cf. Burawoy and Lukács 1992).

Facing lack of regular employment, Solotvynians searched for work elsewhere. Before 2014 the popular destinations were the Czech Republic, Russia, Hungary and to a lesser degree Romania as well as Ukraine’s big cities such as Kyiv, Donetsk or Mariupol. After 2014, Czechia remained the most common destination-which also became a destination for those who used to go to Russia-while some people started going to the UK, whereas Russia almost disappeared from the local migration map. The popularity of Czech Republic and Hungary increased – along with the practice of obtaining Hungarian passports – while the popularity of Russia decreased for reasons previously mentioned. Simultaneously, new destinations such as the UK, have emerged because of the possibility for Hungarian document holders to travel and work there. Czech Republic remained popular also among those who held exclusively Ukrainian citizenship.

Migration mostly takes a short-term “circulation,” with individuals involved in locating their lives and leisure centres in Solotvyno, dividing time between *here* and *there*. Others have left the town for good. Permanent resettling abroad

⁶ It would be an exaggeration though to consider Solotvyno as a crucial salt supplier in the USSR.

in most cases are Hungarian passport holders who reside in the EU countries, not necessarily Hungary. The branches of employment are production (both males and females), construction and renovations (men) and cleaning (women). It is difficult to speak of a direct continuity of industrial experience between working in the mines at home and other branches abroad. However, in the case of men in the 40+ age group, the experience gained in the mines can translate into skills – such as knowledge of different kinds of tools and machines – which prove useful in other types of employment or making it easier to learn new skills.

The amount of time spent *here* (the town, the region, the country) and *there* (Russia, Czechia, Hungary, UK and other countries and places), have consequences in the social, cultural and economic life of the local community. It may seem obvious that the experience of travelling and working abroad influences the way groups and individuals perceive “their” place of origin and the feeling of belonging. This is also the case with the non-migrants who are exposed to the experiences of the others. Images of *here* and *there* shaped by migration and cross-border mobility are worth considering when it comes to analysing the local outcomes of the global processes.

The perception of geographical distances in relation to symbolic ones and the amount of time and effort necessary in order to travel between *here* and *there* is also noteworthy. For example, some Sototvynians regularly travel – or did travel – to Moscow or Prague but have never been to the towns and villages just across the border in Romania. Different relations between the time spent *here* and the time spent *there* can be observed, whereby “there” has no constant character as circular migrants change their destinations according to labour market and travelling opportunities. Safeguarding the right to enter the territories and labour markets of the destination countries is essential in securing the livelihood in Ukraine.

Russia and the Czech Republic: proximity and change

Before 2014 the Russian capital city seemed closer and more accessible to many Sototvynians than the neighbouring Sighet (Romania) and not so distant Nyiregyhaza (Hungary) or Košice (Slovakia). Ukrainian passport holders could travel to Russia uninterrupted and Transcarpathian townships were well connected with Moscow by regular buses and irregular mini-buses (*marshrutki*) providing door to door transport. This was enhanced by the popularity of Russian TV (including the news channels), music, and movies (broadcasted by Ukrainian stations). However, this westernmost region of Ukraine has not avoided the results of tensions with the country’s Eastern neighbour. After post-2014 developments,

Ukrainian passports and origin from the West of the country started to present a risk for those who worked in this country.

“Everything there [in the Moscow suburbs] was built by our people, from Transcarpathia, Ukrainians, Romanians and Hungarians,” I was told to by Alexandr – an ethnic Romanian in his mid-thirties and a manual worker with migratory experience in Russia and Czechia – back in 2011. He also complained about workers from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Moldova who, as he believed, they lowered salaries on Moscow construction sites. According to him they worked for 300 USD per month plus three meals a day and still are satisfied. In his opinion, Transcarpathians were in a much better situation as compared to Tajiks and other immigrants since they still had chances for finding employment *here* and when in Moscow *there* (“our people” or simply “ours”) for at least 1000 USD. Alexandr went to Russia several times and proudly showed me the photos of construction sites at the outskirts of Moscow; luxurious villas and swimming pools whose owners and construction companies would pay, as he put it, “a good money” (up to 2000 USD) for good workers – *us, our people*. Ivan (an ethnic Romanian, manual worker and a truck-driver in his forties), came back from Moscow to his hometown of Solotvyno in November 2010. He had worked for three months on a construction site Russian capital city. In April 2011 he was planning to go there again to work for three months, bringing back some money, since his earnings at home were not enough to afford basic needs. In Moscow he was hoping to earn between 800 and 1000 USD per month with food provided. The work was supposed to be arranged by a man from one of the neighbouring villages who had all the necessary networks and a minibus that would pick him up from his home in Solotvyno and take him to the location in Moscow for 100 USD.

Memories and opinions associated with the Czech Republic, its labour market and work conditions were more positive. Florian – a Romanian in his mid-forties who is a manual labourer and mechanic – used to work there in the early 2000s. He travelled around this country and worked its construction sites, but what he enjoyed most were, as he describes “...small towns where there were just two streets, one bar and that was it.” In such places everybody would all know and greet one another. When asked about the inhabitants’ attitude to the foreigners he said, “...unless there was a fool who would look for trouble, everything was fine.” However, he suggested that this would not happen often. When I talked to Vasili, an ethnic Romanian in his fifties and manual labourer/craftsman in autumn 2009, he was already retired but his memories from the construction site in Prague were still vivid. He was keen to explain the difference between the *Czechs* and “the *Ours*” attitudes to work; he assured me that the Czechs did not

do any work other than that specifically assigned to them. “They wouldn’t even move the cement bag if it disturbs their work,” he told me. He considered it an advantage of Transcarpathians to be able to do the tasks they were not expected to do. He used to be employed as a bricklayer but once when a welder was missing he did the welder’s job and his Czech employers were so impressed that later on they would hire him to do *everything*.

When I met the previously mentioned Ivan and Alexandr again in the Summer 2016, Alexandr no longer intended on going to Russia. He had been deported from the country a year before which made him reconsider his plans for the future. Like most of his friends and colleagues he was thinking about Czechia and as he spoke Hungarian he was also considering applying for citizenship of this country. “If you are from Western Ukraine, they will not ask whether you are Romanian from Transcarpathia, if you are from the West you are a banderite (banderovets – a Ukrainian nationalist) and that’s it,” he stated, explaining the reasons and the broader context behind his deportation. In his opinion, even with the lower price of the Russian currency, it was still worth the effort to go there. However, the living conditions and general attitude towards the migrants has worsened over the last few years. Police harassment combined with the low exchange rate of Russian ruble has put Russia even further down on the list of countries chosen by Transcarpathians as a migration destination.

Ivan’s situation was similar, yet more “successful” than Alexandr. Giving up work in Russia, he began working in the Czech Republic again, just as he used to in the early 2000s. This time, like many other Ukrainian passport holders, he travelled there with Polish visa, which was commonly believed to be easier to obtain in the visa centres in Uzhhorod, Ivano-Frankivsk and Lviv than the Czech ones. In his opinion, finding a job in Czechia was not a problem and Prague was well connected with his hometown. Working unregistered, he earned around 100 UAH⁷ per hour. He claimed he would have earned more if he had a Czech visa. Nevertheless, this amount of money, according to him, was significantly more than one could have earned in Ukraine. Interestingly, from the regional perspective, recalling construction sites in Prague, Ivan complained about Ukrainian co-workers from Lviv and Ivano-Frankivsk who would refuse to speak Russian and disliked it when he would address them in that language. His command of Ukrainian was rather poor, particularly when it came to technical vocabulary.

Volodymyr – an ethnic Ukrainian in his early sixties living in one of the nearby villages – whom I got to know in the summer of 2016, had worked in Russia, or

⁷ About 3,5 EUR in September 2016 (i.e., at the time of our conversation).

the Russian FSSR for most of his adult life. His last visit was in 2014, claiming that if it was not for the war, he would never have stopped working in Moscow. When we talked at his workplace in Solotvyno (the job itself was quite law paid with no prosperous perspective for the future), he complained about the situation in Ukraine, which according to him, had been getting increasingly worse since independence. He was truly convinced that the place of Ukraine was by Russia: a prosperous country where most of Transcarpathia's wealth came from thanks to hard work which translated into remittances. Under the tense Ukrainian – Russian relations and uneven rate of the Russian currency, he did not consider it an option to return there. Although he was equipped with a new Ukrainian passport, he was not sure what to do with it, as in order to work abroad one also needed a visa (which he was not sure he would get). His situation and plans for the future remained unspecified.

By 2017, with Russia no longer an attractive destination, Czech Republic seemed to have taken its place among those who had already been involved in migration and those who had only recently begun (or to work in general). When I got to know Maria, a Romanian and a daughter of an educated white-collar worker – back in 2010, she was a teenager attending secondary school. Her older brother, Adrian, worked as a blue-collar worker in one of the local companies. After graduating and getting married, Maria set her feet “on the migration track.” In the subsequent years, with her Solotvynian husband (also Romanian and similar age) she lived in Prague and worked as a cleaning person while her husband worked in construction. They stayed there, or actually just entered, based on 6-months valid Polish visas. As with his sister, Adrian also lived in the Czech capital city and just like his brother-in-law, he worked in construction. However, unlike his sister and brother-in-law, he had Hungarian citizenship which safeguarded his residency. As he told me, travelling on the Prague Metro felt like home, as Ukrainian and Russian languages can be constantly heard. In his assessment, most people come from Transcarpathia and Ivano-Frankivsk regions, however, there also was an increasing number of workers from Central and Southern Ukraine (which was where the Russian speakers came from). Their mother would occasionally send them packages through the mini-bus drivers or neighbours who travel to Czechia with their own cars. She also maintained a regular contact with them via Skype. Maria and her brother would also return at least three times a year, helping the family back home with renovations, housework, and gardening (which is how we had an opportunity to meet and talk).

Great Britain: the new destination

Unlike Russia and the Czech Republic, Great Britain appeared as a destination only after 2011 with its popularity among Transcarpathians increasing after 2014. As a new phenomenon limited to a particular group (Hungarian passport holders), its profile in local public space and narratives – such as in the form of advertisements – was not as high as other countries. Even if small in numbers, Transcarpathian migration to the UK presents a noteworthy account of the way historical legacies, ethnic identities, diaspora politics and migration intersect. It also contributes to individual and collective agency and entrepreneurship of those who circumvent the obstacles and use the given circumstances to their benefit. Travelling to and working in the UK is possible thanks to the Hungarian passports which, as previously mentioned, are granted based on Hungarian citizenship policy. This in turn references the historical legacy of the Kingdom of Hungary and the current national (re)building policy. This fact also narrows the scope of this kind of “Ukrainian” migration to Transcarpathia. I illustrate this point using the example of Imre, an ethnic Hungarian, entrepreneur in his mid-forties.

In 2010 Imre was operating a small retail business. In 2016, while still maintaining the business, he began travelling to London in a “circular mode,” working on construction sites and renovations. The company he worked for was owned by “...some Russians who have lived there for a long time,” describing his employers. He would go there approximately every three months, staying for a similar amount of time. In order to get there he used low-fare airlines from Debrecen or Budapest airports in Hungary. Alternatively, he travelled by the Satu-Mare (Romania) to London bus, which he boarded in the Hungarian town of Mataszelka. Even though the starting point was closer to his hometown, he considered the Hungarian location better as the bus stopped near the supermarket giving him a chance to do some additional grocery shopping for London. His strategy involved other countries than those of origin and destination (Hungarian documents, transportation hubs and supermarkets in Hungary) and as such required certain transnational competence. While living in the UK, Imre tried to save as much as possible, thus travelling by bus – even though a 30-hour long trip – would enable him to bring cheaper food from Ukraine and Hungary. The bus presented a more attractive alternative to the plane, as it was not only cheaper but allowed for more luggage, including glass jars and bottles. While in London, apart from supermarket chains, he would also shop at Polish grocery stores. He enthusiastically recalled the sausages from one of the most recognized Polish meat producers. Transferring his remittances, he used the service of, in his words, “...some Moldovan company which doesn’t charge commission.”

When we met in Solotvyno between 2016 and 2017, Imre looked upon with resignation and hopelessness at Ukraine, pointing to the ubiquitous corruption, lack of perspective and the war in Donbas, which he considered to be “... just a show.” He was not fond of life in London, either. The city itself was too big, too grey and too noisy. He did not feel comfortable in the “multicultural” environment as much as he disliked the fact of being separated from his family back in Ukraine. In fact, he was critical towards the widespread emigration from his hometown which, in his opinion, affected families, friendships and neighbourhoods in a negative way.

Hungary: an awkward bond

The difficulties some faced in Ukraine resulted in international mobility. However, Hungary, despite its symbolic presence in the region, is not necessarily seen as an alternative. Before 2012, there was the concept of a specific exclusion from the imagined Hungarian national community. The vast majority of the people travelling to Hungary identified as Hungarians. Despite shared language and bearing similar names and surnames, they were referred to as “Ukrainians” or “Russians” by their co-ethnics from an ideological homeland. In addition, they were exposed to mistreatment by Hungarian border guards and police who often treated them with an aloofness that sometimes turned into superiority and contempt.

In 2011 my frequent and intense conversations with Gábor, an ethnic Hungarian in his forties, a former miner who then worked as a technician, accustomed me to his fierce criticism regarding virtually everything in Ukraine. Everything from the state of the country to his hometown, his workplace, state of the national, regional and local healthcare and infrastructure and more. In his opinions, he did not spare Hungary either. As an ethnic Hungarian, he considered this country “his” and disliked the way immigrants from Ukraine – most of them of Hungarian ethnicity – were treated. He also recalled, with discontent, the fact that everywhere he would go people asked whether he was “...from the East.” He shared a bitter story of the migration experience in Budapest. He set off for the first time in the early 1990s. He went there, together with friends who had a relative in Budapest and who was supposed to help them find work. Once Budapest they got employment demolishing a building in the city suburbs. The work was far below Hungarian standards but still significantly more than they would have received in Ukraine. After a while, when returning to Budapest without planning anything in advance, they ended up sleeping outdoors on the outskirts of the city until, by chance, meeting an older woman who allowed them to stay in her leisure cottage (*dacha*).

The story was no better for Istvan, an ethnic Hungarian in his thirties, who had been working in the agriculture sector in northwest Hungary in 2003. The work had been arranged by a woman from Sotolvyno who was married to a Hungarian citizen and lived there, employing Transcarpathians. Istvan and the other migrant workers felt cheated, their earnings much smaller and work conditions much tougher than promised. His passport was taken away from him and he had to struggle to get it back in order to be able to leave earlier than planned. When I met Istvan and Gábor during 2016 and 2017, they lived in Sotolvyno, using their Hungarian passports – obtained after 2011 – for short visits in Romania, Hungary and Slovakia. In Istvan’s case, these were also work-related, since as a professional driver, he occasionally carried passengers to and from these countries.

Together with the post-2011 widespread acquisition of Hungarian passports, migration routes and strategies change, “reversing” to some degree, the relations between “home” and “destination” countries. Nevertheless, they remained awkward. During this time there were the uniformed officers from the country of actual residence that were likely to give the travellers “suspicious looks.” In addition, the locals, Sotolvynians or Transcarpathians, regardless of their ethnic identity, still seemed to be perceived by their Transcarpathian Hungarian passport holders as “Ours,” but increasing identification with Hungary as a state could be observed. Pro-Hungary sentiment and Hungarian nationalism seemed to emerge even among those who had never previously expressed such views. Nevertheless, the emergence of nationalism among the minority groups appears as secondary to the process of acquiring citizenship.

Hungarian citizenship, diaspora and other such policies aimed at territories with which the country shares common history also appeared as a subject of discussions and concerns to some of the Hungarian passport holders. This kind of involvement of Hungarian national ideology extends beyond the boundaries of the nation-state, meeting Ukrainian state-building efforts and pursuit of territorial integrity. Hungarian extra-territorial policy also takes the shape of subsidies not only for Hungarian speaking schools and cultural institutions, but also health care institutions in Transcarpathia regardless of the language of their services. In the framework of “gesture politics”, Ukrainian cultural initiatives in the region are also supported (Eróss, Kovály and Tátrai 2017). Apart from its symbolic value and travelling opportunities it offers, Hungarian citizenship can also entitle one to the country’s pension fund, or to put it simply, a “five times higher pension,” even if one has never worked in Hungary. However, to fully benefit from the possibilities granted to the ‘foreign’ (i.e. Hungarian) passport holders, one needs to register as a resident. The need for registration boosts the real estate market in Hungary but requires certain resources, both financial and social, from the new

citizens. Apart from dual citizenship itself, circular migration and cross-border commuting between the two countries is also strengthened by the requirement of permanent residence in Hungary for at least six months per year in order to be counted as a resident and eligible for the pension fund. This all contributes to the increased “circulation” between Ukraine and Hungary but does not necessarily translate into work in the latter.

Conclusions

Familiarity with language and culture attributed to the destination country or region shaping migration patterns and transnational social spaces, such as the economic (availability of job offers and attractiveness of salaries) and policy (accessibility of labour market) factors do. In Transcarpathia, destinations of migration and the strategies of obtaining the necessary documents⁸ are to a large extent grounded in the regional and local specifics such as historical legacies and living social memories of the past, and ethnic and linguistic composition and social networks worked out in relation to these aspects.

For instance, working in Russia can be considered a part of the “Soviet legacy”. It can be traced in the common fluency in Russian language, which had not been spoken in Solotvyno before 1944 (its knowledge in the region was limited to the Russia-oriented intellectual circles). These language skills are accompanied by competency in Russian popular culture and news.⁹ The visa-free regime between the two countries was an important policy factor encouraging travel to this destination, turning quite marginal after the post-2014 political developments in Ukraine. Hungarian passports are granted on the basis of reference to history and nationalist narratives. They enable recipients to travel and work within the European Union. Thus, applying for Hungarian citizenship is not necessarily related to Hungarian identity or the intention of working in this country, although in some cases it might. Czechia appears not only as the most popular destination but also covers with the widest plethora of documents, making it more “accessible” for Czech and Polish visas or Hungarian passports. The popularity of this country corresponds with positive social memory of the interwar Czechoslovakia which Transcarpathia used to be a part of (cf. Uherek 2009). Livelihood strategies, as observed in the fieldwork and described in this

⁸ I deliberately avoid the term “work permits” or “work and travel permits” as the actual and official functions of the documents do not necessarily overlap.

⁹ It shall be acknowledged that over the last decade, the use of Ukrainian language in Solotvyno has increased while the popularity of Russian TV has decreased.

article, contribute to the bottom-up responses to transformation processes and the legacies of the past. Existing political and economic conditions appear as altered, transformed and put in motion through strategies of survival. Pragmatic responses to political and economic conditions derive from the regional and local specificities. These kinds of actions also reveal individual and collective agency in developing migration strategies and navigating between existing political, economic and legal contradictions to an individual's benefit. These strategies change with the political developments in both "sending" and "receiving" (or potentially receiving) countries and regions. Ethnographic studies of these dynamics provide us with the evidence of the local outcomes of the (inter)national and global processes, including the regimes of mobility and their bottom-up reshaping. No doubt this activity, on the grassroots level, undermines these regimes, creating economic opportunities for individuals, groups and households. However, this does not introduce significant changes in the existing hierarchies and social inequalities (cf. Faist 2016) which can be perceived as fitting within the neoliberal strategy of "human resources management" and individualisation of livelihood strategies.

Stephen Castles (2010: 1579) notes that social theories, both "critical" and "mainstream", applied to migration studies often fall into the trap of political and economic determinism and fail to recognise human agency. This can also be said about various kinds of large-scale concepts and master-narratives which loose the actual people and their individual and collective problems out of sight (cf. Han 2018: 339). It does not mean that social and cultural research should not pay attention to macro-forces, which the position of particular groups and individuals is embedded in. Quite the contrary. To quote Don Kalb, ethnography "...can show how everyday practices and social relationships are embedded in the peculiarities of local paths of change, and in trajectories of possible becomings" (Kalb 2002: 69). Recurrent fieldwork in the small town of Soltvyno enabled me to capture significant changes in local migration patterns and the ways they mirror international political developments and policy frames. It has also revealed persisting exclusionary mechanisms and the need of constant negotiation of power asymmetries and underprivileged position of its inhabitants.

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To become a Pilgrim: Pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela as a Construction of the Pilgrim Body

Tereza Picková

Abstract: This work focuses on how contemporary pilgrims walking to Santiago de Compostela understand their experience. Through the analysis of interviews with nine pilgrims and an auto-ethnographic diary with a strong dose of reflexivity I want to show that pilgrimage can be understood as a process of constructing a pilgrim body. “To become a pilgrim” is achieved through six different strategies, which are walking, socialising, solitude, separation (from everyday life), asceticism, and faith. This experience results in a form of a technique of the body (Mauss 1968) which can be learnt and used in everyday life after the pilgrimage ends. Pilgrim body is a complex skill, consisting of physical, mental, spiritual and social dimensions, each describing a different aspect of the pilgrimage itself, all embodied in the physical body of a pilgrim. Through such an approach I want to show that we might understand pilgrimage as a form of physical experience with transcendental overlap, focused mainly on individual progress, but constructed together in friendly communitas of pilgrims, described by Victor Turner in his classic study (Turner 1969). Usage of these benefits gained from pilgrimage and the life of Pilgrim body in everyday life is analysed as well.

Key words: pilgrimage, Santiago de Compostela, pilgrim body, communitas, autoethnography

Introduction

“This is the end. My body probably felt that I will let it rest soon, so my calves and hips started to ache. Finally, limping on both legs, I reached the albergue (hostel) and in the glass-door I saw the reflection of my pilgrim-self for the last time; smelly clothes, mussed-up hair, in pain, deady tired, and perfectly happy.” (autoethnographic diary, 29 August 2017, Muxía)

My pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela took place in August 2017, lasted for ten days and in total I walked about 300 km.¹ This (rather short) journey became the main source of data for my bachelor’s thesis, homonymous with this paper, that came out of it one year later. Through the auto-ethnographic diary from my journey and interviews with other pilgrims after my pilgrimage I am trying to understand what it means to become a pilgrim through composition of a pilgrim body. My research takes the perspective of anthropology of the body, and through such an approach I describe the strategies of the construction of these pilgrim bodies, their nature, and how these experiences are handled after the pilgrimage is over, lingering in the physical body of the pilgrim.

I argue that pilgrim’s experience is anchored in the physical dimension (physical body), but consists of three other dimensions: mental, social and spiritual. Each of these dimensions is of the same importance, describing a different aspect of the pilgrimage. This four-dimensional form of experience or “habitus of the pilgrim” describes the ways in which one becomes a pilgrim in his² own body. Certain strategies are used to achieve the pilgrim body, on which I will elaborate below. Apart from the construction of the pilgrim body, I will analyse how pilgrims deal with this embodied experience once the pilgrimage is over.

Theoretical framework

*“I have this diary for a month or so, but up until now, only theoretical notes about *communitas* and such has been written here. It will be my main tool of research on the journey which starts in a week. I feel like I know so little about ethnography, about how to do this properly. I also wanted to see the general framework of pilgrimage, so I have seen the film “Wild”, and read “Diary of a Magus”. Boy, that was some bullshit.”* (autoethnographic diary, 2 August 2017, Prague)

¹ This work was supported by the grant SVV 260 596 and Progres Q18 (Charles University).

² When referring to an indefinite pilgrim, I am using masculine pronouns, unless the feminine gender needs to be stressed.

Communitas

Despite the recent shift in the anthropological approach towards the study of pilgrimages, the classical work of Victor and Edith Turner remains an intuitive analytical starting point. Turner builds upon Arnold van Gennep's study of rituals of passage (Gennep 1960) and reframes pilgrimage as such ritual. Focusing on the liminal phase of the ritual, the Turners observe the unstructured communities of pilgrims, and introduces the term *communitas* (Turner 1969). It is only through the power ascribed by all to ritual, particularly to the Eucharistic ritual (which in part commemorates the pilgrim saint), that likeness of lot and intention is converted into commonness of feeling, into "*communitas*" (Turner, Turner 1978: 13). The unstructured social groups of equals sharing the zero social role status has become one of the key concepts of this work. However, I take another perspective than the religious study of the ritual and focus on the pilgrimage as a gathering of people sharing the ritual of pilgrimage, which often has little to do with Christianity as such.

Even though the Turnerian approach is the most inspiring, recent debate concerning the shift in the study of pilgrimages must be addressed. One of the main sources of the criticism of *communitas*, that it failed to take account of the mundane conflicts inherent in pilgrimage, is used as the very foundation of the new approach. *Communitas* is seen as just one idealizing discourse about pilgrimage rather than an empirical description of it (Eade, Sallnow in Coleman 2002: 357). Furthermore, the universalism of the Turners' work tends to overlook the complexity of the problem. According to Eade and Sallnow, there is no pilgrimage, but pilgrimages (Eade, Sallnow in Coleman 2002: 360), and they should be studied as such.

This work does not aim to describe the specificity of the Camino de Compostela; it aims to do quite the opposite. The notion of pilgrim body construction is anchored in the Turnerian perspectives, as it appears thanks to the unstructured socio-spatiality and timelessness that the framework of *communitas* offers. Moreover, I argue that the pilgrim body is a construct of a rather universalist nature and can be indeed found in pilgrimage as such. Therefore, this analysis does not have to be concerned about pilgrimages, but only about a pilgrimage. The pilgrim body is then a complex of all mental, spiritual and social competences experienced through the physical body, gained while the pilgrimage is a form of individual experience, constructed and shaped together in the community of pilgrims. This construction can happen both consciously and unconsciously. Fully formed pilgrim body is a state of mind and body: a lifestyle, an attitude or, in other words, a *habitus*.

Habitus

Even though above-mentioned scholars pay certain attention to the pilgrim's corporeality, their approaches are rather shallow in terms of the complexity this paper aims to describe. However, the notion of cultural patterns embodied by members of such cultures was throughout described by Marcel Mauss in his most inspiring essay "Techniques of the Body" (Mauss, 1968). According to him, every technique properly so-called has its own form. But the same is true of every attitude of the body. Each society has its own special habits (Marcel Mauss 1968: 71). Moreover, the Maussian approach to the study of physical skill is quite similar to the approach I am taking. His triple viewpoint of analysis constructs the physical skills based in physicality, psychology and the social sphere (e.g., through imitation, learning, etc.) (Marcel Mauss, 1968: 74). As the terrain of pilgrimages is rather specific, I added one more dimension to the constitution of the Pilgrim body technique, namely the spiritual dimension. I believe it is crucial for learning this technique, as I shall present in the analysis below.

The Body Memory

I argue that the pilgrim's corporeality is the key platform for experiencing the pilgrimage. People who walk long distances tend to develop a specific relationship to their bodies, as it is the main tool of transport; higher maintenance and intensive care are the usual phenomenon of such a process. However, pilgrimage is not only a "long walk"; it is a spiritual journey undertaken for a reason. The transactional nature of pilgrimage involved offering up one's body as the most intimate sacrifice possible, in exchange for an enduring connection with divinity (Greenia 2019: 50). This narrative penetrates the corporeality, and transforms understanding of pilgrims to the bodily experiences that occur. My approach focuses on the construction of multi-layered experience based in the body of the pilgrim, though some other aspects of the corporeality analysis should be mentioned here. Closely connected to the argument of this paper is the phenomenon of storing the memories inside the body. A rather high number of pilgrims take it literally and decide to follow the tradition of pilgrim tattoos. Pilgrims travelling to Jerusalem in the 16th century also received tattoos as a part of their pilgrimage. Such tattoos were designed with the viewer's perspective in mind, so that returning pilgrims could roll up their sleeves and tell stories about their pilgrimage. This praxis has several meanings; it is an identity-creating act, connecting the tradition of pilgrim tattoos with the contemporary trend in Western societies to use the body for identity construction. There is also a spatio-temporal dimension, which is comprised of tattoos in the form of autobiographical symbols and objects of memory, such as places a person has visited or which are immortalised in tattoos.

The symbolising of one's own life story by means of biographical events written on the body can thus contribute to a stabilisation of the self. (Kurrat, Heiser 2020: 12-13). The intense need of manifesting this new identity is closely tied with the ephemerality of the whole experience. I argue that construction of a pilgrim's body and the intense need of maintenance of this multi-layered experience after the pilgrimage is another way of the immortalization of the pilgrim's experience within his corporeality. The body is the canvas which bares the memory; whether in form of ink or in my case, a set of complex multi-dimensional practices.

Embodiment

The basis of experience is the physical body, but as stated above the experience cannot be reduced just to the physical dimension. The aim is to describe the complexity of the experience that overlaps the physical dimension of the body. It is a crucial thought to understand that body and mind do not stand in opposition; they are in fact the same position and of the same importance. The methodological condition of the unity of body and mind is described well in the work of Thomas Csordas:

“Both (Merlau-Ponty and Bourdieu) attempt not to mediate but to collapse these dualities, and embodiment is the methodological principle invoked by both. The collapsing of dualities in embodiment requires that the body as a methodological figure must itself be non-dualistic, that is, not distinct from or in interaction with an opposed principle of mind.” (Csordas 1990: 8)

This duality needs to be avoided in order to fully understand the complex experience that the pilgrimage offers.

The body is not the opposite to mental, spiritual and social experiences, but another part of it, with the same importance and role. Body and mind become the research perspective through which I analyse the experience of pilgrims who walk the Camino de Compostela.

Santiago de Compostela

The pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Spain is one of the most massive Christian pilgrimages in Europe. It took its origins from the legend of Saint James from the 8th century. According to it, St. James was trying to spread the word of God in Hispania, but he failed and travelled back to Palestine. When he died, his bodily remains were placed in a boat, which miraculously sailed near today's Santiago de Compostela. The city was built after his remains were found and displayed there. From the eleventh century, the cult of St. James spread through the

Europe. In the 12th century the famous, “The Pilgrim’s Guide to Saint James” is written, and the pilgrimage becomes massive (Le Goff & Schmitt 2002: 509-511).

Today, the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela is the most frequented and massive pilgrimages in Europe. It attracts hundreds of thousands of pilgrims from many different cultural backgrounds, of different religions and ages and with various motivations. The massive plurality of personal stories creates a specific time and space, that pilgrimage is. Every personal narrative has a place here and can be heard even in the harmonies of other voices. The experience of Camino the Santiago resonates with Turner’s description of *communitas*; a friendly unstructured community of equals, with values such as brotherhood, friendship and unity (Turner 1969). The shape of this experience is the shape of the pilgrim body.³

Methodology and data characteristics

“I am writing this in the night, but even now there is no time for this. It is so hard to keep the diary updated. There is always something to do on the Camino.” (autoethnographic diary, 19 August 2017, A Guarda)

The autoethnographic approach provides several notable advantages. It is a highly useful tool both for ethnographic research enriched with the self-observation and reflection of an insider. Such an approach is most valuable concerning the abstract bodily experiences, which are extremely difficult to both observe and discuss. The autoethnographic diary was key to the composition of the semi-structured interviews.

The interviews were conducted with nine pilgrims, six women and three men. The ages of the pilgrims were between 18 – 40 years.⁴ They were all in good

³ However, it is needed to be said, that the concept of pilgrim body is not limited to the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela only. The process of its construction is possible thanks to the pilgrim’s conceptualization of the walking journey as a pilgrimage and can be observed within other pilgrimages as well. An example can be found in the analysis of the Japanese Shikoku. A pilgrim stated, that:

“I guess something major did change. Kōbō Daishi still performs miracles.” Through hard work, ritual, and reflection, the young man had earned the salvific outcome of Shingon Buddhism; he became Kūkai in his own body.” (Thorndike 201: 38)

To become a “Kukai in one’s own body”, meaning to embody Kukai Kobo Dashi, the Buddhist monk who founded the pilgrimage and Shingon Buddhism is very similar to embodiment of the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela.

⁴ It is important to note that rather low age of the respondents could have impacted the outcomes of the analysis. Repeating the research with a wider group of respondents would perhaps bring new, crucial understandings of the pilgrim’s corporeality.

physical condition, although three of them were not experienced walkers. Two couples were interviewed (separately); the first one undertook the pilgrimage together, the second couple went separately, as one partner inspired the other to start the journey. All the other people went alone. Two of the interviews were conducted over the phone in English, other interviews were done in Prague, face to face with Czech pilgrims. Seven of the pilgrims were Czech, one was Spanish and one Polish. I have met the two pilgrims who were not Czech on my own pilgrimage, and decided to interview them later, based on non-formal interviews we had during the pilgrimage. Other pilgrims were asked for an interview via Facebook groups for Czech pilgrims⁵. The majority of the interviews were conducted in Czech (and were translated for this paper), two interviews were carried out in English. The interviews were stopped when the information received started to repeat. Two uneven groups of respondents were chosen; those who accompanied me on my journey and were interviewed quite shortly after their journey ended; the aim was to reconstruct the shared experience from different perspectives and find similarities and differences in the experiences. The second group consisted of Czech pilgrims, who had walked the Camino in the past and the aim of the more-or-less randomized selection was to collect experiences that would differ from those collected on the Camino in order to achieve a selection of extreme and different cases, as described in the methodology of Grounded Theory (Corbin, Strauss 1999).

The interviews were opened with a biographical intro. The aim was to understand the situation from which the motivation to start the Camino emerged.⁶ A set of questions based on the autoethnographic diary followed, however this core of the interview was ever changing, as the Grounded Theory approach was adopted, and the researcher aimed to be as sensible to the terrain as possible. With the prism of the body in mind, the open codes roughly outlined the dimensions of the body experiences and the activities that led to the construction of the whole experience. Through constant comparison of the old analysed data with new interviews, axial codes were established (Corbin, Strauss 1999). As the outcome, I have discovered four main dimensions of the pilgrim body; physical, mental, social, spiritual. The areas of experiencing the pilgrimage, or the activities constructing the pilgrim body were labelled as the strategies of pilgrim body construction. I have found six main strategies: walking, ascetism, separation, solitude, sharing

⁵ The facebook groups I am referring to can be found here: <https://www.facebook.com/Ultreiacz> and here <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CaminoForum>

⁶ Both the motivations and Biographical situations of the pilgrim are important factors that need to be understood. However, the paper does not work with it in concert with its deeper analysis; it works with the phenomena as data supporting the main theory.

and faith. Based on these codes, the pilgrim body construction was analysed together with the post-liminal phase of the pilgrimage and its impacts. I believe the list of mentioned strategies is not complete, however I argue that these are the main strategies every pilgrim has to come in close contact with. Even though the selection of the cases is rather small, I believe that the method is suitable for constructing an important perspective on the pilgrimage study.

The movie

After the bachelor thesis was finished and submitted, I decided to take another approach to this topic. I have mentioned above that it is nearly impossible to fully transfer the experience of the pilgrim body construction through words. In search of another tool of expression, an idea of animation has emerged. I followed this idea and created a short-animated documentary entitled PEREGRINO⁷.

Animation usually works with simplifications and symbols and this one is no exception. Reducing the analysis to pilgrim body construction and its preservation in the body by drawing this process more metaphorically so it can be understood by visual viewing helped me get closer to the core of the concept I have created. Another important finding was the universality behind the symbolic journey; the process does not necessarily need to relate to a physical pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela, but it can mean any journey, that has a complex impact on the pilgrim, and which culminates with understanding of one's problems, and perhaps, a decision to leave them behind. The spectrum of interpretation is wide enough for people to find their biography in it, if they need to.

I conclude that even though I have made the interpretation framework wider and got one step closer to making the viewers understand the concept of pilgrim body construction, I am still far from transferring the whole experience to others; at this point, it seems to me, that the only true way of understanding is to walk the pilgrimage on your own feet.

Walking the Camino, constructing the body

In this chapter I am going to present six strategies of pilgrim body construction. They are the strategies of walking, asceticism, separation, solitude, sharing and faith. This core part of the analysis works with various quotations of other pilgrims as well as my autoethnographic diary.

⁷ The movie can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3PRLD1LSdoQ&t=0s>

Learning to walk: Strategy of walking

“Today was about walking in solitude; just walking, nothing else. I walked, listened to most beautiful music, which paired with the forests all around me so well. First beams of new day started to appear through the trees, and I walked.”
(autoethnographic diary, 24 August 2017, Pontevedra)

The traditional mean of transport for pilgrims is his own legs. A pilgrim can be defined by the constant movement, which gives the pilgrimage its shape. I believe that the physical body is the anchor and the starting point of the whole construction of the pilgrim's body. Unless we teach the body how to walk like a pilgrim, we can't expect the person to think, do, or speak like a pilgrim either.

“I told myself I would like to be closer to God, right, but most of the time I was just so focused on me walking, and if I will be able to make it, that I didn't get to that.” (Petra)

Pilgrims often started their story with the description of the troubles they had with their bodies in the first few days of the pilgrimage. Usually at this point, the walking becomes a way of finding the limits of the physical body. However, this phase of pilgrimage is also a time for the transformation reflection. After some time passes, pilgrims start to observe changes in their physical selves.

“The first three days are just suffering, to get used to the weight of the bag, every step hurt...but after three days, when the body is all crumpled, you start ignoring it, and begin to take it as a standard. You notice the first blisters, but the blisters on the first blisters... you just don't care. After a while, you do not deal with anything on the physical side” (Tadeáš)

Tadeáš reflects on a forming technique of the body. The body gains the physical capital and learns how to overcome the pain. It learns how to walk like a pilgrim; it learns a new technique of walking. This quotation reflects also on the pain management, which is also an important transformation process; I will elaborate on it further below.

The most important moment of the body transformation is the shift from understanding the body as a suffering obstacle to the tool of transcendental experiences.

“I don’t know how, but somehow it was very spiritual for me. For example, I was really surprised, that I can just walk, and be aware of the walk. Other times my head is always full of thoughts, but I was not able to think at all on the Camino, I just walked. And it was amazing.” (Jana)

Walking is now a part of the physical body of the pilgrim. This means that the technique is embodied physically enough, that it does not have to be controlled or reflected consciously during the walking process and can rather be used to enter new aspects of the pilgrimage. As Jana reflects, the constant automatized walking made her feel present, yet empty-minded. The walking shifted to a physical activity with a potential of psychological and spiritual perception. The mediation in movement described by Jana is similar to experiences of the Flow⁸ state; timeless moment of absolute presence and focus, balanced between the skill and a challenge, leading to absolute calmness of the mind.

I believe walking is a learnt technique of the body in the Maussian sense, since it stays in the body as a form of skill even after the pilgrimage is over. This embodied habitus stays latent, until it is needed again; like any other physical techniques we have written in our body, such as knowing how to swim, except this one has stronger transcendental potential.

“When I went on my second pilgrimage, I very fast tuned myself to the “pilgrim self”, and started to enjoy it, the walking became meditation much faster for me than the first time. I just walked, I was the pilgrim that walks through the landscape, perceiving time differently. My friend who went with me for the first time, I could see that she is just learning how to do this as well.” (Šarlota)

Walking becomes a tool of meditation, and a process of tuning with something described as the “pilgrim self”, which I understand as a necessarily embodied part of the self in the body. Within the framework of this analysis, it describes the awaking pilgrim body during the next pilgrimage. Another pilgrim, who had never walked a pilgrimage before mentioned in the quotation of Šarlota, creates a nice illustration of contrasting behaviour without the pilgrim body habitus.

⁸ Flow is a psychological term introduced by Mihaly Csikszentmihaly, who observes such a state of mindfulness and presence in the moment in such cases as gifted children or talented people being caught in the moment while doing an activity. Activities done to achieve flow are many and often have a physical base. What they have in common is the empty mind, relaxation benefits and challenge for the actor. (Csikszentmihaly 2015).

I argue that walking is key and the main strategy of the whole process of pilgrimage. All the other strategies are happening with the walking constantly being the background. From mere physical activity it transforms into something transcendental, unconscious and affective, connected to other dimensions of the pilgrimage. In the next chapter, I will analyse how pilgrims deal with the side-product of this activity, pain.

Learning to suffer: the strategy of ascetism

“My right leg started to ache yesterday, and it is getting worse. It makes me slow, which causes great frustration. I do not care about the pain, I am worried what causes it, though. Tomorrow we walk to the mountains, and I need to be ready.” (autoethnographic diary, 24 August, Pontevedra)

“Sleep-deprived, soaking wet, stung by insects, hungry and thirsty, fighting sickness and bad mood, the pilgrim approaches step by step the destination. (...) As if these obstacles were not enough, many pilgrims tortured themselves on purpose. In the List of Miracles by Theobald from Thann we read: A certain woman, whose baby was born with a crippled arm walked a pilgrimage from Lübeck for this newborn, dressed in a simple robe and bare-foot. Another man went with no clothes at all; naked, with no protection from the sun or insects. Her clothes on the other hand were thick and from a material that was tearing her skin.” (Ohler 2000: 96)

The traditional understating of the term “ascetism” must be re-defined first for the sake of this work. Generally, we can understand it as any form of exercise (physical, moral, mental), done with certain technique in order to progress in moral or religious life (Goffi & de Fiorres 1999: 40). A pilgrims’ intimacy with exhaustion, injury, exposure, and hunger would extend to their beasts if they took any, and certainly to the human companions who shared their provisions, apprehensions, illnesses, and lice. Above all, medieval pilgrims perhaps felt more keenly than their modern counterparts that they were taking their sinful bodies to visit holier bodies (Greenia 2019: 38-39). The main difference between traditional ascetism and today’s understanding of pilgrimage is in the duality of body and mind. The point of modern pilgrimage is not to torture the body to reach spiritual epiphany by learning how to ignore pain that is enormous. Neither is it to torture the physical body that has sinned. The point is to torture the body just enough to overcome the obstacles, and through those experiences of suffering connect with the spiritual and abstract self, based in the physical dimension. Pilgrims are not tormenting the body; they are giving it a hard lesson,

teaching it and watching the progress, that brings them possibility to connect spiritually with other aspect of the pilgrimage, while the physical body becomes not muted for the sake of spiritual revelation, but emphasized and enriched with the knowledge and skill it has gained. The pilgrims experience is complex and holistic. Modern pilgrims anchor their experience in the traditional perspective of tormenting the sinner's body, but they reframe this perspective into an identity construction through overcoming burdens they had put on their own shoulders.

Identity is an important aspect for all people walking the Camino. The enormous diversity of walkers can be roughly divided to two major groups of Pilgrims and Tourists. The group of pilgrims can be structured as well (see Kurrat 2019), though the differences are not as significant, since they all share the pilgrim identity. However, there are certain tensions between pilgrims and tourists, spiritual tourists, “snack-bags” and other “non-pilgrim” walkers. They are socially constitutive performances that raise questions over who possesses the power to authenticate collective experiences, or to determine the very criteria of authentication (Coleman, Mesaritou 2018: 180). The distinction of these two groups is extremely tricky, as the status can change, and rather than categories, it seems like a wide spectrum. During my fieldwork on pilgrimages, I often had to ask myself who is a pilgrim and who is not – who am I supposed to study. And every time I had to answer myself, that I need to study everybody, who appears on the pilgrimage (Kapusta 2011: 28). Following the framework of pilgrim body construction, the focus on the distinction between the pilgrims and tourists can be found in the narratives of pilgrims in their sense of self-identification.

“The disproportion (between pilgrims and tourists – authors note) was clear just before Santiago. There was a guy from Spain with bandages all over his leg, from ankle to the knee. We asked him what happened to his leg, and he answered: “a blister”. So, we looked at our fusses, covered in blisters, and we were like – so what? This is the pilgrims detached view of things. These guys seemed like weaklings to us.” (Tadeáš)

Pilgrim Tadeáš speaks about an encounter with, what he called, “snack-bags”; people, who only carried a little bag with a snack for the day. The rest of their luggage was sent ahead by a car, so the walking part would not be so hard for them. Such people usually walk only 100km of the pilgrimage in total, because that is the minimal limit to get the Compostela⁹. Just a few kilometres before

⁹ The Compostela is a diploma for those who walked the Camino de Santiago. Each pilgrim has a Credential; the “pilgrim passport”. It needs to be shown in albergues (pilgrim

Santiago, the pilgrimage becomes a mixture of people walking very long distances, and such “snack-bags”. Stressing of the pain management is a significant motive of self-definition as a pilgrim, whose identity is endangered by the enormous crowd of people.

The self-conceptualization of a pilgrim is what makes the pilgrimage a pilgrimage and separates it from other kinds of long-distance walking trips. In other words, “If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences” (Thomas 1928). The approach pilgrims are adopting towards pain management during the pilgrimage creates a key aspect of the distinction. This binds the pilgrim community even closer and creates a shared opinion that tourists cannot understand the true meaning of the pilgrimage, because they did not take enough time, did not overcome enough obstacles or in an overall sense do not have the right attitude.

However, this unclearness of the pilgrim status vaguely based on pain management brings another problem, which is the amount of suffering that is needed to gain the status of pilgrim. If the pilgrim constructs themselves upon the pain suffered and managed, then tourism is conceptualised as the opposite of pain consumption. But the pilgrim’s status in terms of modern pilgrimage is rather ambivalent in this sense. It does not mean that the pilgrimage is not pleasant at all in the “touristic” way, as the pilgrims reinterpreted ascetism not as strict as its traditional forms. The body is supposed to be experiencing also pleasant things. It is the extent of these pleasant or profane (touristic) and unpleasant or spiritual (pilgrim) experiences, that creates the tensions between some.

“Some people have other opinions, for example one guy commented on the pilgrim forum (on Facebook), that some girl took the bus for 30km, and that she fucked up the whole pilgrimage, and it is the same as if she did not go at all, he was really mean. But we agreed on the pilgrimage with other pilgrims that it is everybody’s choice, and everyone is different, and it does not matter if you go by train or walk, or whatever.

I told myself that I am going for my own health, both mental and physical, and that you can’t have one without the other. So, when something hurt too much – the blisters just were not reconcilable with the boots. So, in the end, I rode 100 km

hostels), and every pilgrim needs to collect at least three stamps everyday to prove that he or she actually walked through these places. In Santiago de Compostela, the credential is shown to the Pilgrim office and if everything is in order, the pilgrim can get a Compostela. The Compostela is an important document that brings benefits for pupils, and it is welcomed to have it in your Curriculum vitae, especially in Spain. The motivations of some pilgrims can be impacted by this.

by bus of my 600 km journey, and I have no bad feeling about it, in fact, I don't care at all." (Tylda)

There is a fragile consensus within the community of pilgrims stating that every pilgrim should languish individually. The point is not to compare yourself with others, but with your own limits. If 80-year-old lady walks 100 kilometres with only a snack-bag, she is a pilgrim hero, but if a healthy young woman does this, she is not determined enough and considered a tourist. This definition is not absolute, but somewhat accepted by most. Today's pilgrims try to find the golden mean between these extremes, to balance their journey and make it as hard and as pleasant as their pilgrim consciousness allows them.

"In the beginning, you have this walking part, and then the social part. In the morning you are tired, you are sweating, and so on, but nobody cares that everybody sweats and stinks. And in the evening, after it, you take a shower, go outside, and want to look better than in the morning, and we go swimming, see sights, and in fact, for me I was praying mostly on the walking part. In the evening, it is shame, but I didn't think so much about God, like still I think it is pilgriming, but the evenings after walking part I focused on the different things, like sightseeing, and being together, and I became kind of tourist then." (Marie)

Time on the pilgrimage is divided between the pilgrimage and the rest. Morning is meant to be a walking part, the "pilgrim" part, with nowhere to sleep and nowhere to belong. When the place of rest is reached, the pilgrim is no longer undertrained, he can rest. At this point, the "job" is done for the day, and since there is nowhere else to walk, pilgrims often look for other activities of amusement. Tourist activities, such as drinking, sunbathing, trying local foods or going sightseeing are quite common. The main difference between tourists and such "afternoon-tourists" is, that the tourist does not "work" in the morning.

Distinguishing between pilgrims and tourists is a very complex question that remains unanswered. However, I argue that the degree to which the person feels like a pilgrim is to a great extent anchored in the amount of hard work, and pain management is one of the main tools of self-understanding in terms of the pilgrim-tourist distinction. It is one of the strategies of pilgrim body construction, because it helps to determine the pilgrim self.

Learning to (dis)connect: strategy of separation

“I think about the people I left at home; I would love to take them with me, but I know they would not understand if I wanted to just walk alone. I want them to have this experience, but I do not want them here with me. I am too busy walking alone, meeting my demons, alone.” (autoethnographic diary, 19 August, A Guarda)

Now that the physical body knows how to walk, and the pain is well managed, the pilgrim can look around and start to explore his surroundings. The pilgrimages are typically different from the everydayness. The radical change of the scenery often leads to a change in the mindset as well. But to experience this otherness of the situation fully, pilgrims must temporally disconnect from what everyday life means to them. Such a disconnection creates a distance for self-observation and perspective seeking. This is beneficial especially for those, who experience hard times in their lives, and seek help on this journey.

“You are cut from the everyday reality, ordinary experiencing. It is about stepping out of the frame, your role you play in the society, like when you press “pause”, and you have time to think, experience, live, and observe the paused picture; see what it is you are looking at really. You have the perspective, and so when you come back, you are not lost anymore.” (Tadeáš)

This “stepping out of the frame” does not only refer to the geographic location and temporary abandonment of the thoughts linked with “everyday life”, but more importantly the everyday social role.

Time is an issue often discussed among pilgrims. Most of them agree that to really experience the pilgrimage, one must spend as much time on the way as possible. Some of them claim it is impossible to gain any deeper experiences in a shorter time than two weeks. I felt the same arriving to Santiago de Compostela after a two-week journey myself. Pilgrims often mentioned that time is important for a form of “spiritual hygiene”.

“In my opinion it is good to use the time on the pilgrimage well to think about anything you have no time to think about at home. Our lives are very fast, one has no time to think about the values, or himself. It takes some time to get in the mood, to calm down and start thinking about something. About two weeks, I guess. You need to free the mind (...). When you get away from the pressure to a calmer environment, where you have only one problem; to pack your things in

the morning, get from point A to point B (...) after some time you start to free the mind. Our minds do not work like machines, so the change will not immediately mean to start thinking differently, but after some time, that I cannot define, it will become freer. People with regular spiritual hygiene will get there sooner, others later. People just walk, are alone, think and it drives them crazy (laughter).” (Daniel)

Daniel understands the pilgrimage as time and space, where the everyday thoughts are reduced in a way which allows pilgrims to think differently. I reinterpret this process as learning how to think like a pilgrim. If it is possible to teach the body how to walk like a pilgrim, then it should be also possible to find a pilgrim state of mind. I believe that using the time in the described way is one such moment.

Another crucial dimension of the separation process is the social status of a pilgrim. The Spanish term for pilgrim “peregrino” can be translated as “nobody, weirdo, stranger”. The anonymity of the pilgrims is a very important factor. It allows *communitas* to emerge, as all the pilgrims are degraded to the same level of strangeness, or nothingness, and the status is shared. It also creates a very wide spectrum of people, so different and so colourful, that every story becomes both original and accepted. At the same time, protected by the anonymity, such groups are perfect for sharing the deepest fears and personal demons with others, who gain the paradoxical status of strangers, but also companions. This way, the pilgrimage creates a social sphere, giving pilgrims enough time and space, and the status of zero social role.

“It is really great that you arrive with zero-social role. Not only here, whenever you travel really. Home, you have the role of student, sister, daughter, student, but you arrive there, and you are clean. You can either play whatever role you want, or you can just be you – the real you, you do not need to play these roles.” (Tylda)

For Tylda, the zero-social role status was an opportunity; a chance to “try” on different masks, to try to be someone else, play a different role and see what happens. Everyone can share whatever they need, without being judged. People walking the Camino can be whoever they want; even themselves.

In this chapter I described the importance of separation from everydayness, and the possibility to accept the role of the pilgrim, creating a space for creative self-conceptualization. The time needed for this transformation is individual, but the longer the better, as the consensus stands. This strategy is crucial since it reflects on the social frame of the pilgrimage. However, the next strategy I am going to describe, which stands in opposition, is as important as this one.

Learning to think: the strategy of solitude

“Alone. That is the Camino for me. Me, the forest, the path, the music in my ears.”
(autoethnographic diary, 24 August, Pontevedra)

Many people reflect their motivation for undergoing the pilgrimages as a wish for “some time to spend alone”. However, thanks to *communitas* forming on the pilgrimage, to be alone on the Camino de Santiago is a tough task; one starts the pilgrimage alone but finishes it with a dozen new friends.

The function of solitude for the pilgrim body construction draws partly from the common wish to spend time alone and think, partly it is made possible by separation from everyday life. It is an individual part of construction, when the pilgrim focuses only on himself, his thoughts, feelings, and enjoys the presence of the walking.

“I thought of this as of a form of therapy, autotherapy I might even say. I overcame myself, became calm, I stop being impacted by perceptions made by humans. Then you can open, open to the outer world, natural perceptions, and this way you can open to yourself; if you can take a good look around you, you can also take a good look to your core.” (Daniel)

Daniel relates mainly to the mental calmness, absence of the hectic life perceptions, and delineates himself from the norm. Autotherapy is linked with solitude, self-cultivation and self-understanding. Oneness of the mind and spirit is described through studying one’s core, along with the unity of self and the pilgrimage itself.

This construction deals mainly with the mental dimension of the pilgrimage. However, the spirituality of the journey is usually experienced in solitude as well. The surroundings of pilgrim create an atmosphere for such experiencing, as well as the state of mind that the pilgrims often are in; i.e., opened to “something”, an unclear idea of spirituality of the pilgrimage. Even though the Camino de Santiago is traditionally a Christian pilgrimage, it does not have to be the Christian Holy Spirit that mediates the mystical experiences.

“It is really intense, one is alone, no one around, really no one; I was completely alone, and I started to feel that I was going wild; I was in nature, and I started to be affected by its laws, the biorhythms, I felt the need to have people around me to be socialized, to be normalized by society” (laughter).

“Can you please elaborate on the “going wild?” (Interviewer)

“In the solitude, there are no other people to talk to, there is only your thoughts, your experiences, and silence. Words can’t describe this, but you feel that you are going wild; you disassociate yourself from society and its rules, and you associate more with something ... it is really hard to describe by words it is a state of mind. When you have people around you, everything works as it should, but when you are alone, you have no possibility to share the experience, you are not so stable, and it borders on meditations, so I ended up with almost mystical experiences (laughter).” (Interview with Tadeáš)

Tadeáš frames his experiences as a mystical journey made possible by becoming. The power and beauty of nature invokes a spiritual dimension, described by many pilgrims walking the Camino, who chose not to associate themselves explicitly with Christianity.

Lastly, it is needed to elaborate on the dangers of choosing the solitude. In fact, the Camino the Santiago creates a relatively safe space for the pilgrims, which is one of the many reasons why is it attractive for so many women. Many female pilgrims choose this pilgrimage to show their power and independence; but at the same time, they know that they are not in real danger, and can focus on overcoming their own limits, rather than being scared for their lives.

“If I did it for someone, I did it for myself. For my own need. But also, for others; I wanted to show everybody that I can do this. That I am not such a lady. That I don’t mind sleeping under the stars, being nibbled by ants; to show other people that I am not a city girl that cannot do this. That was the reason I went – for myself.” (Petra)

Petra decided to use this experience as a way of showing people from her everyday life this side of her as much as she wanted to prove it to herself. She welcomes (mild) obstacles of the journey, shows her endurance and stamina by overcoming them, and through using her own power to get through this she becomes more self-confident.

The strategy of solitude is tied with the time of walking, and in the reflexive narratives is connected to both spiritual experiences, and mental processes and self-understanding. Solitude can also serve as a tool of building confidence based on overcoming the obstacles using only one’s own power. I believe that solitude as a pilgrim body construction strategy might not be accepted by all the pilgrims, but I believe that for some it has become enormous part of the pilgrimage.

Learning to talk: the strategy of sharing

“We sat on the beach, Sarah played her ukulele, George made polaroid pictures, I bothered everyone with sunflower seeds for dinner. Everyone we met so far was there, and it was beautiful, safe and it was communitas.” (autoethnographic diary, 20 August, Mougás)

This chapter might seem to stand in opposition to the previous one, showing the importance of solitude. In fact, both parts are needed for the pilgrim to fully emerge in the pilgrimage. The friendly atmosphere of pilgrimages has been described in Turner’s major work on pilgrimages (Turner 1969). It is important in terms of my work to elaborate on the social structure of the pilgrim community; in other words, how pilgrims learn to talk to one another.

“So, when the body got used to the walking and the difficulties, and you got over the physical pain, how was it then?” (interviewer)

“I started to talk to people I started to communicate more. I started conversations myself, which was something I didn’t want to do the first week, I needed to focus on myself more. But after this first week I overcame some barrier; language, physical.” (Interview with Aneta)

The body that has learnt how to walk, suffer and think as a pilgrim is ready to learn, how to talk like a pilgrim too, as well as to mediate the pilgrim identity with the others. The “pilgrim language” is English, but to improve language skills is not what I mean here – I am referring to the ways of communications, and the differences between pilgrim conversations and the conversations led in everyday life.

“At first, I was so excited, I did not know what is going on; some pilgrim, what can I say to whom, how to talk to these people. But after a while one finds out that everyone is kind of open, and that I can talk to them, because the conversation is easy, you both know what to say; you start with easy stuff, how are they, how many kilometres did the walk today, where did their pilgrimage start. But slowly you get to more important topics, like why are you walking the Camino, and so on. And you do not know if you will walk with this person the whole journey, or you will say goodbye after two hours.” (Šarlota)

Šarlota reflects on the process of understanding the character of pilgrim community. At first, pilgrims feel that they are associated with the others, but do not know how to express this connection through the conversation. After some time,

she learnt that others welcome a conversation, and that it can be built on the shared things pilgrimage brings. It is important to stress that the length of the relationship is unclear; as Šarlota says, it could be two hours, but it could be a month. It is very important to elaborate on this, because this makes the relationships between pilgrims very dynamic; strangers become companions after an exchange of a few words, so it is common to learn about personal stories of the other person in just a few minutes after meeting him for the very first time. Such short but intense relationships are built on the shared pilgrim status. As mentioned above, pilgrims stand outside the major society, having a zero-social status, which degrades them all to the same level; the social roles they play outside the pilgrimage are not important here.

“Nobody cares if you are a manager, or a zero. When you walk, you are a pilgrim, you all are, and you all share the same goal, the same struggles; food, water, shelter. You share this, and therefore you are closer to each other. Normally this is complicated, to start to talk to strangers in a subway, but you share the same experience, so you know. The more you know the more you share, and the more you share, the more you know.” (Tadeáš)

Tadeáš understands this connection through the shared experience. In his reflection I notice a very important moment for pilgrim body construction; that is sharing his own individual pilgrim experience to another and receiving other pilgrims' experiences in exchange. It is the process that reshapes and reinterprets the pilgrimage, passing the experience on to new pilgrims in the real time of their journey. Thanks to this constant narration, the pilgrim changes his identity in relation to this narration, and at the same time shapes the pilgrimage itself by passing on his reinterpretation.

As a contrast to this shared pilgrim identity, Tadeáš speaks again about “tourists”, therefore people who either make their journey easier, or walk only short distances. Above I conceptualized these people in relation to their pain management; it is not the only dimension of the pilgrimage that makes them different, though. Not only did they often not learn how to suffer like a pilgrim, but they also do not know how to talk like one.

“It was really fun to see those snack-packers on the last hundred kilometres before Santiago de Compostela. Those people have no idea what the journey is about, that it is about intense sharing of the pilgrim experience, everybody talks to everybody, everybody shares the same fate, everybody walks to Santiago, everybody shares the same struggle; food or no food, hills or no hills...” (Tadeáš)

Besides, with the increasing number of people on the pilgrimage, something I conceptualize as “pilgrim spirit” decreases. With too many people around, anonymity becomes more common, pilgrims form smaller groups, and the atmosphere is not as friendly as it was on the beginning of the pilgrimage.

One more aspect of the social structure needs to be mentioned. So far, I only spoke about such relationships formed on the Camino, but there are of course people who decide to take the pilgrimage together; in a group, or as a couple. Their journey is therefore very different from those who decide to walk alone; mainly, because this relationship can be transformed to something different for the time of the pilgrimage. Structures of the outside world do not apply on the pilgrimage, and that can create tensions between people who arrive together.

The main difference lies in the fact that the pilgrims are not responsible for one another. It might seem paradoxical concerning the friendly atmosphere, but it goes hand in hand. Pilgrims understand that the people they meet have their own story, goals and ways to deal with the Camino; hence the dynamic relationships. Pilgrims respect each other, share the experience, and of course help one another if needed. But there is no real responsibility; if one pilgrim needs to go ahead and leave someone rest for a day in albergue, there is no moral tension present. The community will take care of the wounded one, other pilgrims will help him; at the same time, the wounded pilgrim understands that the other one has to go, because his or her journey needs to be finished in the way he feels it needs to be done.

The tensions tend to be more significant, when the people arrive to the Camino in a defined relationship, such as partnership. Couples walking the Camino often speak about it as a hard lesson for their relationships, by describing the harsh conditions, pain management and other aspects of the journey. However, I believe that the difference of the social structure is one of the most crucial factors, causing these difficulties. By arriving together, people feel responsible for each other, and as I argued above, responsibility is not common among pilgrims. In a way, couples tend to limit their own experiences for the sake of the other.

“Now when I think about it, I let him set the walking speed, and I just followed. Once he wanted to teach me a lesson, and he walked so fast I could not follow, I only saw him as a small dot on the horizon (laughter), so that was very important, because I learnt how to rely on myself. Mostly, he wanted to go alone, I wanted to share with him more, but he did not, and he always run away like that (laughter) and waited for me somewhere. We went about two days completely separately, but usually we met after a few kilometres like that, so there was a lot of time for myself, which was enough for me, but Daniel probably wanted even

more, so he might walk the Camino alone. But maybe I will too, when I think about it now. It has another dimension when one is alone.

But we communicated easily, I started to talk to other pilgrims more, because I needed to share the experience, either with people around me or on the phone, which was something Daniel was not comfortable with, but I needed it, I really needed to share not only with people from the community but also with my close friends.” (Aneta)

“I think the spirituality would be different if I walked alone. When you walk as a couple, you need to look out for the other one. If I make it sound bad, she was a burden to me, I needed to take care of her, and I could not do what I wanted. You can’t just turn around and walk away the path you need to; you need to submit to the other. For example, she wanted me to wait for her, so I did, but there were places where I just didn’t want to sit on a bare rock, so I walked ahead and waited in a coffee shop or something, but we always met before we reached the albergue. You learn how to deal with it, but you are impacted, and you have an impact, and that draws you away from becoming calm, and going deeper within yourself.” (Daniel)

While Aneta prefers to walk slowly and share with others, Daniel needs to walk faster, and spent most of the journey alone. These two pilgrims embody a different amount of the various pilgrim body construction strategies needed to experience the pilgrimage fully. Moreover, their reflections are a contrast to any other relationship made on the pilgrimage itself. The presence of responsibility decreases the possibilities of pilgrimage experience. It needs to be said though that both consider their journey beneficial for their future relationship.

In this chapter, the ways of sharing the pilgrim experience within the pilgrim community are described. The pilgrimage creates a characteristic time and space for the pilgrims to interact in. However, the pilgrim body construction comes first; making alliances or caring about others comes second. Like the strategy of solitude described in the previous chapter, the strategy of sharing is individually needed, and the time spend by talking to others can differ, as well as the number of allies made on the journey. However, even presence within such community forms the pilgrim’s experience.

Learning to give in: the strategy of faith

“It looks like there will be nowhere to sleep”, I said dramatically to Marie. She looked at me as if she was disgusted, or rather impatient. She waved her hand and, bothered that we are even talking about it, answered “Oh, don’t worry, or how to pronounce it ... or translate ... don’t worry about what will happen, it will just do somehow!” And she was right, it did somehow, and it was fine.” (autoethnographic diary, 18 August, Viana do Castelo)

Finally, after the pilgrim managed the body, the pain and found the balance between the time spend with the community and alone, the most intimate and individual dimension unravels. It is crucial for pilgrims to decide to give in; no matter how they conceptualize the higher power ruling over them. It expands the frame of the journey, and makes it not only a longer walking trip, but it adds a spiritual overlap, and “creates” the spirit pilgrimage.

“Usually I have everything under control, I am used to it; but on the pilgrimage this is impossible, and I had to learn to give in to “something” to lead me. On our way we met mystique, you know; a guy in a towel, lots of tattoos of symbols over his body, and he told me a story; that we are like a ship on the sea, trying to reach the shore, controlling everything at all times, but we do not know where there are rocks in the sea. So, we keep on bumping in them, turning around and sail god-knows-where, and we sail in circles. But if we give in to the stream, which for him was the Virgin Mary, it will lead us safely. So, it is good to have a direction, but let fate lead you.” (Tadeáš)

Tadeáš undertook a huge transformation, from a person controlling every minute of his life to someone aware of this “higher power”, leading his life in a certain way. This knowledge, or maybe life attitude, will be further analysed in the chapter below concerning the resocialization process after the pilgrimage is over.

The last reflection on the spiritual side of the pilgrimage is the story of Tylda; a girl who never believed in God (or so she said), and who understood her journey mostly as a trip (in my terminology, she considered herself a tourist), and did not spend much time thinking about the spirituality, until she reached a small monastery Monasterio Armenteria in the mountains, where she attended a mass for the pilgrims.

“Before the mass I had one more beer, and I kept drinking, then it was seven o’clock, so I told myself fuck it, I am not here for some masses, but then I told

myself, you cow, go to that church, so I went. There were seven nuns and one ... they are called ... monk, and one of the nuns played the piano, and they sang. It was in Spanish, only thing I understood was "Senior", Oh Lord, but still; I was not feeling good mentally, and it affected me very much, because it was really for only a few people, pilgrims mostly.

So, the mass started right, and until then, it was just kind of a field trip for me. Like a long walk, you sleep on different places, you meet people, have fun, sometimes you drink too much wine, and so on. But the mass – there I realized that it was my twelfth day of my pilgrimage, and the others are like eight days in. I am kind of an emotive person, so I started to sniff and cry a bit. I took this mass as if it was only for me, it was very personal. Not that I would like to ... belittle the other pilgrims, but I took it personally, and I cried, so much. Then they told us "May you go back to home full of light and joy", like the sense of the return right, like you started this journey for some reason, so go home back and be happier. Some people left homes because something bad was happening to them, so when you go home you are full of anticipation, like you see your partner and you think, wow, did he cheat on me, and such bullshit. So, they told us this, and I started to cry so much, I could not stop, and I cried for another hour. One of the German girls went to talk to me and told me that I must be religious, but I told her I am not, and I have no idea what is happening. I spend the evening with some Czech guy, who talked with me about God and these things then.

I can't describe the feeling I had, but I think that in the end God caressed me a bit, and he was with me until the end of the journey. But when I got home, he is not there anymore. He is waiting for me on the Camino, waiting for me to get back. Until the mass I did not think about it, but after it to the end of the journey, I understood that it was something more than just a walk, a way of meeting with something. I felt different there; but I do not feel it anymore. I am back, down-to-earth (laughter)." (Tylda)

Tylda understands herself as a "down-to-earth" person, and she conceptualizes the beginning of the pilgrimage more as a field trip than a spiritual journey. However, she is affected by the surroundings, and she slowly accepts the idea of the pilgrimage as something more than just a holiday. She started to recognize the impact of the time spent on the pilgrimage as well as the distance she managed to walk. The experience of God's touch is very affective, and it triggered a different understanding of her presence on the pilgrimage. The reflection of understanding the meaning of coming back from the pilgrimage is also important, since it bounds the pilgrimage's experiencing, and creates a line to be crossed, back to everydayness. At the same time, she believes that God awaits her return; meaning,

the pilgrim self she found is not lost for good, and will be activated again, when she returns to the pilgrimage.

By the description of this strategy, I conclude the list of the strategies I consider important for construction of the pilgrim body. I am aware that the list may not be complete, and that many pilgrims find other ways of experiencing the pilgrimage to be more important. However, I believe that these are the core activities of every pilgrim that describe the dimensions of the pilgrim body; the physical dimension through the walking and the pain management, the social dimension described through learning how to talk and share with others, the mental dimension linked with time alone and thinking, and the spiritual dimension teaching the pilgrim to dive in.

Now that the pilgrim body is fully constructed, it is time to come back home from the pilgrimage and analyse how the pilgrim body behaves after the pilgrimage is over, and how the pilgrims deal with this experience.

After the pilgrimage

“I am home for a few days now. The Camino still has an impact on me. I walk whenever and wherever I can. I also see all the things in the society that are wrong; patterns I did not perceive before. And I feel that it is all fading away and it scares me.” (autoethnographic diary, 9 February, Prague)

The pilgrim returning home carries a pilgrimage in his body; a habitus constructed through the above-described processes. Affected by this experience, he needs to deal with this new knowledge and skill. I purposely leave out cases of pilgrims who claimed that the journey had no impact on them; such cases are very rare.

Most of the pilgrims refer to their journey as a positive experience, that has taught them how to live better, and this knowledge is now being integrated into their everydayness. In most cases, the pilgrim incorporates the new knowledge into his previous life, making minor changes. Not only the pilgrim body itself, but also the strategies that led to its formation are seen as beneficial, and are integrated into this new lifestyle:

“I learnt two things mainly. First – and I did not plan that – (laughter) I learnt not to plan too much, do not fix on the plans. That will bring you much more suffering, it’s like the Christmas gift effect; you hope to get a race car, and you get a tractor instead, which is also great, but you are disappointed, because you wanted a race car (laughter). It is important to set goals, but not to get fixed on them, be opened to possibilities and let things flow.”

The second thing is that you do not need much to be happy. You do not need a career, and a big house; you need the basic stuff, like food, water, shelter. And you can be happy like this, you do not need this bunch of bullshit that is so important in society today ... when you have the minimum, everything else is an extension. Everybody knows this – but if you really try to live it, you come to actually know it.” (Tadeáš)

In the first paragraph of Tadeáš’s narrative he talks of the spiritual and mental dimension of the experience. Through the process of learning how to give in, he continues to practice this also at home. He changed his previous mindset, and instead of controlling everything he, similarly as he did on the Camino, lets the events happen, and learns how to react to whatever comes into his life instead of setting his goals as fixed points in time.

Tadeáš also reflects on materiality and material possession. Because of its nomadic format, the pilgrimage forces pilgrims to carry as little as they can, which teaches them how many of the things they use in everyday life are necessarily needed. Pilgrims often clear their homes of items that they believe are not necessary. Tadeáš also mentions the transcendent meaning of the material possession; it embodies something typical for major society, that is the cumulation of possessions as a mark of success. The pilgrimage leans to post-materialistic values, such as humanism, freedom, self-realisation and such.

The interpretation of habitus used in this work is summed up in the reflection of Aneta, who describes this experience as a form of dealing with everything and a point of view which she now embodies, and it places her in the society:

“I understand now that it does not matter what it is you are doing, but the point is how you are doing it; how you get to the goal. And it does not matter if you are washing the dishes or writing a book; it is about how you decide to face it. You need to choose a path, and the path is more important than the goal. Let it happen. Stay calm. Do not push it.” (Aneta)

However, it is not always possible to incorporate this experience into the previous life pilgrims lived before their journey. Embodied experience can become an obstacle instead of a tool. In that case, pilgrims need to decide; either to leave this experience behind, ignore it and embrace their old lifestyle, or forget the lifestyle they lived before, and start a new life drawing from the pilgrim experience. Because of the drastic changes needed to be done in the second case, most of the pilgrims whose pilgrim bodies have hard time adapting to everyday life are forced to leave some of the pilgrims’ habits behind.

“I was thinking about values a lot on the Camino, but it was not worth shit. I came back and had this ideal, but I realized that I need to take care of myself; and so, I had a life crisis, about two months after the Camino. I tried to live up to the values and ideals I thought about during the pilgrimage, but in the end, I was not able to, and I had to take a job I hated anyway.” (David)

Values and habits learnt on the pilgrimage are usually adored by the pilgrims and are therefore hard to let go. If pilgrims are forced to let go of the pilgrim life, they at least try to actualise those parts of the pilgrim body they can; try to take longer local trips, try to dwell in nature more frequently, try to be more socially open, etc. But it is hard to do alone; as described above, the pilgrim body is a socially constructed phenomenon.

“After the Camino my first day was completely in the Camino mode. Not only for the people, but also for the “take it easy”. But the problem is, that after the Camino, you just forget about it. It is impossible to stay in this Camino mode when normal life is around you, everyday life, the real world, this normal stuff, a normal day, your life, everyday life. (...) Even this interview with you is very important for me, a very good thing, because some parts of my mind are sometimes like “tomorrow I will try to make my Camino, or my day more in the Camino mode.” (Marie)

The “Camino mode” stands for the embodied pilgrimage experience. Marie reflects on the fact that it is almost impossible to hold on to the feeling, or the lifestyle on her own, and that without the pilgrim community, she is unable to keep herself in this pilgrim mode, even though she tried. The fear of forgetting that often fuels the efforts of pilgrims is quite common. Many others, such as Marie, act against it by keeping in touch with pilgrim-friends or planning another journey.

“I am not done yet you know – I am scared of forgetting the feeling, because the feeling was so awesome that I just do not want to forget, and I have another goal set; I want to do the pilgrimage from my house to Rome.” (Tylda)

It is believed that pilgrimages are highly addictive. Pilgrims very often come back to the Camino, or seek other pilgrimages, just as Tylda states. Most pilgrims keep their pilgrim body waiting for such opportunities in the future, which keeps it active. However, other pilgrims decide for more drastic change; the experience had such impact on them, they consider it more important than the lifestyle they had before the Camino started. Many such people try to find a lifestyle as like

the pilgrimage as possible; or they choose such a lifestyle, that lets them live the same values, live in community, or such.

“After the Camino, it became much clearer for me, and I thought that the idea of experiencing your life as best as possible and this idea was not in the process of my job, just reaching a certain goal and being happy with results, but after the Camino I realized I have to be happy with the process, walking every step. Not just the goal. And even if it meant I had to quit my job, leave my company and rent the apartment, then so be it. (...) Well, right now I am in Nepal, it is the trip like “another Camino”, and I am here with one person from the Camino, we have some goals we share and we like the idea of going on this trip and some things we want to do and we have ideas or goals we want to work at.” (Georg)

There are many ways of dealing with the pilgrimage experience, and it is a process as individual as the construction itself. The experience, though, is always embodied, forcing the pilgrim to do everyday tasks in specific ways. Dimensions of the experience are present in almost every activity. Trying to include new habits into the old life can be tricky but mostly it is possible. In other cases, the lifestyle can be fully changed, according to the newly gained habitus. If the body becomes latent and will start to fade on all levels of experience. It usually is possible to find these old bodily memories when they need to be used again.

Conclusion

“I am exhausted, slow, soft. I have lost all my strength; the whole Camino lies on me. We walked about 300 kilometres in 14 days. Today is the last day, the day for resting. I can’t wait to work on the analysis, though. I will have a chance to work with my experience, my memories and I will always have a chance to come back to my Camino. I will never forget any of this.” (autoethnographic diary, 29 August, Muxía)

I would like to conclude my analysis of pilgrim bodies by coming back to the beginning of this paper. My interest of the research was to come closer to understanding how modern pilgrims conceptualise their experience. I have found that many pilgrims frame their journey through complex multi-dimensional experience anchored in the physical body, which is a centre of attention on the pilgrimage. This experience has the shape of the pilgrim body. I argue that this form of habitus or technique of the body (Mauss 1968) is being created through a process of learning, gaining new perspectives, value judgements etc. Acquiring

these (and many more) competences can be divided into four dimensions of experiencing. These dimensions are physical, mental and social as described by Mauss, accompanied by a spiritual dimension specific for the concept of pilgrimages.

However, there is also an important individual dimension of this process, that collides with the Maussian framework. As stated in the beginning of the paper, I have conceptualised the body as a multi-layered complex including its spiritual and mental elements, following the concept of embodiment introduced by Csordas. This means, that the pilgrim body construction is both a subject of individual process framed by the phenomenological approach, as well as a process evoked and moulded by the social milieu around the pilgrim.

In order to acquire the pilgrim body, pilgrims use certain strategies. The way these strategies are reflected in both my autoethnographic diary and pilgrim's memories, and also the development or improvement in their performance as well as their overlap and the result, I consider these activities to be strategies, since they lead to gaining the embedded habitus. The strategies that I analysed are the walking strategy, austerity strategy, separation strategy, solitude strategy, sharing strategy and faith strategies.

After returning from the pilgrimage, a pilgrim, who has managed to construct such a pilgrim body has to make a choice how to handle this new habitus¹⁰. Usually, the experience leads to a certain shift in attitude to ordinary activities, or a reflection of one's own abilities. The pilgrimage habitus thus manifests itself to a lesser extent and is in certain sense latent. When the pilgrim decides to make another pilgrimage, this ability becomes active again, and can be used. Another case is a situation when the pilgrim body cannot fuse with ordinary life; a choice must be made. The pilgrim can either decide to abandon this new habitus, which usually happens involuntarily. The second option is adopting the new pilgrim habitus as a new lifestyle, abandoning the previous way of life.

The fear of forgetting the details of the experience of pilgrimage creates another out of the frame overlap. Victor Turner's analysis of rituals describes the liminal

¹⁰ Marcel Mauss uses the term to describe the reflection of the sociocultural background in the techniques of the body of the individual. Pierre Bourdieu, who builds upon Mauss's theory uses the term in the sense of a lifestyle, or a differentiating tool of social distinction (Bourdieu 1998). For this work, the term has become both the description of the body techniques gained in the process of becoming a pilgrim, as well as a description of the further life changes in the post liminal phase of the pilgrimage, where the fully developed pilgrim body becomes a new lifestyle of sort. I argue that the understanding of the term can slightly shift through the analysis; that is, Maussian usage of the term is more sufficient for description of the pilgrim body construction, while Bourdieu's usage of the term can relate to a newly established identity of a pilgrim in the post-liminal phase of the ritual; the pilgrim would change his lifestyle.

phase of the ritual as perhaps a pleasant and brotherly part of the transition, yet as one that is desired to be ended in order to come back to the society. The pilgrims quoted above adored the liminal phase (which is the pilgrimage), expressing the wish to go back as well as mentioning fear of forgetting. This is an important shift in understanding the liminality of the ritual, since the point of undertaking the pilgrimage is not to finish it, as to walk it. In other words, as the awful cliché goes; it's about the journey, not the destination.

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“Irresponsible, incompetent, inadequate?” Narratives and Practices of Parenting in High-Conflict Divorces in Croatia

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Abstract: Approximately one-third of all the divorces (Turkat 1994, Whiteside 1998, Visser et al. 2017), the number of which is rising in most European countries, are defined as high-conflict divorces. Even though divorce conflicts are multidimensional, and several types should be distinguished (Johnston 1994), high-conflict divorces are generally characterized by prolonged lack of communication between partners, by child visitation interference and by different ways of emotional and psychological manipulation of children (Warshak 2008). According to the findings of several years' long qualitative research of conflict divorces in Croatia, there is little institutional and political support for parents caught up in high-conflict divorces. Institution representatives too frequently claim that the parents themselves are to blame, because they are 'irresponsible', 'incompetent', or inadequate parents. On the other hand, the parents, who report being the victims of high-conflict divorces, feel disempowered, helpless, bitter, and betrayed. This paper analyses those juxtaposed and conflicted narratives and practices in high-conflict divorces in order to reveal their context and potential rationale and tackles the question whether and in what way the pandemic of COVID-19 influenced post-divorce child visitation practices.

Key words: high-conflict divorces, Croatia, ethnography of parenting

Approximately one-third of all the divorces (Turkat 1994, Whiteside 1998, Visser et al. 2017) are defined as high-conflict divorces. The crude divorce rate in the EU has gradually increased from 0.8 per 1,000 persons in 1965 to 2 per 1,000 in 2017.¹ As the number of divorces has been steadily rising, the number of high-conflict divorces has been rising proportionally. The majority of divorces include some kind of conflict, and even though divorce-related conflicts are multidimensional most “include at least three important dimensions: *domain* dimension, referring to separation arrangements, *tactics* dimension, referring to the strategies of avoidance of the ex-partner, and *attitudinal* dimension, linked to negative emotions, covertly or overtly expressed” (cf. Johnston 1994). In high-conflict divorces one or more conflict dimensions are excessive, accentuated and present over a prolonged period of time, even years after the separation (Johnson 1994:167). Furthermore, high-conflict divorces are generally recognized as characterized by a lack of communication between the divorced parents or parents undergoing the process of divorce, by child visitation interference and by different ways of emotional and psychological manipulation (of children) (Warschak 2008). Such behaviours could be accompanied by different forms or direct and indirect violence.

Family violence is an extensively researched topic and ethnographies of divorce have become rather frequent since the 1990s (Kohler Riessman 1990, Simpson 1998, Hopper 1993). However, high-conflict divorces has remained at the margins of research interest. They are not as strikingly visible as family violence and there is little awareness among parents and families going through them as to what is going on. In most cases, high-conflict divorces are not permanent, however they can last for years which is an extremely long period for the children involved.

According to the findings of several years' long qualitative research of conflict divorces in Croatia, there is little institutional and political support for parents caught up in high-conflict divorces. Institution representatives too frequently claim that the parents themselves are to blame, because they are ‘irresponsible’, ‘incompetent’, or inadequate parents. On the other hand, the parents, who report being the victims of high-conflict divorces, feel disempowered, helpless, bitter and betrayed.

This paper analyses those juxtaposed and conflicted narratives about high-conflict divorces in order to reveal their context and potential rationale, discusses the implications of the changes in parenting culture in which parenting becomes medicalized and commodified and, finally, tackles the question whether and in what way the pandemic of COVID-19 has influenced post-divorce child visitation practices.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Marriage_and_divorce_statistics

Data, methodology and involvement

The presented data are part of my qualitative research conducted in Zagreb, the capital of Croatia (pop. approx. 1 million). The analysis covers in-depth interviews and the life histories of 22 individuals — 12 fathers, 9 mothers, and one grandmother— which formed a segment of my continual ethnographic research on divorces. Children were not included in the interviews because of the emotional nature of the topic of divorce, even though some were present in less formal settings and meetings. Also due to ethical considerations, the parents’ accounts are presented here in short sentences and quotes linked to a specific topic or argument and not as full life stories, so as to avoid potential recognition of the situation and family involved, as was promised in advance to all the interviewees. For the purpose of writing this article, those 22 individuals were singled out from the larger research group of people since they were regularly attending meetings, round tables, informal gatherings, workshops, public protests, get-togethers, or pastime activities of three different non-governmental organizations². They were established respectively in 2008, 2014 and 2017 and all three were founded by the people who had had experience of a conflict divorce themselves, whether as partners/parents or members of the family in conflict, by two men and one woman. All three NGOs provide counselling, self-help group sessions, legal advice, they sometimes offer practical workshops for their members on how to deal with divorce conflicts, and frequently organize round tables where they invite the related institutions to discuss the most alarming issues concerning conflict divorces. In many cases when some political decisions were being made regarding family and divorce, such as the announced changes in the Family Act, they would organize public protests to warn the public of the problems of conflict divorces. Moreover, their pro-active politics enabled them to enter some of the related ministries, after repeatedly knocking on their doors, and even reach the President of the Republic of Croatia, twice, however, all that with mixed results. I was present on most of the meetings and the data collected in such a way also form a part of my analysis. I went to the meetings, but also to the protests and always accepted the calls to the television shows which discussed the related topics. To the best of my expertise, I participated in their efforts for improving Croatian legislation regarding high-conflict divorces and in raising public awareness on the dangers of such behaviours. Here again, the results are still not notable. From all the above, this research is deeply rooted in the contexts and practices of applied anthropology.

² <https://ravnopravno-roditeljstvo.com/>, <http://www.udruga-dijete-razvod.hr/page/13/>, <https://www.tataipol.hr/index>

High conflict divorces in Croatian context

Divorce statistics and trends in Croatia are like those in other EU countries. The number of divorces per newlywed couples is around 1:3 to 1:6 couples in different European countries and in Croatia it is around 1:5, which amounts to around 6,000 divorced couples per year.³ Since, according to statistics (Morrison and Coiro 1999; Sclater and Piper 2001), one-third of all the divorces are high-conflict divorces and since one couple in Croatia has, in average, 1.6 children, the number of children caught up in high-conflict divorces is more than 2,500 per year.

Even though the statistics are similar, there are certain specificities as to how high-conflict divorces materialize in the Croatian societal context. One factor which is specific to the Croatian historico-political context and to the societal treatment of divorces is the re-positioning of the Catholic Church in the post-socialist period, starting after the wars of the 1990s, and the subsequent insistence on the normative pattern of a heterosexual nuclear family and one life-long monogamous marriage. This re-positioning was not specific only for Croatia, it also occurred in other Central and Eastern European countries (Ramet 2014, Pelikan 2014, Reban 2014). Although many authors justly warn against potential generalisation and unification of the post-transitional position of the church in post-communist Europe (Zrinščak 2011), its role did change, albeit in different modes, as well as its presence, influence and impact on public discourse and policy making (Ramet 2014, Pelikan 2014, Reban 2014). On that scale of the new level of influence and the position of the church Croatia appeared to belong to the group of the most religious countries in Central-East Europe (Václavík in Reban 2014). According to the official 2011 census of the Croatian Bureau of Statistics, as high as 83.99%⁴ of the entire population of Croatia declared themselves to be Catholics, which was comparable only to the situation in Poland. One of the visible signs of the increased church impact on everyday practices was an immediate increase in the number of church weddings which happened in the post-transition period. The last Yugoslav ambassador to the Vatican called this increase, to up to a staggering 85% after the 1990s, a consequence of the conformism of young people, “since it was the prevailing atmosphere in the society where the church was suddenly given great importance, so young people married in church not because they particularly wanted to, but because it was accepted and expected”.⁵

³ https://www.dzs.hr/hrv/censuses/census2011/results/htm/h01_01_12/h01_01_12.html

⁴ https://www.dzs.hr/hrv/censuses/census2011/results/htm/h01_01_12/h01_01_12.html

⁵ <https://www.jutarnji.hr/vijesti/hrvatska/veliki-zaokret-ovo-nije-zabiljezeno-od-osamostaljenja-rh-gradanskih-brakova-vise-je-nego-crkvenih-hrvati-radije-idu-kod-maticara-nego-kod-svecenika-10051801>

During the following decade, roughly from the 2000s onwards, those statistics have been changing in the opposite direction, but very gradually. For the first time in the last thirty years, in February of 2020, the number of civil weddings slightly exceeded the number of church weddings by the small 2%⁶. Croatia’s ascension to the EU in 2013 certainly aided such modification of the prevalent discourses, together with the two mandates of the left-oriented Croatian governments, from 2000 to 2003 and from 2011 to 2016. However, political upheavals should not be too easily proclaimed as the major reasons for those changes. Leftist tendencies to push the objections concerning the concept of the traditional monogamous heterosexual nuclear family and to promote other ideas of marriage and family units, could have not have affected cultural attitudes and behaviours in only eight years. Paradoxically, however, even though the idea of “traditional family” holds almost a mythical place in the Croatian cultural narrative and has recently even found a new niche for its promotion among the far-right pro-life groups (cf. Sekulić 2016), the number of divorces has been increasing continually and steadily from the late 1990ies till today, with roughly constant rates in the last five years.⁷

Another specificity of the Croatian context is that the cases of high-conflict divorces have remained almost completely unrecognized by the institutions, social services and the ministries. The parents caught up in them have sought help primarily from NGOs, which were founded by people who have shared the experience and were actually self-organised and self-educated on the matter. Those parents who were the victims of child visitation interference and child manipulation, felt, in the majority of the cases, disempowered, helpless, bitter and betrayed by the institutions. Instead of continuing their parental roles, they sometimes became “distant relatives” to their own children. A lot of them have not seen their children for a few months and, in the extreme cases, for a few years.⁸ Without adequate mechanisms of dealing with those issues, or without the power, will, knowledge or jurisdiction to enforce them, the related state institutions (social services, judiciary, police, ministries) claimed that the parents themselves were to blame, because they “egoistically placed their needs before the needs of children”, as directly stated by one female social worker I interviewed.

As already mentioned, not all the divorces are defined as high conflict, some proceed relatively smoothly and do not get any additional attention of the institutions. However, divorces and break-ups of relationships can be equally violent

⁶ <https://uprava.gov.hr/UserDocsImages//Statisti%C4%8Dki%20prikaz/2020//Finalni%2017.pdf>

⁷ <https://www.dzs.hr/Hrv/important/Interesting/articles/Ljubav%20kroz%20statistiku.pdf>

⁸ None of the cases I have analyzed in this article are cases of family or domestic violence in terms of physical abuse towards children or other any members of the family. Such cases should be analyzed and treated separately.

and manipulative without ever being perceived as such by the society, institutions and, sometimes, by the divorcees themselves. Namely, without high-conflict divorce being publicly and officially acknowledged as a socially unacceptable and damaging behaviour, as is the case in Croatia, many people endure the conflict for years without realizing the damage that this situation can do to their children (Ayoub, Deutsch, Maraganore 1999) and themselves. Most experts writing in the field (Garrity and Baris 1997; Morrison and Coiro 1999, Turkat 2002, Warschak 2008) have clearly described a “typical” high-conflict divorce as a long-term conflict which includes manipulation of children in form of belittling the other parent, openly criticising him/her in front of the children, emotional or financial blackmail of the children, etc. (Turkat 2002; Warschak 2008). Such types of behaviour were almost always successful – the other parent would see the child/ren less, sometimes not to cause additional trauma to the already traumatized child/ren, while older children themselves avoided the other parent, trying to remain loyal to the “home” parent. In some cases, children needed psychiatric help and psychological counselling to cope with the situation (Spillane-Grieco 2000; Lebow and Rekart 2006).

According to the “established practice”, 89-96% (the difference in percentage depends on the source of data) of all the children in the process of divorce in Croatia remain in the sole custody of the mother. Again, according to the “established practice”⁹ most fathers receive a court ruling that they have the right to see the children two times per week for two hours, every second weekend and half of all summer and winter holidays as well as half of all state holidays, depending on the child/ren’s school obligations. Even though the representatives of the related ministries and social services will tell you that “the visitation rights are always determined on an individual basis and depend on the individual needs of the child/ren, taking into account the child’s age, ale emotional status,” according to one of the representatives of the ministry, almost all the court rulings I have seen during my research outlined the very same sketch for the visitation rights. Many EU countries have adopted various criteria which make the custody decisions based on more than just “practice” (cf. Galatzer-Levy, Karus and Galatzer-Levy 2009). Since most of the children remain in the custody of the mother, the fathers are mostly the victims of high-conflict divorces in Croatia, but only statistically. In the rare cases of divorces when fathers get the custody of the children, because of a far better financial situation, the mother’s unemployment or, maybe, an

⁹ “Established practice” is in inverted commas here because that’s the explanation the majority of the institutional representatives would give when asked why the court rulings looked so uniform.

agreement between the parents, the conflict-prone fathers are equally manipulating, especially towards pre-teen and teenage children, as I will show later.

Traditional values in a post-transitional society

According to my interviewees, divorce in Croatia is still highly stigmatized. All the people I talked to when asked whether they felt stigmatized as divorcees would almost yell: “Oh, yes, yes, of course!” They reported that that was because Croatia was still a “traditional country”, where “divorce was not looked well upon”. As far as men were concerned the stigma was associated with the feelings of shame and humiliation, especially if they were left by their wives or if the wives, prior to the divorce, had an additional sexual relationship. Most men found it very difficult to describe the situation.

She had someone, I thought she did. She turned very cold and cruel towards me. I followed her once... I saw her... (38-year-old man, father of the child)

For women, the trouble was reportedly not so much in dealing with emotional introspection, rather in dealing with societal pressure and expectations. The most extreme accounts came from several women who were originally from the ‘traditional’ Croatian south, all high-school or college educated and living in Zagreb for years, but who were told by their mothers:

You should not dream of returning home if you get divorced, what the neighbours would say, having a divorced daughter in the home! (49-year-old woman, salesperson)

One of them was going through a very serious case of high-conflict divorce with the husband, who was the owner of the apartment in Zagreb where they lived, psychologically abusing her in the most demeaning manners. She could not afford to leave financially and had a very small son:

He (the husband) messes up everything, the toilet, too and makes me clean it... disgusting, watches me do it. If it weren't for the boy, I'd... (29-year-old woman, unemployed)

Another young woman was told to “shut up and endure it”, because, in her mother’s words, “marriage was not a fairy-tale”, “a woman’s role was to sacrifice herself for the family” and she should not be making “a lot of fuss over nothing”.

Even though those accounts sound extreme, they are not that uncommon, and they show a very traditional attitude towards divorce.

The traditional attitude related to divorce was also obvious in many narratives in which guilt was associated with the person leaving the marriage as the one who broke up the (traditional) family. The onus was almost always on the person leaving the family and in both cases, fathers or mothers leaving, their partners, if prone to manipulation, would frequently repeat to the child/children: “Your father left us for a crazy woman, he broke the family apart” or, a very similar version going in the opposite direction: “Your mother is a bitch who destroyed the family, she is guilty.” Very similar accounts were reported in other researches on the topic (Garrity and Baris 1994). The rationale those parents adopted and the moral reasoning they chose to justify the constructed narratives with, very quickly and firmly made them believe that they were in the right and that they had every right to do whatever they wanted to the parent who left (them). The cultural stigma of divorce and the imposed guilt over family break-ups aided their rationalizations. In her pivotal book, *Divorce Talk*, Catherine Riessman (1990) examines the stories the spouses tell about their marriages and finds out the ways in which those narrative structures immediately provide ways to persuade both the narrator and the listener that divorce was justified.

Even though blaming the other spouse/parent is typical for high-conflict divorces not only in Croatia but elsewhere as well (Johnston 1994; Turkat 2002; Warshak 2008), this post-socialist, neo-religious, traditionalistic insistence on monogamous nuclear heterosexual family¹⁰, as the standard norm, has undoubtedly contributed to the stigmatization of divorce and divorcees. In the pre-nuptial preparatory workshops organized by the Catholic parishes throughout Croatia, which were obligatory if you wanted a church wedding, my interviewees were told divorce was a sin. Even though many of them sneered and laughed at that, this attitude still lingers in the minds of many of the churchgoers, at least in their blaming narratives. Notably, the Catholic Church does not recognize the regular institution of divorce.¹¹

Societal and cultural gender roles also highly influence the way divorce will be manifested in a specific setting. Although divorce is invariably stressful, many

¹⁰ This establishment of a “normative family” can also be observed in a very low level of tolerance towards the LGBTQ population, with every Gay Pride in Croatia accompanied by examples of hatred and intolerance and even physical violence towards the participants of the Pride. The incidents in Split, the capital of Dalmatia, continue to display intolerance and xenophobia.

¹¹ Divorce in the Catholic Church is possible only with the special permission issued by the Pope himself and that happens extremely rarely.

people believe that men suffer less than women (Riessman 1990). The same author calls this the “feminization of psychological distress”, meaning that traditional ways of conceptualising and quantifying distress reflect women’s idioms, rather than men’s. However, according to Riessman, some women do not at all perceive divorce in negative terms, they paradoxically sense rewards afterwards, even as they report hardships during the divorce (Riessman 1990). As if the society would accept and allow women their hardships, but not their freedom, specific stigmatization was reported by the mothers who, whether because of their financial situation, unemployment or some other reasons, decided to yield custody of the child/children to the father. As they reported themselves, they were immediately proclaimed “the worst mothers ever”, who should “not be called mothers at all”, or, even more extremely, “should be prohibited from having children at all”. Accusations of alcoholism or drug abuse frequently accompanied such attitudes. Therefore, fearing being proclaimed incompetent and irresponsible parents, “bad” parents, or, even, monsters (“what kind of mother would leave her children”), those women who might have possibly seen the situation with the father having the custody of children as beneficial to the children themselves, would hardly ever do it, fearing being severely judged by their social milieu.

Even though the idea of mothers as the primary parents and thus the “logical” choice of custody cases has been long abandoned by many experts in the field (Ackerman and Ackerman 1997; Galatzer-Levy, Kraus and Galatzer-Levy 2009), Croatian court reality still shows a preference towards mothers. This politization of womanhood, or more precisely, motherhood, seriously and degradingly played with the image of the mother as natural, traditional, holy; one who was kind, warm, emphatic, loving and sacrificing. This explains the accounts from the mothers I have quoted above on their need to make sacrifice and “shut up” for the greater good – the continuation of the normative family. Their open criticism of being told to behave in a certain manner even by the members of their immediate family shows the above-mentioned shakeup in gender roles, and women more than men feel they gain a fuller idea of who they are after divorce (Riessman 1990), restructuring the link between self and society.

Bottom to top: parents’ accounts

Most of the people undergoing high-conflict divorces felt completely abandoned by all the institutions which they felt should help them, by the police, social services, and judiciary. With no outside help, and with the partners scarcely speaking to each other, taking care of the child/children becomes very difficult. More worryingly, the partners who had the sole custody of children frequently

prohibited and impeded the visitation rights of the other parent (Turkat 2002) as well as manipulated the children against the other parent. My interviewees reported feeling powerless and disappointed and commonly claimed that the institutions not only “did not provide any help, but they even deepened the conflict”, by making the gap between the partners even more visible. Maybe looking to appoint blame, they claimed the institutions were those who “made them the opposite sides in a conflict”. One telling account from a father fighting for regular visitation practices:

The mother of my children was now my enemy. I did not want that. But she would not give me the children, so I had to fight for them (...) and the only way to continue fighting was to fight against the ‘other side’ (52-year-old father of three children)

This raises important questions of responsibility in high-conflict divorce, and they are extremely complex. Accusations of irresponsibility, whether justified or not, were frequent from both the parents and the representatives of different, related institutions.

Almost every high-conflict divorce starts as any “normal” or “common” divorce. A person decides to leave their marriage, or, sometimes, both partners conclude that divorce is a better solution. Even though the expressed motives for the divorce sometimes screen the unexpressed ones (Hopper 1993), the finding that high-conflict divorces can occur even after the joint decision to get a divorce is very important.

At first, everything seemed OK. We talked, she already had another relationship, we agreed we had both been unhappy for years, I took my suitcase and left. But then, after some time... hell... (45-year-old, father of one child)

Namely, high-conflict divorces were frequently wrongly interpreted as the consequences of the situation in which one parent had “abandoned the family”. Even though there were examples of the fathers leaving and then being estranged from the family, there was also a significant number of cases in which the mothers left and moved away with the children but were later still prohibiting or making it very difficult for the fathers to have access to their children. Special cases in which high-conflict divorces developed to the extremes were the cases when, due to economic reasons, estranged partners could not live separately and then the conflicts continued and thrived in everyday situations. Hence, this idea of the “guilty runaway” from the marriage is completely wrong.

The key moment which I tried to establish was the moment in which the parents themselves were beginning to be aware that they were going through a high-conflict divorce, a “hellish nightmare” as some would describe. Surprisingly enough, the awareness came very late, so late that, when they finally realized what was going on, they were already caught up in months of lawsuits, court hearings, custodial disputes, even police visits.

Another point impeded many people to fully and actively participate in taking control over their lives in high-conflict divorces: the initial emotions they felt were denial and disbelief. Many were relieved to know that they were not alone in this and the only ones who had encountered a similar situation, but still kept repeating:

I am sorry, guys this was so hard for you, but I do not believe it will be as horrible to me. My partner could never do that, I know.

Just six months later, the situation was as hard and as horrible as with everybody else. For most of my interviewees it was almost “consoling” to find that such behaviours were not individual but common and typical for high-conflict divorces. Many of them found the books the NGOs had prepared for them as first-aid kits revolutionary, since they proved to them that they personally had not done anything wrong and that this behaviour was expected and predictable in cases of high-conflict divorces.

Loss of control over everything that was happening to them made those people feel traumatized, lost and disillusioned. Ethnographies of emotion (Rosaldo 1980, 1984; Abu-Lughod 1986; Grima 2005) were readily adopting the idea of constructionism, with the emotions being more culturally than “biologically” determined, but I am here adhering to the idea of local particular constructions (Abu-Lughod 1991), situational, temporal, political, private, individual, religious, cultural, which very powerfully determined how and what people in high-conflict divorces felt. My interlocutors have lost not only the everyday reality but also the idea of how the “normal” life should proceed. Furthermore, most of the fathers I talked to tended to link their relationship to children with their relationship to their wives. When asked how their parental role changed and what is now different, they would readily insist that they can take care of their children in terms of cooking, cleaning and changing diapers and that they do not need mothers for that. Mothers would frequently insist that in pre-divorce times they were performing most of the tasks linked to the children themselves, with no help from the fathers whatsoever. Hence, the only thing they could focus on in this liminal position of the painful passage was the form, but not the content of parenting.

The post-divorce narratives were very similar when it came to the opposition of the mother's versus father's role in the household. Both to the mothers and fathers it was very important to make that shift from "I was never good enough", which many of my interviewees were told by their ex-es, to "I can be an adequate single parent". In "normal divorces" this shift is hard to achieve, in high-conflict divorces, it is almost impossible.

The parents who have no access to their children cannot work on developing their parental roles. "My daughter sees the cleaning lady in her kindergarten more than she sees me", said one of the parents. Those parents come up with various tactics and strategies to try to realize at least some kind of contact. One account from the interview:

- *You know, I would fax her.*
- *You did what?*
- *Send faxes. I would draw something nice, smiles and flowers, or copy a cartoon image, colour it and write down I loved her.*
- *She would get them?*
- *Not at home, no, sure. There was a nice sympathetic young lady in the kindergarten where she went, her group teacher, she would give them to her and read them to her.*
- *How often did you do that?*
- *Few times a week, did not want to misuse the staff, otherwise would do it every day.*
- *Was this the only contact you had with your daughter?*
- *Yes, for weeks. She was three, I was terrified she would forget me.*

So, already traumatized by the situation, those parents felt both intimidated and frustrated with the way they were treated at the court hearings or the offices of the social services. Most of them concluded that the people working there "didn't understand" or "just didn't care". In their "defence", they would claim that "for them, we are just another case file". According to one of the mothers, who was already a frequent visitor in the offices of the social service complaining when the father would not bring the child to the arranged meetings, so they were probably seeing her as a "problem", one of the social workers opened up in front of her the filing cabinet full of files and said: "see how many cases we have, we cannot spend all of our time on just your case". This is a tough sentence to hear for the traumatized mother fighting for her child.

Parents were also disappointed in the cases when they were told, or they interpreted it in this way, that they were inadequate and irresponsible parents. One of

the mothers repeated the words of a social worker: “If you really cared about your child, you would not bother us this much.” Some parents accused the employees of corruption.

Another complaint commonly reported by the parents was that the social workers would repeatedly advise them to talk and discuss things with the other parent, a task they all claimed was futile. “If we could have made the agreement ourselves, we would not need institutional help”, was a logical comment made by one of the fathers. However, it must be said that all the interviewed parents have perceived themselves as cooperative and the other partner as non-cooperative, which was not necessarily the image shared by the social workers or other experts.

Similar complaints about not being heard or being ignored, the parents voiced about the judges in the court hearings:

She [the mother] yelled all the time and said to the judge that I was mentally disturbed, that there was something wrong with my brain, but the judge said nothing. (39-year-old man, father of 1 child)

There was a perceived gender bias in such situations with the fathers frequently complained that most of the social workers and judges were female and that this also contributed to the fact they felt disempowered because, according to them, females were more likely to “understand the female side”. Such a bias is very difficult to prove, and if asked directly whether they would prefer more male judges or social workers the fathers answered they did not mind if “they were doing their job”. The mother complaining in the account above was complaining about a female social worker. Less than 10% of the parents I interviewed were satisfied with the way they were treated by the related institutions and there were very few positive accounts, when the parents felt listened to, understood and thought the experts did everything they were supposed to or even more.

The final outcomes of high-conflict divorces can be devastating for everybody involved. As time goes by and the parents find no help, the level of their frustration rises, and some parents admit: “in this state I cannot even take care of myself properly”. Even though some of the parents managed to continue the good relationship they had with their children (usually smaller children), those parents who did not see their child/ren for weeks, months and years, when they finally did see them, they could not possibly act towards them as parents, fulfilling their pedagogical roles, but became overindulgent, permissive, cautious, avoiding any type of conflict, anxious, worried and afraid not to make the wrong move and lose the little they have. Some of the most extreme examples of such cases were the mothers who lost a great deal of emotional attachment with their teenage

sons who were grossly manipulated against the mother by their father, to the point when a fifteen-year-old boy told the social worker:

I am going to throw myself in front of the car if you make me go live with my mother (an account from the written report of the social worker).

Some fathers were told by their children: “I hate you”, “I don’t ever want to see you again as long as I live”. It has to be emphasized once again that these parents and their children had normal relationships before the high-conflict divorce and, in the cases I am analysing here, there were no instances of domestic violence against the children¹² which could explain such hostile attitudes children had against the other parent.

Top to bottom: institutional gaze

Institution representatives too frequently claimed that the involved parents were themselves to blame, because they were ‘irresponsible’, ‘incompetent’, or inadequate parents. There were two most common claims uttered from institutional representatives which the parents found the most questionable. The first one was that the authorities cannot solve personal issues between the partners, with the most extreme version of it uttered at a workshop for juvenile court judges which was:

They should have paid more attention when they were marrying that person (cf. Hopper 1993).

The other was the explanation on the reasons why high-conflict divorces happen: “it is always the case of irresponsible parents who egotistically place their needs before the needs of children and who have not yet separated their marital role from their parental role.” Whether true or not, it is quite obvious that none of the two claims could ever be helpful in any way to the parents in high-conflict divorces.

Such and similar sentences were not some silent confessions offered to me by an individual social worker tired of a seriously difficult job. On the contrary, they were said publicly and loudly at most of the round tables which were organized on the topics related to the high-conflict divorces in Zagreb, organized either by

¹² The non-existence of violence was checked in the official reports and records from social services and court hearings. My interviewees would bring these with them to the interview.

the related Ministries (Ministry of Social Policy and Youth which is the former Ministry of Health and Social Services, the Ministry of Justice) governmental bodies (Association of Youth and Family Judges and Specialists, Ombudsman for Children) or the mentioned non-governmental organizations.

Another common advice in that category, frequently also heard from the lawyers, was that the parents should solve the conflict with their partners themselves, because “if they have managed to survive with this individual for so long, they know best how to talk to this person”. Again, a questionable advice for people whose partners use very elaborate strategies — turning off the mobile phones, turning off the ringer on phones, deleting e-mails and text messages, not answering the doorbell, not appearing at arranged meetings — not to talk to their partners. All these strategies are also, of course, used to eliminate the children from communication with the other parent.

A very specific account from institutional representatives, but also many psychologists and psychiatrists writing on the topic (Garrity and Baris 1994; Warschak 2002, 2008; Turkat 2002), was the claim that people who initiate the non-communication and manipulation of children in high-conflict divorces have a certain type of psychological disorder. They are labelled as “high-risk individuals” and even though “we need not characterize such people by precise diagnostic labels (...) they can easily be recognized by their manner and behaviour” (Garrity and Baris 1994: 111). This proposed correlation between manipulative behaviors of the parents in high-conflict divorces and potential psychological disorders points to a certain type of medicalization of parenting. The above-mentioned authors define special types of personalities of manipulative parents, label them as types of disorders and therefore medicalize them and give medicine — psychiatry in this case — a jurisdiction and power to solve them. Garrity and Baris, for example, speak about four different types of personality likely to be involved in a high-conflict divorce: the “I’m always right” type, “You’re (Ex-Spouse) Always Wrong” type, “Maybe I Will and Maybe I Won’t” and “Easy-to-Victimize Ex-Spouse” (1994:111–119). Even though I am not questioning the possibility that these or similarly defined types of personality and parenting style can be established in high conflict cases, many sociologists (Zola 1972; Illich 1975) and medical anthropologists (Kleinman 1980) have long been warning about the dangers of medicalization, since, in this case especially, it provides a biomedical shelter over narratives which are much more complex in their formation, origin, interpretations and embodied reality. The issues of personal responsibility and individual narrative of parenting then become the issues of displaced, imposed institutional control and power, power which is empty in its substance, but the potency of which stems from its interpretative significance people ascribe into it. The issues

of responsibility, power and control are central for the problems surrounding parenting in high-conflict divorces. The final “result” of medicalization of parenting in high-conflict divorces is sending parents to psychotherapy. As in many other cases of personal trauma, it can undoubtedly provide help for many people who need it. However, in this specific case, it seems that many parents I have spoken to do not see it as a way to better parenting, or maybe, better parental behavior, but as a kind of a short-term correction, a kind of a magic pill.

In these cases, medicalization of parenting goes hand in hand with commodification. Some forms of counseling and psychological help are provided free of charge by the state institutions, but they are limited. More affluent parents sometimes find help in private clinics where they pay large sums of money for psychological and psychiatric counseling to help themselves and their children and educate themselves how to deal with the situation and finally overcome it. Hence, parenting in this case becomes a commodity, with the simple equation that the help people will get, or be able to seek, will depend on their financial status. In high-conflict divorces, the money issues suddenly completely reverse the economic family bonds of the past and trading becomes a very important, long-term activity in the break-up of the old and set-up of a new regime (alimony issues, joint and separate costs, property disputes). Another commodity were expensive parental workshops, but the parents were critical of them since they made them feel inadequate: “they were talking to me like I was an idiot”, incompetent, “it is like when a school psychologist explains puberty” and useless “I know this stuff; they were blabbing on and on in there”.

The old normal and the COVID-19

In the old normal and in the everyday practices of ongoing high-conflict divorces, many manipulative parents would use the word “sacrifice” as a discursive shelter to continue playing the game of guilt-and-blame with the other parent, all the time continually blocking the channels of communication towards them, towards the institutions or towards their social milieu which, potentially, thinks differently. Moreover, since they felt they were the ones who supported the Norm, the whole discourse arranged in the way I have described above, gave them the *carte blanche* to do whatever they wanted, with the Norm almost becoming their *habitus* (Bourdieu 1977). The COVID-19 pandemic made the situation worse. Many parents who experienced difficulties with child visitation practices almost entirely stopped seeing their children at the beginning of the spring lockdown in Croatia which started on 14 March 2020. The notion of “being responsible” was now used against those parents by the parents with whom the children lived,

since in their interpretation being responsible meant not even to demand to see one's own children. The uncertainty was the leading premise of the moment, with some parents who have established their second families in the meantime sometimes choosing to stay home themselves, from the fear of contagion and the attempt to protect their new families. Strikingly enough, it seemed that in the face of pandemic, many parents forgot the active role they were playing in the conflict. Again, the children were the ones left aside.

Economic factors also played a significant role. Due to not a very bright economic situation in Croatia, many divorced parents find it difficult to survive on one salary (plus alimony). Hence, many of the high-conflict divorces continued to revolve around financial issues to extreme situations such as one mother telling the father he is going to see his child when he gives her the house. During the lockdown, even though the contacts were discontinued, the trading continued. Both the giving and the receiving parents had objections, with those paying the alimony claiming that if they don't see the children they don't have to pay and that children staying at home cost less, while the receiving parents claimed that staying at home required more provisions and overhead expenses and cost the same or even more. Again, the battle was going on between the parents and the children were left aside.

The fact that the pandemic of the COVID-19 made the situation worse, but lessened the conflict, just because the two opposing sides were not in contact, shows, however, that the parents could control their behaviour and that adopting a new type of behaviour, just to an extent, of course, could come from the parents themselves.

Conclusion

All divorces are complex and divorce conflicts are multidimensional and multi-layered. From the above data, five concluding points could be summarized here: (1) cultural, popular, political, social, economic, religious and even epidemiological factors and contexts shape and cloud in various ways the attitudes the parents have about effective and responsible parenting, especially parenting caught up in a high-conflict divorce. This was partly result of the situation in which parenting was historically considered something that happened behind closed doors and was shaped by traditional, “inherent” attitudes and norms. In an interview with a high police official working specifically on family issues I was told that even the policemen themselves, when being called in to intervene in cases of family conflicts, sometimes find it difficult to go “beyond the closed doors” and forget their own personal ideas on men, women, family and conflicts. (2) The

parenting culture has changed, of course, and the fact that today we discuss the problems of medicalization and commodification of parenting prove that the closed doors have been opened and that much more than just traditions or our own experiences of family life behind the traditional closed doors, shape our parental behaviours. (3) However, the still prevailing traditional attitudes on the importance of nuclear family and consequential stigmatization of divorce trigger a consistent cultural reaction to treating divorces and divorcees as the unwanted disturbances in a community and society, regardless of their increasing numbers. (4) Even though divorce conflicts are recognized by the experts and high-conflict divorces are defined and classified, according to the people caught up in them they are not treated as a specific phenomenon by the related institutions, as a pattern-like and re-occurring type of undesirable social behaviour, and are not yet sanctioned. Whether justified or not, those criticisms just prove that the two narratives, experiential individual and constructed institutional, will always have difficulties finding a common path. Proposing clear-cut institutional procedures for families undergoing the high-conflict divorce and applying them in any necessary situation could bridge this gap of allocating responsibilities, power and control which impedes finding quicker and more appropriate solutions. (5) Finally, if individual behavior can be checked by a pandemic, as happened in the case of COVID-19, when the conflicting sides were occupied elsewhere and not centered on the conflict, they could also be checked in non-pandemic times.

A frequently heard utterance from the representatives of the institutions was also that every high-conflict divorce and custody case is case-specific and that no two cases are the same. This is, of course, true, because these are the issues of specific individuals and their children with their specific needs, but what I hope I have shown here and what the three analysed non-governmental organizations are fighting to prove is that high-conflict divorces are typical and recognizable, and that every case of high-conflict divorce should be characterized and treated as such by all the relevant institutions. They can be prevented only by pin-pointing those situations and by defining strategies and sanctions for people working against the benefit of their children.

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“The Aim is always Joy!” The Hybrid Gift as an Anchor for Morality

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Abstract: This article aims to analyze a specific form of the gift and its role in human lives, and to explore the moral and ethical values in which the gift is entangled. In 2012, Czech millionaire and Buddhist Libor Malý founded the “generous social network” Hearth.net as the basis of a new social and economic system. Hearth is a space where users offer and receive gifts without any expectation of a counter-gift. The network raises a debate concerning the nature of the gift and promotes heterogeneous approaches to the gift. Based on long-term ethnographic research on Hearth.net investigating gift giving, receiving, soliciting, and reciprocity, I argue that the gift reflects insecurities in human lives and relations. I perceive the gift as a hybrid that comprises the ideology of the pure gift, positive moral values, desire for an alternative system, pragmatic choices of everyday life, and tools of the market economy. Thanks to this multiplicity, the gift provides an ambiguous yet safe category through which individual development and improvement of society can be carried out. It represents an anchor for morality in the contemporary elusive world.

Key words: gift; exchange; morality; assemblage; generosity

Introduction

In May 2016, I went by bus to Litoměřice, a town in the northwest part of the Czech Republic, to attend the Alchymistic festival.¹ I had never heard about this event before. I had applied as a volunteer to help promote “the generous social network” Hearth.net. I was a user of this network, and the festival was my first opportunity to meet the people behind the idea of Hearth. When I arrived there, a young woman wearing a long colorful cardigan welcomed me and introduced herself as Pavla.² She worked for Adato Paradigma, the organization that manages Hearth, cares for its users, and promotes the network. She led me to the hall where our booth was to be set up. Together, we prepared badges, stickers, and flyers with information about Hearth, and placed them on small tables. Next to us was a whiteboard with the title, “I am generous when...” A few minutes later, a second volunteer came, an older, lanky man, and we started to address the people passing by. The idea of a generous social network where everyone can offer or ask for anything without the obligation to give something back appealed to many of the festival visitors. At this festival, it was possible to buy a Shungite pyramid with healing properties, ask a clairvoyant about relationship issues, and participate in musical meditation and harmonization. The unifying theme of the festival was spiritual development.

During the day I spent there, I met Libor Malý, entrepreneur, millionaire, and the founder of Hearth. When I saw him, I was surprised by his enthusiasm. I could feel the energy coming from his body language, his cheerful voice, and his boyish kind of behavior. He gave the impression of being self-confident and convincing. This combination, plus the fact that he was a millionaire, allowed him to work at organizing the world and shaping the future according to his image. I already knew that, in 2008, he received a vision during meditation in the practice of Dzogchen, a teaching passed on by Tibetan masters. The vision brought him to the idea that the world should change and work differently. After many discussions with his colleagues, he realized that it was essential for the new world to get rid of money and build relationships on something different than the

¹ I would like to thank Daniel Sosna for his immense help and valuable advice during writing. I am also grateful for the insightful comments offered by two anonymous peer reviewers. I am indebted to Libor Malý, his colleagues from Adato Paradigma, and users of Hearth.net who enabled me to learn about their lives and their activities within the network. Finally, I would like to thank Patty A. Gray for proofreading and valuable comments.

² I left the original names of the members of Adato Paradigma because the profiles of these persons are publicly available on the Hearth and Adato Paradigma websites. However, I pseudonymized the names of all ambassadors and Hearth users.

logic of market exchange. He thought a gift economy could fulfill these requirements. Based on this idea, he launched the web platform *Hearth.net* in 2012. On this network, registered users can offer, accept, and ask for things, services, information, or time within the so-called market (*tržiště*), and these transactions, which are called gifts, are not to be settled.³ Why is the gift accentuated, and what kind of gift is it? In what kind of moralities is it entangled, and how does morality influence the gift?

Theories of the gift mostly draw upon Marcel Mauss's *Essai sur le don*, published in 1925. Using data from Melanesian, Polynesian, and northwest American societies, he presented the idea that gift exchange followed “the phase of ‘total prestations’” and preceded the individual contract system (Mauss 2016: 144). Gift exchange involved three obligations: to give the gift, to receive it, and also to reciprocate (ibid.: 120). According to Mauss, “material and moral life, and exchange, function there [the system of the gift] in a form that is both disinterested and obligatory at the same time” (ibid.: 108). The obligation is what creates and strengthens relationships and mutual ties. Contrarily, as Mauss claimed, “our own civilizations [...] distinguish between obligation and nonvoluntary prestation, on the one hand, and gift (*don*), on the other” (ibid.: 146). Under the influence of Christianity, the idea of pure gift evolved out of this opposition to self-interest (Graeber 2001: 160). Mauss pointed out that self-interest was also present in the societies he explored, but it had a different meaning. It was not the opposite of disinterestedness in an endeavor to enrich oneself. Instead, it was “our economies” (of Western European society of the early twentieth century) that cast self-interest in opposition to generosity (Mauss 2016: 189–190).

Following Mauss, Jonathan Parry assumes that the pure gift is created in opposition to the predominant economic structure based on self-interest. He thinks of the pure gift as an ideology that evolves in “highly differentiated societies with an advanced division of labour” (Parry 1986: 466–67). According to Graeber and Laidlaw, the conception of pure gift plays a vital role in the market economy. Graeber (2001: 161) argues that an act of pure generosity in the form of a modern ideal of gifting not limited by any idea of personal gain becomes an impossible mirror of market behavior. Similarly, Laidlaw (2017: 569) writes: “We like the idea of making our economy more gift-like precisely because for us gifts now symbolize the positive moral qualities excluded from ‘the economy,’ where cold calculation has to reign.”

³ At the time of my fieldwork (2016–2017), the number of *Hearth* users was about 15,000. At the beginning of 2018, that number had fallen significantly, as *Adato Paradigma* decided to delete accounts that were rarely used.

A gift without a counter-gift seems to be the only way Malý could think about it. His definition of the gift – one that requires no remuneration, compensation, or exchange – would be consistent with a pure gift. However, although one can read about disinterested gifts on Hearth, at the same time the Terms and Conditions state: “The ultimate goal is always joy. Joy that you can pass on to the rest of the world.”⁴ It means that the gift is neither pure nor disinterested, because the donor should expect positive moral value in return. How, then, to approach this gift?

In the conclusion of *Essai*, Mauss states that gift exchange is ubiquitous also in “our societies” and inherent in the economy. He related gift exchange to positive moral values such as mutuality and solidarity, and he postulated the recommendation: “Let us adopt as a principle of our lives that which has always been – and will always be – a principle of action: emerging from ourselves, and giving freely and obligatorily; we will not be disappointed” (Mauss 2016: 184). Mauss’s understanding of gift associated with positive moral values is challenged by Retsikas (2016: 2-5). He asks why Mauss puts gift giving in the context of morality and goodness when his ethnographic examples indicate that the gift is linked with humiliation and enslavement (*ibid.*: 5).

Retsikas (2016: 3) finds the aim of Mauss’s writing, which was to find an alternative to “commodity production,” problematic. Mauss describes gift exchange as the opposite of the market system and as the inspiration for the future. Retsikas suggests reconsidering the gift. In contrast to Mauss, who highlights the donor of the gift and gift giving as the principal act, he emphasizes the role of receiver and focuses on soliciting the gift. Based on ethnographic research of *zakat* practice in Java, he depicts “soliciting as irreducible, and as prior to giving” (Retsikas 2016: 14). Soliciting and the violence associated with it are preconditions for the gift and its positive aspects.⁵

I recognize the importance of Retsikas’s argument in deconstructing Mauss’s tripartite obligation to give, receive, and reciprocate, with an understanding of reciprocity and positive moral values as inherent parts of the gift. In this article, I want to offer a perspective on a kind of gift that proceeds in an organized way in contemporary society and presents a more subtle and ambiguous case. Based on Retsikas’s arguments, I want to focus not only on the morality

⁴ Hearth Terms and Conditions, <https://www.hearth.net/app/terms> (accessed 1 April 2021)

⁵ Similar to soliciting, Widlok (2016: 75) describes demand as the constitutive aspect of sharing that is often unsaid but not violent. He claims that sharing is done on demand. What matters is that demand is shared among others. In opposition to the gift, “sharing is enabling access to what is valued through a bundle of social practices of responding to demands” (*ibid.*).

of gift giving; I am also interested in a gift that embraces giving, receiving, and soliciting or requesting, and finally, reciprocity, even if verbally absent in the context of Hearth.

In analyzing the moral values associated with the gift, I follow Jarett Zigon’s methodological theory of moral and ethical assemblages. These assemblages cover three aspects of morality and a set of ethical practices that emerge from the assemblage. The three aspects are institutional discourse, public discourse, and embodied individual capacities. Within assemblage theory, Zigon (2014: 21) approaches the individual as an affective and relational being and follows the relations that determine the character of being. Zigon’s approach allows one to address moral and ethical effects on the broader scale and, at the same time, to pursue the specific actors and their moral and ethical actions and convictions.

This article aims to reveal the moral and ethical values that are highlighted in the context of the gift and how they shape the gift. Other questions follow: What kind of gift is produced in the context of Hearth? Why does this gift get a significant role? Many economic anthropologists engaged with gift exchange have formulated their theories based on fieldwork in various non-capitalist or small-scale communities (Gregory 1982; Mauss 2016), and religious groups (Laidlaw 2000; Parry 1986; Retsikas 2016). There are exceptions, such as Carrier (1990, 2005), who applied the Maussian model of gift exchange to social life in Western (American and British) capitalist societies. This article observes a specific form of gift giving present in Europe, namely in the Czech Republic. However, I will not explore gifts that appear inconspicuously in the daily routine of human lives. Instead, the gift under scrutiny here is thought through and reflected in many ways – as an alternative to the market economy or a stimulus for spiritual development, among others – by the founder and users of the social network Hearth.net.

I argue that the character of the gift, which Hearth’s users find difficult to understand and define, reflects the fragmentation of moral and ethical values, the uncertainty of daily life, and the elusiveness of interpersonal relationships. I call the contemporary form of the gift a *hybrid gift* because of its capacity to offer social, spiritual, and economic outcomes in addition to being embedded in “economic orthodoxies of neoliberalism and the market” (Henig 2018: 3). In other words, it is a hybrid of pure gift, obligation, spiritual enlightenment, and market-economy logic. Despite the hybridity emanating from contradictions and paradoxes, the gift is a fixed reference point and becomes a representation of morality in the contemporary ambiguous world.

Gift without Counter-gift

When I visited the Hearth website for the first time in November 2015, I did not find it very convincing. The phrases “A joy to give! A delight to accept!” and “A space for open hearts”⁶ gave me the impression of a group of naive spiritual people whose goal was spreading joy, love, and happiness. Gradually, I found out that it was not so straightforward, nor were the users so gullible. I registered on this website so that I could participate in the so-called market (*tržiště*). The market was full of gift offers and requests for gifts, consisting of things, services, information, and time. Every user could offer or ask for a gift under one important condition – those who offered must demand nothing in return.⁷ This was implied further on the website: “Let’s share gifts and wishes.” “We share what fulfills us. We accept what we ask for. Without money. Without ‘what’s in it for me’ [*Bez principu ‘co za to’*]. Just like that, for the pleasure it brings.”⁸ The gifts in the market were controlled by the team from Adato Paradigma or by the ambassadors;⁹ when an offer did not fit the regulations, the person was asked to delete or edit that offer. However, this raises the question of whether a gift without a counter-gift is possible. I have already explained that Hearth’s gift, the way it is presented, is not pure or disinterested, since it seeks to generate positive moral value. What does it mean to give a gift without a counter-gift, and how it is framed?

In December 2016, in a small old-fashioned café, Hearth user and future ambassador Antonín told me how he always gave a lucky button to a donor in return. However, after some time, he realized that it was not a good idea, “because I gave a counter-gift when no one wanted it.” The twist in his understanding of the gift came when someone “forced” something on him when he was not interested. The gift that he previously considered a nice counter-gift started to strike him as violent and unwanted: “Basically, Hearth is teaching us how to give gifts and how to accept them, to get used to it. Not to feel bad when receiving a gift. Why wouldn’t you receive it if I want to give it to you without

⁶ These phrases appeared on the homepage of *Hearth.net* in the years 2015–2019.

⁷ The terms of use stated: “Our site is a platform for communication between users for providing gifts – giving is the main content of activities at *Hearth.net*. In no way can you ask for any sort of fee, barter or exchange for anything you offer to others.” (<https://www.hearth.net/app/terms>)

⁸ Phrases from the homepage of *Hearth.net* from the years 2015–2019.

⁹ Ambassadors are the most active users selected by Adato Paradigma, the organization that runs *Hearth* and assists Malý, the founder, in considering and implementing his ideas. The ambassadors help Adato Paradigma spread *Hearth*-related ideas and values.

any counter-gift, just for the sake of it, from the pure joy?” (Antonín, interview 4 December 2016). Antonín embraced the values presented on Hearth and consciously internalized them.

Nevertheless, this does not apply to all users. In many cases, they give at least a chocolate bar or a little something as a counter-gift. It signifies the obligation described by Mauss. The obligation emerges by virtue of the “spirit of the thing” and is based on honor (Mauss 2016: 69-70, 144). Mauss drew the conclusion from, among other things, the study of potlatch among the North American Kwakiutl. Sergei Kan (1986: 206), who gave a very detailed account of the funeral ritual linked with the potlatch of a similar group of North American Indians called Tlingit, showed that the mourners gave guests gifts that were not to be rejected, “since its spiritual essence belonged to the dead.” Hearth presents a different context, yet we will see a similar application in the way a thing given is associated with the person giving it, and thus places demands on the gift’s receiver. The counter-gift is articulated, or rather its absence is emphasized, and it results in alternative forms of covering the obligation without necessarily giving something back or admitting one is making a counter-gift. These include more or less personal conversation when handing the gift over, endeavoring to offer something on Hearth rather than only taking, or giving a rating.

After giving or receiving gifts, the users are encouraged to write a review about the giver or recipient. Reviews can also be given without being prompted by a link. A user who is rated can react to that rating. The rating is only an option, not an obligation, but some users explicitly demand it from recipients of their gifts. The rating does not merely serve potentially to cancel the obligation; it also plays an important role when the donor is deciding to whom he will give his gift. The ratings are divided into categories: “Thanks,” or “Everything has clicked into place,” or “It did not work out well.” On Hearth, most of the ratings state that everything worked out. When users react to something that has gone wrong, they often stress that they are loath to give such a rating.

Words expressing gratitude represent a crucial reaction in the process of handing over a gift. Kan (1986: 203) argues that words, in addition to gifts and food, are a significant object of exchange between hosts and guests during a Tlingit potlatch. In their conception, words have the power to heal or to wound. Words in the form of speeches are dedicated to the mourners. The speeches are clearly structured, as is the speech of gratitude delivered by the host. A certain structure is also apparent in the ratings of “Thanks” on Hearth. The rating always includes a thank-you for the gift and an appreciation for a good agreement on handing over the gift. In many cases, the receiver makes an effort to state how the gift made him or his relatives happy and how it was used. For example, one

user wrote: “Thank you again for the beautiful books, I am immersed in the one about coaching, and it is excellent. It fits well into my practice of psychotherapy. I probably wouldn’t get to it normally, so it was just supposed to come to me through you :). May you prosper and still have the courage to love :)” These words do not merely express gratitude; they primarily demonstrate the endeavor to disrupt the link between the giver and the gift by highlighting the new link between the receiver and the gift. Thus, the comments are used to alienate the gift from the receiver and decrease the feeling of obligation.

I perceive the rating as a way to build up and strengthen prestige and social status within the network of gift giving. To gain positive ratings, the user must behave virtuously, give generously, and receive gifts with joy. The gift acts as an object for building up a certain social position within the Hearth community, while simultaneously representing individual morality based on “one’s already cultivated everyday way of being in the world” (Zigon 2010: 8) – in other words, embodied morality. The rating may be approached as the pivot of how to understand the gift on Hearth. This gift is proclaimed to be without a counter-gift, and yet at the same time it is linked with emotions of happiness and joy that are possible to gain. These emotions and the rating alike are not perceived as a counter-gift, yet they present an integral part of the gift and are partly the reason for gift giving. It shows that the “gift without a counter-gift” is an ideal that individuals yearn to achieve. The reality of the gift demonstrates an effort, on the one hand, to show gratitude through giving a rating or something in return, and on the other, to make disinterested gifts and find ways to avoid making a counter-gift.

The rating is also a way to orientate in the anonymous network, and people are used to this form from other web platforms, mostly based on collaborative production. In this context, Adam Arvidsson and Nicolai Peitersen refer to “reputation” as representing “the way value is measured and circulates in an economy of commons” (2013: 92). The online reputation system emerges as part of “productive publics”¹⁰ (ibid.: x). Arvidsson and Peitersen think of it as ethical capital whose accumulation “must be understood to be premised on ethics” because it may be obtained only “by acting in coherence with the established values and norms of a particular institution” (ibid.: 107). This assumption is opposed by Alison Hearn, who argues that the digital reputation system based on “ranking and feeding back” represents “voluntary activity whose affective qualities are colonized for value by capitalist interests” (Hearn 2010: 434). Hearn addresses primarily social

¹⁰ “Productive publics are collaborative networks of strangers who interact in highly mediated ways and who coordinate their interaction through adherence to a common set of values” (Arvidsson and Peitersen 2013: x).

media and states that rating is “a free source of large profits” (ibid.: 436). This does not apply to Hearth in the same way, because Adato Paradigma does not make a profit from the website.

The rating or the online reputation system appears to be a market economy tool to profit from “affective expressions” (ibid.: 434). As such, it contributes to posing a crucial paradox inherent in the understanding of gifts made through Hearth. On the one hand, there is an effort to break free from the market system, evident in the conceptualization of the gift without any kind of compensation. On the other hand, the gift involves the adoption of the market system’s features, such as the reputation economy. I will address this paradox later.

Gift as Generosity and Kindness

In August 2016, I participated in a weekend meeting “with Hearth.”¹¹ I met there with members of Adato Paradigma, the managers of Hearth, and with Hearth users. I did not know what the meeting would be about. The only thing I knew was that we would discuss the future of the Hearth network. The first evening, the members of Adato Paradigma presented the idea behind Hearth, which they eventually called the “paradigm of generosity and kindness”¹² (*paradigma štědrosti a laskavosti*). For all participants, including me, it was the first time we had heard about it. During the weekend, it became clear that this paradigm was far more important than Hearth itself. After the meeting, I started to hear about the paradigm of generosity and kindness more often.

It emerged that Libor Malý, the founder of Hearth, perceived the gift within a broader context, and envisaged the development of a new paradigm of generosity and kindness. In this paradigm, people can live, work, and develop their relationships through gift giving. The money that will no longer be needed will lose its role. According to Malý, people will be able to unify the separated parts of work and personal life. In that case, they could devote time to what they enjoy to the benefit of those who need it. Malý calls this behavior “generosity.” In his view, generosity contributes to building interpersonal relationships that are currently negatively influenced by money. The new paradigm of generosity and kindness should gradually replace the old one characterized by the “dopey

¹¹ Hearth is a social network, but the term is also used to denote the community of people who participate in the gift giving.

¹² The first name was “paradigm of happiness” or “paradigm” in general. Quite early after that meeting, the name changed to “paradigm of generosity and kindness.” Later the term “paradigm” was cancelled because for many users it was hard to understand.

financial system” (Libor Malý, interview 31 October 2017). According to Malý and Adato Paradigma, the paradigm should provide for the welfare of all people globally. Hearth, together with the gift, is only a means to achieve this paradigm.

The essential inspirational source for Malý is the teaching of Dzogchen that was passed on within Tibetan Buddhism. In Buddhism, generosity and kindness are both significant virtues. Generosity or giving is one of six perfections (*pāramitā*) and is called *dana*. It presents the act that must be made with noble and selfless intention. Kindness or *metta* is one of four immeasurables (*Brahma-vihara*). *Metta* means unconditioned and selfless loving-kindness. In its meaning of gift giving in Buddhism and Hinduism, *dana* was studied by anthropologists (Heim 2004; Laidlaw 2000; Mauss 2016; Parry 1986; Raheja 1988; Simpson 2004). *Dana* represents a gift that must be given to a worthy receiver, and it carries on “the inauspiciousness from the donor to the receiver” (Parry 1986: 460). It assumes that “the gift contains the person” (ibid.). “The gift threatens to cement the two [donor and receiver] together in a dangerous interdependence; but every attempt is made to sever their bond by insisting on the complete alienation of the thing” (ibid.: 461). The counter-gift is seen in karma, in “the flow of merit” (ibid.: 462). Parry argues that such a return is deferred and impersonal. Although Malý works with *dana* virtue, Hearth’s gift is not like the gift *dana*. First, the gift on Hearth is not recognized as a religious gift. Second, there is no belief in the inauspiciousness handed over with a gift. Instead, Hearth’s gift arises, in Parry’s words, in the different “ideology of reciprocity and non-reciprocity” (ibid.: 453).

Generosity is the virtue also emphasized in practices of other world religions, such as *zakat* (Retsikas 2016) and *halal* (Henig 2018) in Islam or alms giving and charity in Christianity (Svoboda 2010). The paradigm of generosity and kindness does not correspond to religion. However, given the ideals it represents, it is not far from it. Instead, considering the totality of the paradigm covering gift giving, general reflections on the world, and one’s behavior in it, I approach it as a cosmology. That means it constitutes a shared belief in the essence of how the world works, the human behavior within it, and the forces that govern it.

To be precise, the paradigm rather represents an ideal cosmology. It defines how the world *should* work, and it suggests the way to achieve that. The decisive forces that should determine human action are generosity and kindness together with joy and the desire for happiness. Within this cosmology, the individual is seen as the central point of change. Through his inner development, humanity can lead to positive change. The paradigm of generosity and kindness is to be spread by the most active users, joined in the group of so-called ambassadors. Hearth defines ambassadors as “a community of people who believe that

kindness, generosity, openness, and respect belong to a happy and good life.”¹³ Malý and Adato Paradigma stress generosity and kindness in opposition to the world, defined according to them by the economic relations of market exchange, where these values disappear.

A year after the first meeting of ambassadors, Adato Paradigma organized a second meeting. In both events, I observed an enactment of the virtues of generosity and kindness. The atmosphere was always friendly. Everybody was encouraged to express himself and his opinions. At the same time, nobody was forced into anything. Moreover, at the second-weekend meeting, Milan, one of the ambassadors, gave a morning lesson of *qigong*¹⁴ to all who were interested. Ambassador Erik donated several of his books, and he also played his songs on a guitar for the enjoyment of all listeners. The other two ambassadors, Alena and Monika, brought homemade cookies. At the first meeting, participants could taste sheep cheese from Luboš and Jana. For both meetings, the accommodation, catering, and transport were paid for by Malý, who thereby displayed his generosity. However, his generosity was different from the generosities displayed by ambassadors. It had a specific purpose: to support the users' activity in the promotion of Hearth and the paradigm of generosity and kindness. Thus, the relation between Malý and ambassadors is asymmetrical and involves a gift that requires a counter-gift. Nevertheless, this counter-gift is not solicited and is returned only voluntarily.

The paradigm of generosity and kindness was enacted and materialized in the form of the weekend meetings. This means that the whole environment was organized to support the impression of generosity and kindness, along with mutuality, solidarity, trust, joy, and peace. It involved material objects such as chocolate being shared among all participants, a display of encouraging posters, close mutual proximity given the building's character, and sitting on the ground, which reduced barriers between people. Thus, some of us sat close to each other. It becomes apparent that the specific moral and ethical framework defined by the paradigm of generosity and kindness is anchored in material and non-material aspects. The paradigm of generosity and kindness can be seen as a constituent of discursive public morality (Zigon 2010: 6). It signifies that the ideal gift and the practices linked with it are considered in relation to the paradigm. It provides a context and a set of rules for giving and receiving a gift correctly. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that the paradigm is not clear to all users, and not

¹³ Dolínek, Jan. 2016. „O radosti (nejen) Na radosti.“ In Blog.HEARTH.net [online]. <http://blog.hearth.net/o-radosti-nejen-na-radosti/>

¹⁴ A traditional Chinese practice to cultivate body and qi.

even to all ambassadors. Understanding of the paradigm and the gift is given by users' specific contexts as "relational-beings" (Zigon 2014: 21). It is formed in their interactions and within their discussions. Thus, Malý's original idea is further organically developed.

Ambassador Eva is one of those who unintentionally challenged the course set by Malý and Adato Paradigma. She was not satisfied with the fact that there were not many people from her town on Hearth. Therefore, she decided to hold *daríšťe* at the town festival. Adato Paradigma created the term *daríšťe* to designate gift-markets that should represent "offline Hearth" and be places for generosity. At *daríšťe*, people can bring gifts and receive them. The gift-markets organized by Adato Paradigma took place primarily at events with a spiritual theme. Instead, Eva decided to bring the "offline Hearth" to a local civic event, because it was essential to her to connect people living in the same area and avoid throwing away things someone else could use in the neighborhood, such as apples from the garden. For her, the important aspects of gift and paradigm were locality and thrift. In this way, she and some of the other ambassadors introduced to the paradigm values that broadened the spiritual understanding of generosity and kindness and included pragmatic aspects, such as local relationships and regard for the environment manifested in thrift.

Precisely because of the paradigm's ambiguity, given by its evolving character, it seems useful to understand it in terms of the ideology of the gift (Parry 1986). The paradigm constitutes such an ideological ground for gift giving. Parry puts the modern gift in opposition to exchange in an ideological way: "*Gift-exchange* – in which persons and things, interest and disinterest are merged – has been fractured, leaving gifts *opposed* to exchange, persons *opposed* to things and interest to disinterest. The ideology of a disinterested gift emerges in parallel with an ideology of a purely interested exchange" (Parry 1986: 458; italics in the original). Even though disinterestedness is highlighted on Hearth, the person is not always in opposition to things. According to Malý, people should give what they enjoy, things they created or that they like. They should give some part of themselves.

In both ideologies – of the gift and market exchange – the individual plays an important role. However, the outcome varies. In the ideology of market exchange, the goal is to maximize utility. In the ideology of the gift, more precisely in the paradigm of generosity and kindness, the goal is to achieve one's own and others' wellbeing. Thus, the ideology of gift does not count only with the disinterested gift. Instead, it covers the qualities related to gift exchange in the Maussian interpretation that can build relationships. The spiritual aspects linked with more pragmatic values create an ideology opposed to market exchange and demonstrate the broad scale on which the ideology of the gift may appear. However, as I showed in the

previous section, the practice of gift giving is linked to aspects and relations of the market, thus rendering gift a *hybrid* category¹⁵.

The Gift as Training for a Better Future

The paradigm of generosity and kindness is closely attached to Malý’s broader vision of the future world. Based on the evolution of the current world, he assumes the system is changing from linear to chaotic, with the latter system difficult for individuals to understand. Malý builds on the distinction between what he calls western and eastern styles of thinking. “Western thinking is dull, linear, structured, and leads to the materialization of outcomes in the matter. Eastern thinking is elusive, subtle, very chaotic, and leads to inner knowledge development, but it is not visible from the outside” (Libor Malý, interview 31 October 2017). Furthermore, Malý considers it crucial to become aware of the duality in which we live. He describes it thus: “I think I am me, and you think you are you, and we think there are two of us.” He means that people see themselves as clearly defined beings, independent and detached from others. In opposition to duality is non-duality, which refers to the state in which a person becomes aware that all living beings in the world are united by one consciousness.

According to Malý, the capitalist system uses duality and stresses the concept of individual freedom to the effect that “you won’t tell me what to do” (Libor Malý, interview 31 October 2017). He considers it problematic for potential social change. For this reason, it is necessary to go beyond the boundaries of time and space where the conceptions and terms of current society are no longer valid and relevant. At that point, one realizes that there is only one consciousness: “You will achieve the ultimate point of knowledge, the state of non-duality.” Buddhism defines this state as the absence of everything. Malý finds substantial the ability to take off “the glasses with those concepts” and experience something impossible to convey. For the person who can “take off” those concepts, change himself, and become aware of non-duality, “the old paradigm” and the financial system seem too formalized, and thus binding. Therefore, he introduced “the gift economy,” where “the two beings that will develop themselves may communicate or cooperate on some higher level” (Libor Malý, interview 31 October 2017). Hearth exists as a space where gift giving can be “trained” until people begin to live by it themselves. In Malý’s vision, the gift gains the potential to change the lives of individuals and society.

¹⁵ Mauss has already pointed out the hybrid nature of economic acts, which range from pure total services to exchanges driven by interests and utility (Mauss 2016: 186).

Malý envisages a dystopian evolution of society, with machines taking over people's jobs and people having to figure out what to do. Malý proposes to "be useful," by which he means to make others and oneself happy. Hearth could thus provide space for "training" and starting a new life, while preventing dystopian social evolution. The most significant emphasis is on the spiritual and economic aspects of society and the individual search for one's qualities. What is essential for a good life is the ability to find one's own potential in relation to an economic system that should be based on gift and generosity rather than exchange and material wealth.

Economic relations play an essential role in ambassador Karel's vision. He is one of the users of *Hearth.net*, and he reflected carefully on his position in the network and his reasons for using it. Based on life's twists, he began to think about "optimizing his consumption" (Karel, interview 2 February 2017) and how to reduce the amount of money he must earn. In seeking to release himself from competition and craving for profit within the market system, he referred to self-sufficiency, or what he described as "mutually interconnected self-sufficiency," recognizing the impossibility of complete independence. Karel's interest in *Hearth* was shaped by his goal of building a working alternative economic system where people provide services and products to each other to meet their needs within the local context. He also emphasized the world's natural resources and regard for the Earth. In maintaining a balance between consumption and resources, he stressed the importance of frugality and thrift.

Both men have a vision of a better future for the world. To make these visions intelligible and applicable, they materialize them in the gift and the practice of gift giving and gift requesting. The gift becomes the centerpiece of the ideal image of the future, a specific way of becoming attached to the world and others in the continually evolving assemblage of moral and economic relations¹⁶ that seems barely comprehensible. Therefore, the gift and *Hearth* represent a stable way of organizing social relations, although the gift itself is ambiguous.

In their visions, a better future lies in strengthening the relations between people and between all animate and inanimate entities. The imaginaries of a better future are projected into the gift in the disinterested gift ideas and the counter-gift's action. The contradictions intrinsic in the gift become a creative

¹⁶ I understand the term assemblage as the relational networks of animate and inanimate with a capacity to affect and be affected (Fox and Alldred 2015: 399). I build upon Deleuze, who uses the term assemblage to designate "multiplicity" and "becoming." It presents a process and a tendency to acquire an ontological status by being involved in relations to other material, social and abstract entities (Fox and Alldred 2017a: 17).

part of these imaginaries. Within the assemblage of economic relations, the gift represents the ideal that connects the most valuable moral values. In relation to the current market system and selfish acts in pursuit of wealth, the absence of such values as generosity, mutuality, and solidarity becomes evident. It supports the inclination to Hearth and the ideas of gift economy and values of happiness and joy, especially when these qualities are promoted as the natural ones.

On the one hand, the gift is perceived as something natural by the members of Adato Paradigma. For instance, they construe birth as the gift of life present in human lives from their very beginning. On the other hand, Malý talks about gift giving that must be trained. This aspect of learning and training is specific for religious practice, through which one should achieve enlightenment or self-perfection. Training is also the inherent practice of religious gift giving. Retsikas (2016: 2), on the basis of his ethnographic observation of *zakat* distribution, states: “Giving as well as receiving are activities conducted in a socially approved and politically sanctioned manner. Because of this, givers as well as recipients have to be trained in the acquisition of appropriate manners and should expect to have their performances evaluated according to standards of behavior that are historically and culturally specific.” In this way, Hearth presents an artificially created environment whose rules are primarily given by its founder and further negotiated and extended in the assemblage constituted by users, ambassadors, the team of Adato Paradigma, imaginaries of the proper gift, experiences with the market economy, and relations between humans and nonhuman entities, material things for instance. Learning of these rules occurs while giving and soliciting gifts. When Malý refers to the training of gift giving, he perceives it as a practice by which the perfection of oneself, and thus of society, can be achieved.

Gift as an Anchor for Morality

When the financial crisis hit the world in 2008, it impacted many people who lost their jobs and income. At that time Libor Malý, entrepreneur and Buddhist, had a spiritual vision that influenced how he approached the crisis. He thought of a new system that would not only offer affected people a way to cope with the consequences of the crisis; he wanted to create an alternative economic form that would provide at least some security to people in an ambiguous, fluid, and chaotic world, full of political, economic, and social uncertainties. He came up with the idea of a gift economy, which seemed the most suitable because it was conceived as the opposite of the market exchange. The economic crisis in 2008 challenged the financial system and the moral values associated with economic activities. The gift appears not only to show an alternative way of organizing economic

relations; it also emerges as the “apparent” antithesis to globally accepted moral values. I say “apparent” because although in many ways Malý conceived the gift in clear contrast to the market economy, these boundaries are blurred.

The dichotomy between the commodity in the market economy and the gift in the social science literature was mentioned by Mauss in 1925 (Mauss 2016: 189-90). Further, economic anthropologists elaborated on this topic, and they either criticized the basic distinction between gift and commodity (Appadurai 1986: 11-12; Gudeman 2001: 461) or thought of these two categories as intertwined (Carrier 1992: 189-90). On the one hand, this dichotomy has been used as a conceptual framework to help understand the logic of exchange and specific aspects of economies (Tsing 2013: 22), and on the other to end this dualism by reversing the common understanding of both categories (Miller 2001: 113). However, they all showed that the dichotomy is alive and plays a vital role in the prevalent conceptions of daily economic life. Thus, Hearth’s gift appears both as opposed to the market economy and the capitalist way of thinking, and simultaneously as a hope for a better future in responding to dystopian economic development.

Parry (1986: 467) states, “in an economy with a sizeable market sector gift-exchange does not have the material significance” and thus does not fulfill an economic function. Therefore, it is perceived as released from the ties of the market economy. According to the visions of Libor Malý and Karel, the gift on Hearth should acquire an economic role. They perceive gift exchange as the natural outcome of shortcomings of the current system. Despite their endeavors and imaginaries, many users consider gift exchange to be a rather secondary way to organize their social and material relations. Furthermore, the effort to establish gift exchange as an alternative economic system is accompanied by a spiritual discourse searching for noneconomic qualities. These ambiguities and inconsistencies linked with the gift lead me to think of Hearth’s gift as a *hybrid gift* that embraces material and non-material forms, with diverse meanings from spiritual to social and economic.

The hybridity of the gift lies in the conjunction of different economic and moral aspects. The gift is framed by the ideology of the pure gift and a public moral discourse defined by the values of generosity and kindness, and disinterestedness. However, the same gift is embedded in the tools created in compliance with the market economy and marketing. Hearth is organized like a social network that includes communication between users, a rating system, the option to join a specific group of users, and the ability to address all users with an offer or request within the market. These functions are used intuitively because everybody is familiar with them from other social networks and web platforms, making Hearth understandable. Simultaneously, they show how the contemporary gift is

irreducible from the capitalist neoliberal society’s current rules. The other hybrid feature of the gift concerns the ideal gift that should be, according to the Hearth website, “disinterested without any demands and expectations of the donor.” At the same time, the aim of this gift “is always joy.” Although Hearth’s gift is understood without the counter-gift, it supposes something in return already in the discursive sphere. Further, the counter-gift is an inherent part of gift giving and gift requesting, and it has different forms, as I have already shown.

The hybridity of the gift reflects the uncertainties present in human lives that stem from vague values and relations to the self and to other humans and nonhumans. Despite its opacity, the hybrid gift on Hearth acts as an anchor for positive moral values and represents a fixed point of reference in the world. The fact that it is embedded in the “economic orthodoxies of neoliberalism and the market” (Henig 2018: 3) only contributes to fostering confidence in something familiar.

Conclusion

On the “generous social network” Hearth, the gift emerges as an articulated, organized, controlled, reflected, and intentional unit. It is a type of gift defined from the top by the millionaire Libor Malý and his team and further shaped by Hearth’s users. I call this a *hybrid gift* because of its ability to merge divergent layers of human life. This hybrid gift obtains diverse functions and meanings. It becomes the means to get rid of a certain thing as well as a way to make someone happy, establish a deeper relationship, make one’s dreams come true, help someone, accept help, give one’s opinion, persuade others, spend time effectively, understand oneself, or fulfill the idea of the moral person. In other words, the gift offers a way to extend oneself, become entangled in new relations, and to affect and be affected.

The hybrid gift absorbs the various moral and ethical values attributed to it by donors and recipients. This moral and ethical assemblage involves individuals’ embodied moralities, the discursive morality of the paradigm of generosity and kindness, and the institutionalized morality of mainly market exchange presented by the state and major economic institutions. Although institutionalized morality is plural and stems from multiple sources, the gift is shaped primarily in opposition to the values associated with the market system. The opposition is not homogeneous and includes various reactions by Hearth’s users depending on their approach to market exchange.

On the one hand, the financial system is seen as unsatisfactory, and there is a need to refuse the idea of duality behind it. It results in highlighting the values of generosity and kindness and the necessity to “train” the individual in gift giving

to start a better life in non-duality. On the other hand, competition and desire for profit leading to uncertainties in people's lives are perceived as harmful. By contrast, regard for other human and nonhuman beings and the environment is emphasized. While these two aspects of morality, institutional and discursive, are "separate and distinct from one another, they are in constant dialogue with one another" (Zigon 2010: 7). In this dialogue, the gift becomes a representation of morality and takes on the role of an actor contributing to the development of the individual and society.

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Etika v sociální antropologii: Křehké rámce

Luděk Jirka

V roce 2020 se mnoho konferencí a workshopů přeneslo do online prostoru a také workshop se vznešeným názvem „Etika v sociální antropologii: Křehké rámce“ organizovaný Českou asociací pro sociální antropologii (CASA), Etnologickým ústavem AV ČR a Fakultou humanitních studií Univerzity Karlovy, nebyl výjimkou. Na internetové platformě Zoom se tak v sobotu 21. listopadu 2020 sešli antropologové, ale také filozofové nebo sociologové, aby debatovali o etických principech ve výzkumu, respektive na vysokoškolských pracovištích a ve vědeckých institucích. Nutno dodat, že se jednalo o odložené setkání, protože původně se měl workshop uskutečnit v březnu „prezenční“ formou, ovšem kvůli epidemiologické situaci musely organizátorky Hana Synková (Katedra sociální a kulturní antropologie, Univerzita Pardubice), Hedvika Novotná (Fakulta humanitních studií, Univerzita Karlova) a Markéta Slavková (Etnologický ústav AV ČR) workshop odložit a navíc jej uvést do online podoby. V tomto ohledu jim patří veliké poděkování za to, že se rozhodly workshop uskutečnit i navzdory nepříznivým okolnostem.

Pro atraktivitu celého workshopu bylo jediné dobře, že diskuze nebyla vedena pouze v rámci českého akademického prostředí, ale že na workshopu vystoupili i zahraniční přispěvatelé. Jednalo se tak o setkání s mezinárodní účastí, a to i navzdory tomu, že podněty k uskutečnění workshopu vznikly spíše v české akademické obci. Ze zahraničních přispěvatelů se v rámci panelu „Ethical Aspects of Interaction with State Power“, který proběhl jako jediný v anglickém jazyce a který pořádala Markéta Slavková, zúčastnily Andrea Petö (Department of Gender Studies, Central European University, Budapešť) a Helena Patzer (Institute of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology, University of Warsaw). Dále se slova ujal „naturalizovaný“ Joe Grim Feinberg (Filozofický ústav AV ČR) a Lucie Najšlová (UPCES CERGE-EI a Univerzita Karlova). Andrea Petö zaměřila svůj příspěvek na omezování akademických svobod v Maďarsku a Helena Patzer se věnovala obdobné situaci v Polsku, zatímco Joe Grim Feinberg si vzal slovo

k situaci v Turecku a Lucie Najšlová se ve svém příspěvku zabývala vztahem mezi Evropskou unií a Tureckem. Dovolím si zde osobní poznámku – již se ne bavíme pouze o situaci za hranicí Evropské unie, ale v rámci Evropské unie jsou Maďarsko společně s Polskem skutečnými varovnými případy, které by neměly nechat české akademiky v poklidu.

Následující panel s názvem „Etnografie na hraně“ již proběhl v českém jazyce a určitým východiskem zde byla „causa“ Davida Scheffela (jak je uvedeno v anotaci panelu). Panel „Etnografie na hraně“, který pořádal Yasar Abu Ghosh, se měl věnovat hraničním situacím, kdy antropologové provádí výzkum na „pomezí“ zákona nebo etických norem. V panelu vystoupila Tereza Virtová (Fakulta humanitních studií Univerzity Karlovy), která se věnovala etickým dilematům v případě tajného výzkumu, Václav Walach (Katedra antropologie Západočeské univerzity) prezentující příznání výzkumu ve vztahu k participantům a Jan Grill (Department of Social Sciences, Universidad del Valle, Kolumbie), který uvedl své zkušenosti z terénního výzkumu mezi Romy na Slovensku a ve Velké Británii. Prezentující antropologové došli k závěru, že vztah mezi antropology a participanty – alespoň tak, jak byl definován jejich předchůdci – je sice naplněn především snahou pomáhat výzkumu, ale že příznání výzkumu nebo informovaný souhlas může chránit jak výzkum samotný, tak i badatelovu roli a osobu.

Následující panel s názvem „Akademická prekarita ve středoevropské podobě: Jak jí kolektivně čelit“ byla svým charakterem diskuzí mezi akademiky z Etnologického ústavu AV ČR (Martin Fotta), Psychologického ústavu AV ČR (Kateřina Záborská), České asociace doktorandek a doktorandů (Kateřina Cidlinská), Fakulty humanitních studií Univerzity Karlovy a Sociologického ústavu AV ČR (obě tyto instituce zastupovala Tereza Stöckelová). Pro úplnost lze dodat, že Martin Fotta zastupoval také Evropskou asociaci sociální antropologie (PrecAnthro Collective EASA). Panel pořádaný Terezou Stöckelovou a Martinem Fottou se zaměřoval na prekarizaci antropologů na jejich pracovních pozicích. Panel vycházel z premisy, že transformace českého akademického světa na západní normy jsou veskrze bolestné a že pracovní prekarizace je důsledkem těchto přeměn. Ta se však obecně dotýká i akademického světa na západ od našich hranic. Dovolují si zde tvrdit, že prezentující otevřeli téma, které silně rezonovalo, alespoň, co se týče mladších akademiků, a téma by mělo upoutávat pozornost i nadále.

Poté následovala diskuze ohledně zavádění etických komisí na univerzitách, přičemž hlavními řečnicemi zde byly především Petra Ezzedine (Fakulta humanitních studií Univerzity Karlovy), Magdaléna Štovičková Jantulová (Fakulta humanitních studií Univerzity Karlovy) a Eva Hejzlarová (Fakulta sociálních věd Univerzity Karlovy). Pořadatelkami diskuze byly právě první dvě jmenované

akademicky. Na závěr celého workshopu byly za moderace Hany Synkové probírány návrhy pro etické směrnice České asociace sociální antropologie, přičemž hlavními diskutanty byli Kateřina Sidiropulu Janků (Carinthia University of Applied Sciences, Villach), Markéta Zandlová (Fakulta humanitních studií Univerzity Karlovy) a Michal Lehečka (Fakulta humanitních studií Univerzity Karlovy, Anthropictures).

Mnohé příspěvky přinesly nové a užitečné teze a informace a jsou určitým příslibem do budoucna (možná i pro další – v pořadí již třetí – workshop věnovaný etice ve výzkumu?). Workshop byl zdařilý, ačkoliv bylo obtížné sledovat současně chat i přednášející. Je samozřejmě nasnadě, že návrat k prezenční formě workshopů a konferencí je žádoucí, ale s ohledem na situaci zvládly organizátorky online formu setkání velice úspěšně.

Původní podněty pro uskutečnění workshopu vycházely – alespoň motivačně a zejména v panelu Yasara Abu Ghoshe – jako reakce na zatčení David Scheffela na východním Slovensku a je z mého pohledu škoda, že se „případu Scheffel“ nikdo z prezentujících nevěnoval. Vzhledem k tomu, že David Scheffel byl v září 2020 – tedy dva měsíce před uskutečněním workshopu – odsouzen k sedmi letům vězení za sexuální zneužití, se přeci jenom mohl někdo z prezentujících k této situaci vyjádřit. Trochu mě to navádí k otázce, zda nezůstává osud Davida Scheffela poněkud pozapomenut.

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Spolupráce organismů: mimo-lidští inženýři ekosystémů

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Lorimer, Jamie. 2020. *The Probiotic Planet: Using Life to Manage Life*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. 344 s. ISBN: 1517909201.

Jamie Lorimer je geograf a antropolog, který se věnuje současným transformacím ekologických systémů. Zaměřuje se na výzkum produkce vědění o ekosystémech a na to, jak vědecké diskurzy formují vztahy mezi lidmi a dalšími organismy. Ve své monografii *Wildlife in Anthropocene* (2015) se zabýval zapojením mimo-lidských organismů do politiky a ekologických managementů. V nejnovější knize *The Probiotic Planet: Using Life to Manage Life* (2020) navazuje na své předchozí publikace, především na studii „Probiotic Environmentalities: Rewilding with Wolves and Worms“ (2017). V této studii Lorimer analyzoval přístupy k „managementu zdraví a životního prostředí“ (Lorimer 2017: 2), které nevychází z modernistických praxí (medicínských či ochranářských), ale využívají dříve tabuizované formy života k ozdravení ekologických vazeb. Podstatné přitom je, že se jedná o ovlivňování makro i mikro systémů: o dynamiku krajinných ekosystémů i fungování lidského mikrobiomu, tedy mikrobiálního osazenstva lidského těla.

Lorimer se zaměřuje na případy, kdy byl do určitého regionu nasazen vlk obecný, ale také na experimentální a vědomé osazení lidských střev novými organismy. V obou případech vede taková intervence nové entity k „rekalibraci“ (Lorimer 2017: 6) daného systému, tedy k přetvoření vztahů mezi jednotlivými činiteli. Následkem by měla být transformace, která nejenom přeskládá etablované vazby, ale povede k lepšímu fungování krajinných ekosystémů (v případě re-introdukce vlků) a lidského mikrobiomu (v případě nasazení organismů do střevního mikrobiomu). Lorimer tyto experimentální přeměny socio-ekologických kolektivů označuje za projevy tzv. „probiotického obrátu“. Jedná se o souhrnné označení pro myšlenky a praktiky, které se do určité míry vymezují vůči modernistickým přístupům k lidskému zdraví a k ochraně životního prostředí, především pak

vůči „antibiotickým“ intervencím (Lorimer 2020: 2) spočívajícím v eliminaci (mikro)organismů v zájmu ochrany zdraví. Probiotický obrat zastřešuje postupy, které naopak spoléhají na zapojení dalších mimo-lidských organismů, přičemž jejich vstup do biokulturních vztahů spustí takovou reakci, která daný systém transformuje, a tím zajistí jeho lepší fungování. Ve své nové knize se Lorimer soustředí právě na takové typy environmentálního managementu, v nichž lidé sice ovlivňují ekologické procesy, ovšem povětšinou se vzdávají „modernistických“ snah o absolutní kontrolu nad ekologickými ději a spoléhají do velké míry na činnost nově vysazených (či znovu introdukovaných) organismů.

The Probiotic Planet je pokusem o analýzu, a především konceptuální zachycení současného spektra probiotických teorií a praxí, čili různých experimentálních přístupů k tomu, jak lze využívat formy života k „managementu života“. Geograficky se Lorimer zaměřuje na oblasti USA a západní Evropy, které označuje pojmem WEIRD (Western, Educated, Industrialized, Rich, and Democratic) (Lorimer, 2020: 1), což mu v některých kapitolách umožňuje kritickou analýzu popsaných praktik jakožto metod dostupných pouze těm, kteří mají nejenom finanční, ale také sociální kapitál k jejich uskutečnění (především Lorimer 2020: 133–159). Zároveň ovšem toto geografické zacílení zastiňuje některé další mocenské aspekty probiotického obratu, což se pokusím rozvést v druhé části tohoto textu.

Rámec Lorimerovy analýzy tvoří dvě případové studie probiotických činností, které rozpracoval již ve zmíněném článku z roku 2017. Jedná se o „rewilding“, čili o proměnu ekosystémů prostřednictvím vysazení takového živočišného druhu, který dokáže ovlivnit dynamiku celého krajinného ekosystému, a o praktiky týkající se obnovy lidského mikrobiomu, tedy nasazení takového organismu do lidského těla, který má potenciál transformovat fungování mikrobiomu. V první části knihy se Lorimer věnuje představení probiotického obratu jakožto širšího fenoménu, který zahrnuje konkrétní pokusy i teoretické práce. Zabývá se zde proto nejenom současnými environmentálními projekty a „do it yourself“ (DIY) experimenty, ale také přírodovědnými a konceptuálním zdroji těchto praktik. Shrnuje poznatky imunologů, mikrobiologů i ekologů a sumarizuje teorie sociálních vědců (kupříkladu Bruno Latoura, Donny Haraway a Anny L. Tsing), kteří navazují na teorie biologky Lynn Margulis a Jamese Lovelocka. Lorimer tak usouvztahuje probiotické praxe s tím, co nazývá „Gaian thinking“ (Lorimer 2020: 56) – uvažování o planetárních ekosystémech jakožto propojených dynamikách, které nelze ze strany lidstva plně kontrolovat, ale pouze rekalibrovat skrze pochopení toho, jak jsou jednotlivé entity propojeny a jak se navzájem ovlivňují (Lorimer 2020: 106). Jedná se přitom spíše o nové promyšlení konceptu Gaia, nikoli o jeho převzetí z textů Jamese Lovelocka. „Gaian thinking“, toto holistické pojetí ekosystémů, nepojímá planetu jako jednu Přírodu (Lorimer 2020:

8), jejímž teleologickým cílem je harmonická rovnováha a která se dokáže mstít nebo naopak odměňovat své obyvatele. Právě kvůli komplexní provázanosti ekosystémových dynamik se počítá s decentralizovaným fungováním, s výskytem nerovnováh a narušení. Člověk se ve většině probiotických praxí nevzdává snahy o transformaci ekologií, ale namísto totální kontroly zaujímá pozici, v níž může iniciovat impulsy, které mohou vést k funkční proměně.

Paralelně k těmto teoriím byl zaveden koncept týkající se pojetí samotného člověka: člověk už není chápán jako biologická jednotka oddělená od ostatních organismů, ale je popisován spíše jako „holobiont“ – jako hostitel, který je spoluvořen organismy obývajícími jeho tělo (pojem holobiont začala v tomto smyslu prosazovat již Lynn Margulis (1991), v debatách na pomezí antropologie a biologie jej v posledních letech rozvádí především biolog Scott Gilbert, 2016).

Tento teoretický a konceptuální kontext Lorimer podkládá pokusy, které rekalibrují ekosystémy a lidský mikrobiom. Etnografické příklady, které zkoumá, spojuje využití tzv. „keystone species“, tedy takových organismů, které hrají *klíčovou* úlohu v určitých ekologických systémech. Jejich přítomnost (či absence) proto může proměnit kompletní fungování ekologických vazeb. Na rovině environmentálního managementu, který spoléhá na rewilding, se Lorimer věnuje především případu přírodní rezervace Oostvaardersplassen (OVP) v Nizozemsku, v níž byl nasazen zpětně vyšlechtěný druh pratura, konkrétně Heckův skot (Lorimer 2020: 26). Návrat „původních“ býložravců má obnovit místní krajinu a přiblížit ji k režimu, v němž tyto ekosystémy fungovaly před nástupem antropocénu. Období paleolitu přitom představuje ideální předobraz fungování místních ekologií. Podobně jako reintrodukce vlků do Yellowstonského národního parku (Lorimer 2017: 3), také vysazení Heckova skotu představuje využití klíčového druhu, jehož vliv na lokální ekosystém má přinést kompletní transformaci krajiny, včetně biodiverzity a funkční ekologie. S podobnými důrazy Lorimer přibližuje vysazování bobřů v Británii, kdy se počítá s jejich výpomocí krajině, neboť bobří hráze fungují jako prevence povodní a sucha. Také bobří jsou pojímáni jako „ekosystémoví inženýři“ (Lorimer 2020: 32). V oblasti obnovy lidského mikrobiomu se Lorimer zaměřuje na chov, distribuci a aplikování červů do lidského mikrobiomu (především měchovce amerického, *N. americanus*). Tento druh červa žijící v tenkém střevě zastává v probiotických DIY experimentech funkci klíčového druhu a „ekosystémového inženýra“, jehož činnost může pozitivně ovlivnit celou ekologii lidského mikrobiomu (Lorimer 2020: 41).

V druhé části knihy Lorimer kriticky analyzuje probiotické teorie a praktiky. Navrhuje konceptualizaci nových typů správy ekosystémů a způsobů vládnutí nad nimi (a s nimi). Vychází přitom z Foucaultova vymezení biopolitiky, ale navazuje především na koncept *mikrobiopolitiky* americké antropoložky Heather

Paxson (Lorimer 2020: 90), který zviditelňuje činnost mimo-lidských biologických aktérů a jejich přiznané zapojení do politických, zdravotních a environmentálních strategií (více viz Paxson, 2008). Lorimer se proto věnuje také politické ekonomii probiotického obratu. Předestírá totiž možnosti ocenění práce mimo-lidských aktérů, rozličné metody jejich nasazení jakožto aktivních klíčových druhů (od „anarchistického“ vysazování bobrů bez oficiálního povolení – „hackování“ (Lorimer 2020: 118) – až po vládou schválený a dotovaný monitoring velkých šelem) a analyzuje druhy ekonomik, do nichž vstupují ty praktiky, v nichž lidé vyjednávají s mimo-lidskými organismy podobu ekologických vazeb. Tyto ekonomické směny mohou být uskutečňovány formou sdílení, když jsou mikroorganismy mezi jednotlivými experimentátory předávány ve formě veřejně dostupných statků (Lorimer 2020: 194), zároveň se probiotické praktiky stávají předmětem podnikatelských aktivit farmaceutických firem a dostávají se do oficiálních vládních strategií (Lorimer 2020: 198).

V následující části bych se rád zastavil u dvou konkrétních kapitol a nabídl dva body polemizující s Lorimerovým pojetím některých aspektů probiotických praxí. V šesté kapitole („Future Pasts, The Temporalities of the Probiotic Turn“) se Lorimer věnuje aspektu probiotického obratu, který souvisí s revizionistickými interpretacemi historie. Řada probiotických koncepcí a praktik totiž podle Lorimera stojí na nabídce „budoucích minulostí“ (Lorimer 2020: 161): určité období v dějinách je považováno za ideální z hlediska stavu ekosystémů a probiotické managementy se pokouší docílit (částecného) návratu tohoto minulého stavu, kdy ekologie ještě fungovaly. Klíčové přitom je, co která skupina považuje za „funkční“ ekologii a jakou historickou etapu určuje jako „vytouženou minulost“ (Lorimer 2020: 171). Lorimer si v této kapitole vybírá případovou studii zmíněného nizozemského přírodního parku OVP. Zdejší management se pokouší simulovat podmínky období paleolitu. Právě paleolit je v tomto modu rewildingu určen jako ideální „divočina“, k níž je zapotřebí se vrátit a k jejímuž fungování je nutné se přiblížit. Klíčovým druhem v tomto projektu je zmíněný Heckův skot. Autor porovnává toto pojetí s jiným typem ekologického managementu, v němž hrál ústřední roli rovněž Heckův skot. Lorimer detailně popisuje historii zpětného šlechtění tohoto praturu, když na základě historických materiálů ukazuje, že německý zoolog Lutz Heck, blízký přítel Hermanna Göringa, vytvořil toto plemeno jako součást plánů na návrat části evropské krajiny do podoby, kterou měla ve zromantizované představě o středověkých „lovcích“ (Lorimer 2020: 173). Zatímco v environmentálním managementu současné západní Evropy sehrává roli ideální „budoucí minulosti“ paleolitická ekologie, původ Heckova skotu byl provázán s nostalgickou mytologií lovců rekonstruovanou nacizmem.

Jakkoli tato „biopolitická“ genealogie Heckova skotu umožňuje ilustrovat různé temporality, které slouží a sloužily jako modely politicko-environmentálním strategiím, v celkové struktuře knihy působí pasáže o Heckových šlechtitelských plánech spíše disproporčně. Historický exkurz k environmentálním strategiím NSDAP příliš nepomáhá analyzovat současné podoby ekofašistických verzí probiotického obratu. Tyto antimodernistické a „temně zelené“ (Lorimer 2020: 221) odpovědi na výzvy antropocénu Lorimer zmiňuje, ale nevěnuje větší pozornost jejich aktuálním podobám. V kontextu detailního přehledu probiotického spektra, který Lorimerova práce nabízí, by bylo podnětné, pokud by se Lorimer pokusil vypořádat kupříkladu s teoriemi finského environmentalisty Pentti Linkoly. Linkola se profiloval jako přiznaně antihumanistický myslitel, který s ohledem na podmínky ekologické krize navrhoval zaměřit se na problém předlidnění (Linkola 1989) a kvůli ochraně ekosystémů odmítl demokracii, neboť se domníval, že racionální ekologické kroky jsou uskutečnitelné jen autoritativní vládou (Protopapadakis 2014). Vzhledem k tomu, že se Linkola ve svých textech vymezuje proti antibiotickému režimu, navrhuje sžívání člověka s bakteriemi pro posílení zdraví (Linkola 2011) a – mimo jiné – navrhuje využívání lidských fekálií v zemědělství pro efektivnější produkci potravin, není možné zcela odmítnout jeho místo v „probiotickém obratu“. Analýza této „temně zelené“ části probiotického spektra by mohla rozšířit záběr Lorimerovy knihy a je škoda, že tyto autoritativní formy probiotického obratu Lorimer spíše opomíjí.

Má druhá poznámka se týká především páté kapitoly („Geographies of Dysbiosis, The Patchiness of the Probiotic Turn“). Lorimer se v této pasáži věnuje geografii probiotického obratu, konkrétně určité elitní a privilegované dimenzi probiotických praktik. V oblasti WEIRD lze sledovat experimentování s nasazením mikroorganismů do lidského těla, přičemž je toto soužití moderováno tak, aby daný mikroorganismus lidskému tělu prospíval. Ovšem v chudých regionech, v nichž nejsou dostupná dostatečná hygienická a lékařská opatření, lidem stále hrozí infekce způsobená těmi samými mikroorganismy, které v zemích WEIRD pomáhají obnovovat lidský mikrobiom. Politicko-ekonomické uspořádání může změnit daný typ mikroorganismu z „gut buddies“ na nebezpečného parazita (Lorimer 2020: 206). Zároveň dochází k romantizaci (mikro)biologie lidí mimo USA a Evropu, a tedy k představě, že jejich mikrobiom nebyl poničen antibiotickými praktikami, které západní svět adaptoval. V některých případech tak slouží mikrobiální materiál „domorodých“ obyvatel jako zdroj pro fekální transplantaci určenou lidem ze západního světa (Lorimer 2020: 46; k tomuto tématu viz také Hobart, Maroney 2019).

Tato kritika postkoloniální (mikro)biopolitiky patří k cenným pasážím knihy. Zároveň Lorimer popisuje environmentální projekty západní Evropy, jejichž cílem

je přenést managementové strategie do východní Evropy, aniž by nabídl výraznější kritickou reflexi tohoto transferu postupů. Když se Lorimer věnuje projekcím ideální ekologické minulosti do budoucích ekologických taktik, zmiňuje jeden z rysů této politické snahy, kterým je:

„...projekce moci ze západní do východní Evropy (a někdy i mimo ni). K tomu docházelo prostřednictvím radikálně odlišných politických mechanismů napříč analyzovaným obdobím, ale východní Evropa je běžně pojímána jako ekologické centrum, jako životně důležitý biologický a kulturní zdroj pro Evropu a její občany a také jako brána k divočinám na ruském území. Západoevropští nadšenci pro ochranu přírody před studenou válkou i po ní umísťovali toto území do své legitimní sféry vlivu a tvrdili, že potřebuje jejich zásahy a správu.“ (Lorimer 2020: 175).

Pečlivější analýzu by zasloužila nejenom mocenská nerovnováha mezi „západem“ a Afrikou, ale také tendence v environmentálních strategiích rámujiících východní Evropu jakožto nerozvinutý region, který musí dohnat ekologicky vyspělou západní Evropu. Střední a východní Evropa bývá pojímána jako homogenní prostor, který by se měl inspirovat u „západních“ ekologických modelů (Jehlička, Kostecký, Smith 2013; Jehlička, Daněk 2017). Mocenské prosazování západních probiotických postupů (především různých typů rewildingu) mnohdy opomíjí socioekonomické kontexty střední a východní Evropy: mimo jiné například ztížení ekonomické situace farmářů v sociálně ohrožených regionech poté, co se do daných oblastí navrátil vlk obecný. Z pohledu probiotických teorií se jedná o pozitivní změnu, která může obnovit místní ekosystémy, ovšem v praxi farmářů je návrat vlků ohrožením hospodářských zvířat i farmářských domácností (Senft 2020). Zatímco se tedy Lorimer podnětným způsobem věnuje tomu, že měchovec může být „kamarád“, který ozdravuje lidská střeva, ale může být také nebezpečný parazit, přičemž záleží na situovanosti dané koexistence, ambivalentní povahu postupů rewildingu pouze naznačuje a nerozvádí jejich potenciálně negativní dopady při adaptaci mimo západní Evropu.

Lorimer příliš neprezentuje etnografické detaily a situace (přestože etnografická data stojí v pozadí jeho analýz), protože jeho cílem není ukázat, jak se *dělá* probiotická každodennost. Pozornost soustředí na črtání širšího prospektu toho, z jakých teorií a praxí je tzv. probiotický obrat konstituován. *Probiotic Planet* je především pokusem o konceptuální uchopení heterogenních přístupů, zmapování jejich provázaností a odlišností. Nejedná se přitom pouze o sociálněvědní kompendium, za speciálně přínosné považují především pasáže, které analyzují jednotlivé tendence, vyznačují jejich mnohdy nerefektované aspekty (mocenská

rovina probiotického obratu) a popisují jejich návaznost (či odklon) od modernistických environmentálních strategií. Lorimer předkládá *konkretizaci* toho, co znamená probiotický obrat, a *systematizaci* praxí a teorií, které usilují o správnání živého prostřednictvím kooperace lidí a mimo-lidských organismů. Jedná se tak o cenného průvodce probiotickými systémy, který umožní lepší orientaci v relevantních terénech a koncepcích pro výzkumníky, kteří pracují s metodologiemi vícedruhové etnografie a ekologické a medicínské antropologie – a to včetně těch, kteří se budou věnovat aspektům environmentálních strategií, které Lorimer opominul.

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Etnografie nebo špionáž? Státní dohled v socialistickém Rumunsku

David Pergl

Verdery, Katherine 2018. *My Life as a Spy: Investigations in a Secret Police File*. Durham: Duke University Press. 323 s. ISBN 9780822371908.

Americká emeritní profesorka Katherine Verdery, jejíž práce a poznatky význačným způsobem obohatily mnohé akademické debaty, platí za jednu z nejuznávanějších antropologických badatelek pro oblast studia východní Evropy, komunistického Rumunska, socialismu a postsocialistických transformačních procesů. Za svou bohatou profesní kariéru vyprodukovala značné množství publikačních výstupů, kdy pro své odborné studie, příspěvky do kolektivních projektů či monografická díla mohla čerpat i z výsledků svého dlouholetého terénního výzkumu, který prováděla od první poloviny sedmdesátých let v Rumunsku. Autorka zde v přestávkách pobývala mezi lety 1973 až 1988, což dohromady přineslo více než tři roky věnované terénní práci, kdy zkoumala společenský život v horských podmínkách transylvánských vesnic. Do Rumunska se opakovaně vracela i po pádu železné opony. Původně se zde zabývala sociální nerovností, etnickými vztahy a nacionalismem. Po roce 1989 se její výzkumné zájmy posunuly blíže k problémům transformace socialistických systémů, především ke změnám majetkových vztahů v zemědělství.

V recenzované knize *My Life as a Spy: Investigations in a Secret Police File*, se autorka vrací ke svému prvotnímu výzkumnému terénu v socialistickém Rumunsku. Verdery nám zde s pronikavě osobním a naturalisticky stylizovaným tónem podává přesvědčivé svědectví o způsobech dozoru ze strany důstojníků státní bezpečnosti. Poukazuje například na to, že už jen nálepka „západního vědce“ v tehdejších podmínkách Rumunska vedla k intenzivnějším praktikám prověřování a sledování ze strany Securitate. V knize jsou nastíněny postupy, které byly využívány k vytváření a eliminaci nepřátel státu, což doprovázelo zapojení rozsáhlé sítě spolupracovníků a informantů. V této souvislosti autorka

zmiňuje, že v prostoru tehdejšího komunistického Rumunska působilo kolem půl milionu informátorů, přičemž ve službách Securitate jich bylo kolem patnácti tisíc. Postupně jsme v různých detailech obeznáni s tím, co to doopravdy obnášelo, být označována za špiónku v poměrech tehdejšího Ceausescova Rumunska. Je nám částečně umožněno nahlédnout do utajovaného spisu, kde vystupují pod pseudonymy autorčiny odlišné verze, jakési její atomizované re/duplikáty: „Vera“, „Kora“, „Vanessa“, „Viky“, „Kitty“, „Folkloristka“ atd. Ve své složce se znovu a znovu dočítala o obavách Securitate, že její sběr „sociálně-politických“ informací by mohl prezentovat Rumunsko za hranicemi ve špatném světle. Prioritním zájmem důstojníků Securitate bylo, aby neutrpěla „mezinárodní image“ Rumunska. Za tímto účelem se jí prostřednictvím zprostředkovaných manipulativních praktik snažili vnuknout pozitivější přesvědčení o hostitelské zemi a získat nad jejími aktivitami dostatečnou kontrolu.

V jedné z úvodních podkapitol se průřezově seznamujeme s „Kathy“, která ve své částečně mladistvé naivitě a temperamentní povaze tíhne ke vzrušujícím představám o tom, jaký asi může být ten život „za železnou oponou“. Sama Verdery zde zvolila popis ve třetí osobě (tzv. illeismus), protože způsob, jakým na „Kathy“ bylo pohlíženo ze strany důstojníků Securitate, ji při četbě vlastního spisu odcizoval a vzdaloval od jejího mladšího alter ega. Po seznámení s vlastním spisem pro ni nebylo ani zjevné, zda měla plnou kontrolu nad vytvářením „svých vlastních“ názorů, popřípadě jak výrazně do toho vstupoval zprostředkovaný aspekt manipulativních metod Securitate. Není to jen nějaká jednotlivá pasáž, kde se autorka vrací s odstupem ke své autobiografii, ale v celé knize nás Verdery vtahuje do svého osudového výzkumného pole v komunistickém Rumunsku, jež zároveň podrobuje zevrubnému přehodnocení.

Rumunsko se pro Katherine Verdery stalo vhodným terénem spíše z praktického hlediska, protože v kontextu 70. let rumunský režim zvolil cestu větší otevřenosti, a byl tedy obecně jedním z mála komunistických států v Evropě, kde bylo možné relativně snadno provádět terénní výzkum. Ceausescův režim byl v období jejího příjezdu nakloněn k pragmatickému navazování ekonomických vazeb se Západem s cílem zabezpečit příliv kapitálu a zahraniční úvěry v tvrdé měně. Tento pokus směrem k větší otevřenosti však završil úplný krach země a opětovné zhoršení vzájemných vztahů, což znamenalo návrat k předešlé paranoie, upevňující bariéry nepřátelství mezi Východem a Západem. Verdery zde zachycuje, jak se makropolitické události a zájmy projevují na místní úrovni, přičemž zde vstupují do procesu jejího sledování a současně proměňují i podobu sledovacího spisu. Z „Folkloristky“ byla transformována na „maďarskou agentku CIA“, pod kódovaným přízviskem „Vera“, když její přítomnost začala být vykreslována v zájmu iredentismu a rozdmýchávání etnického napětí. Objekt sledování

„Vera“, se v tomto období dostal až k rukám generála Juliana Vlada, u něhož byl zmíněný případ vyhodnocen za „velmi významný“ a došlo k zintenzivnění tlaku na její dozorování. Na konci osmdesátých let už to byla „agentka Vera“, která se pohybuje ve spikleneckém okruhu protistátního a nepřátelského disentu v Bukurešti. Verdery nás provází vývojem v posuzování jejího bezpečnostního souboru, kdy nám zároveň s tím poodhaluje své předchozí přešlapy, které znamenaly výrazné změny ve sledovacím spisu, ale i v zadání a praktikách jejího dohledu. Přestože některé z krušných chvil napovídaly tomu, že už se schyluje k jejímu zatčení a předvedení před soudní tribunál, důstojníci Securitate k tomuto kroku nikdy fakticky nepřistoupili. Přičemž i v nejvíce vypjatých momentech, kdy se například zvyšovalo napětí a tlaky uvnitř Ceausescova režimu, jí bylo umožněno opustit zemi a navrátit se až po odstavení diktátora. Mohla to být jen pouhá shoda okolností a ohromná porce štěstěny, že se Verdery nikdy neocitla v poutech. Nicméně Securitate její profil považovala za příliš zajímavý z řady hledisek, než aby prostě dospěla k rozhodnutí ukončit dozorování a přistoupila k jejímu uvěznění.

Kniha rozhodně nezůstává jen u schématu memoárového vyprávění, ale v mnoha ohledech se přibližuje práci ve formě auto-etnografie. Autorka rovněž obratně pracuje s postmodernismem a jeho optikou, když jsou zde v multifokálních promluvách zastoupeny mnohovrstevnaté perspektivy, které se vzájemně střetávají či smysluplně doprovázejí. Zaměření na různorodé perspektivy se projevuje v uspořádání obsahu knihy, kde ke čtenáři promlouvají výňatky ze sledovacího spisu, které si můžeme snadno propojit s etnografickými zápisky, v nichž se autorka nijak nezdráhá otevřeně popisovat citlivé pasáže ze svého spisu a současně se při zpětném ohlédnutí nesnaží opravňovat své dřívější nedostatky. Naopak Verdery dokáže v patřičném kritickém odstupu upozornit na své předchozí nedomyšlené přešlapy a trable, které zakoušela během svých badatelských aktivit, čímž kniha získává i punc hodnotné příručky pro vstup do terénu, když předkládá celou řadu užitečných postřehů pro badatele. Jedním z takových klíčových nedostatků, na něž autorka v knize upozornila, bylo i její počáteční nerefektivní přesvědčení, že stačí být počestným a pravdivým, aby to rozešlo veškeré neoprávněné podezření. Zpětně to kriticky posuzuje jako předpojaté přehlušení etnocentrického náhledu, které mělo spíše opačné omezující účinky, když u dozorců příslušníků Securitate a jejich informantů zavdávalo spíše k pochybnostem a posilovalo jejich předpoklad, že se jedná o skrytou zpravo-dajskou hrozbu.

Kniha je výsledkem propojení tří úrovněvých segmentů výzkumu, kdy autorka kombinuje tehdejší vlastní terénní data s paralelně probíhajícím „výzkumem“ Securitate, což následně přenesla i do roviny „ex post“, kdy se odhodlaně

po dlouhých letech pustí do analýzy konfrontující některé ze samotných agentů a jejich spolupracovníků. Poměrně unikátní je svědectví o tom, jak sama autorka po letech vyhledala některé ze svých blízkých přátel, kteří na ni pravidelně donášeli Securitate. Verdery se zdráhala k nim přistoupit v duchu morálního zúčtování. Chtěla znovu-setkání uchopit jako etnografka a lidská osoba hledající především porozumění v sociálních aspektech, jež nás mohou zavést k podobnému jednání vůči osobám, které nám svěřily svou důvěru a určitý druh nevinnosti. Ozřejmuje nám, jak někteří z informátorů, se kterými udržovala přátelské a intimní vztahy, museli přistoupit ke spolupráci z důvodu vydírání. V některých případech se však nejednalo o tak úplně vynucenou spolupráci, někdo využíval škodlivých lží na její adresu, aby mohl zapůsobit na Securitate. Sledování probíhající ze strany Securitate jí narušilo mnoho z důvěrných vztahů, ale ne všechny zůstaly rozvrácené i v budoucnosti. Někde dosáhla pozdějšího usmíření, ale zůstala v ní určitá pachuč s pocitem vlastní viny, že to byla právě ona, kdo k nim Securitate přivedl. Je pak pochopitelné, že samotná četba vlastního sledovacího spisu u Verdery vzbuzovala řadu protichůdných a složitých pocitů. Znamenalo to určitý druh procitnutí, její tehdejší stav nevědomí se měl rozplynout a seskládat do nového bolestivého procesu rozpominání, což se podepsalo nejen na zpřetřhání některých přátelských vazeb, ale také na rozbití manželství. Při pocitu neustálého dozoru se objevuje nekončící propast nedůvěry a paranoia, která přizivuje pochybnosti nahlodávající důvěru ve vztazích.

My Life as a Spy není ojedinělým příkladem publikace, kde se autor pokouší vyporádat se skutečností, že se během svého výzkumu stal obětí pečlivého státního dozoru, přičemž veškeré podrobnosti ze sledování vyšly na povrch až se zpřístupněním skrytých bezpečnostních záznamů. Po pádu železné opony se objevilo hned několik takových publikací, přičemž v podobných intencích i předchodí díla zahrnovala detailní rozbor vlastního spisu, který se prolínal s prvky memoárového vyprávění. Například velkou pozornost vzbudila monografie *The File* (1998) anglického historika Timothyho G. Ashe. Z pozdější tvorby lze zmínit také Sheilu Fitzpatrick a její *A Spy in the Archives* (2013). Verdery si v tomto ohledu dala poměrně na čas, ale výsledek její práce stojí za to. Ohromný objem záznamů ze svého spisu nejprve přetavila v monografii *Secrets and Truths: Ethnography in the Archive of Romania's Secret Police* (2014) a o čtyři roky později v poněkud niternější sondě do vlastní minulosti v *My Life as a Spy*.

Teprve s uplynutím jedné dekády po pádu Ceausescova režimu se přijetím lustračního zákona otevřela možnost nahlédnout do specifického světa skrytých mechanismů státní kontroly. Rumunsko v roce 1999 odtajnilo spisy státní policie jako jedna z posledních postkomunistických zemí. Verdery se ke svému spisu dostala až v roce 2006, když pracovala na jednom ze svých výzkumných

projektů, při němž navštěvovala Národní radu pro studium archivů Securitate (CNSAS). Přes svou počáteční obavu a značnou neochotu si nakonec v několika kopiích sledovací spis odvezla domů. V celkovém souhrnu sledovací spis zahrnoval na jedenáct svazků, což znamenalo projít 2 781 stran, jejichž obsah doplňovalo hlášení od 70 spolupracujících informátorů, což zcela nepochybně nebylo konečné číslo. Tento soubor svazků byl postupně přidělován pověřeným důstojníkům Securitate, kterým se podařilo nashromáždit ohromné množství materiálu. Securitate se během patnáctileté práce zaměřila na nejrůznější informační a výzvědné kanály, když prováděla sledování skrze nasazené informátory, kteří podávali pravidelná hlášení a hodnocení. Dále byly pro tyto účely pořizovány skryté odposlechy, zaznamenávány telefonní hovory, korespondence, fotografie, přepis terénních poznámek či vypracované analýzy z akademických prací sledovaného cíle.

Pro Verdery to znamenalo příležitost pokusit se porozumět tomu, jakými způsoby byla vnímán ze strany důstojníků tajné policie a jejich informátorské sítě. Verdery se pokusila popsat, co to znamenalo být neustále špehována v podmínkách studené války, jak tento dozor vstupoval do její etnografické praxe a jak ji ovlivňoval. Pokusila se této hordě chaoticky navrstvených zápisů z jednotlivých fází sledování vtisknout chronologii a zařadit ji do smysluplných kontextuálních podmínek. Teprve s tímto přístupem mohla začít zpracovávat sledovací materiál. Musela však nejprve zpracovat svůj sledovací soubor do upotřebitelného stavu pro účely svého výzkumného záměru. Autorka nám zde následně poodkrývá paranoidně schizofrenní stránku lidské bytosti, a jakým způsobem může být přiřívována v kontextu autoritářského režimu. To může mít mnoho zajímavých konotací při hlubším zamyšlení nad současnými politickými událostmi, jakými způsoby zpravodajská činnost působí na společnost při vytváření hrozeb. V Rumunsku za éry Nicolae Ceaușesca byl každý výzkumný pracovník potencialem hrozbou, proto muselo být jeho chování podrobně zaznamenáváno a vystaveno pravidelnému dozoru. Z jejich pohledu to byl potencialem adept na spolupráci s některou ze zahraničních zpravodajských služeb.

Verdery v této souvislosti rovněž obrací pozornost k tradiční a eticky stále citlivé otázce, v jejímž epicentru se snaží problematizovat některé podobnosti a rozdíly mezi antropologem a špiónem, přičemž v některých pasážích této knihy, jako kdyby se tyto obvykle zjevné hranice začaly vytrácet ve složitě vydefinovaných konturách odlišně zakoušené sociální reality. Podezření, že člověk je zahraničním zpravodajským agentem, ať už je to oprávněná obava či ne, může přinést fatální důsledky, a to se nemusí projevit pouze do provádění vlastního etnografického bádání. Byl to samotný Franz Boas, který se před více než stoletím ostře vymezil proti čtveřici antropologů, již během první světové války svůj výzkum použili

jako záminku pro špionážní výzvědy v oblasti Střední Ameriky. Ve svém již proslulém dopise, uveřejněném na stránkách *The Nation* 2005 [1919], se Boas k jejich zpravodajské činnosti vyjádřil se značným opovržením a znepokojením. Považoval jejich počínání za zaprodání principů profesionality a nezávislého vědeckého bádání. Podle něj tím poškodili kredibilitu budoucích antropologických výzkumníků, čímž automaticky ztratili právo být klasifikováni jako vědci.

V období Franze Boase se americká antropologie dostatečně nezabývala eticky spornými otázkami, které by řešily zapojení antropologů do zpravodajské činnosti. Přitom jsou z té doby dobře známé příklady konkrétních antropologů, kteří se angažovali v tajných službách během obou světových válek, přičemž tento trend pokračoval i se započatím studené války. V následujících desetiletích došlo k četným soukromým a veřejným interakcím mezi zpravodajskou a antropologickou komunitou (pro srov. Engerman 2009; Price 2016). Například David H. Price (2000) v jedné ze svých studií poukazuje na to, jak *Americká antropologická asociace* počátkem padesátých let vyjednala tajnou dohodu se CIA, jejíž součástí bylo i vytvoření adresáře členů asociace, jenž poskytoval údaje o jejich geografických a jazykových odborných oblastech znalostí a dalším zaměření (Price 2000: 25). Verdery pak ve své knize opakovaně vykresluje některé paralely, které značně oslabují na první pohled zřetelné vymezení mezi zpravodajskými a antropologickými metodami. Poukazuje právě na nástroje etnografie, v nichž důstojníci Securitate posléze identifikovali jim známé praktiky, vlastní elementy profesionalizovaného přístupu a chování. Také oni se při svých „šetření“ snažili nevzbuzovat přílišnou pozornost, pragmaticky přitom využívali služeb „informátorů“, kterým přidělovali pseudonymy, a výpovědi si pečlivě nahrávali. Byla to z jejich strany promyšlená komplexní strategie sběru dat, kdy dokázali ze svého sledování vyprodukovat ohromné množství informací a poznámek, které pečlivě kódovali a šifrovali do výsledné podoby obsáhlého sledovacího spisu (Verdery 2012: 17). Následně pak Securitate stačilo zasadit semínko rychle se šířící zvěsti, že Verdery přichází místní vesničany sledovat s magnetofonem v ruce, což uskutečnili prostřednictvím místních policejních složek.

Spirálu paranoidních a vážných podezření ze strany Securitate odstartovala dobrodružná epizoda s půjčeným motocyklem *Mobra*, na němž se proháněla Verdery poblíž tajné vojenské základny, což autorka nastiňuje již prologem. Pro Securitate tím vzrostlo podezření, které přiřivila ještě několika dalšími závažnými pochybeními, čímž se důstojníci pouze utvrzovali v tom, že shromažďuje citlivé sociálně-politické informace o rumunské kultuře a společnosti, které potenciálně může použít proti rumunskému státu. Díky svému upřímnému popisu vlastních činů a selhání mohla Verdery následně sledovat, jak se etnografický výzkum mohl stát pro Securitate vodítkem v jejich chápání toho, co pro ně měla

představovat. Do přečtení svého sledovacího spisu měla Verdery jasnou představu o tom, kým podle ní „Kathy“ doopravdy byla. Její vize sebe samé, utvářená v pohledu do vlastní minulosti, zde byla charakterizovaná jednotou a soudržností. Při četbě svého spisu se však setkala s tím, že byla najednou posuzována na základě detailních a intimních vědomostí o ní samotné, ale ve zcela odlišných intencích. V očích Securitate byla státním nepřítelem, a to hned v několika různých verzích. Aniž by to mohla reflektovat, bez vědomí takového skrytého postupu, byla postupně duplikována a fragmentována těmi, kteří získali iniciativu a byli vybaveni vhodnými prostředky tvořit alternativní verze o ní samotné. Autorka si tu pohrává s otázkou identity, což se mnohdy dostává až do výrazně psychologizujícího popisu, kde přibližuje své niterné prožitky traumatizující zkušenosti.

Recenzovaná kniha představuje fascinující intimní svědectví o státním dozoru v Rumunsku během studené války, jeho konsekvencích při vytváření identity zahraničního badatele a jeho vztahů s informátory, které považuje za blízké a důvěrné přátele. Nicméně mimo všechny tyto zmíněné zásadní dimenze, kterými *My Life as a Spy* vtahuje čtenáře do osobního a poutavého příběhu o způsobech sledování v komunistickém Rumunsku, je tu i rozměr ústřední pro studenty antropologie, z hlediska transparentnosti a nevšedního způsobu zobrazení antropologické praxe. Jsme zde nepřímou nabádání, abychom uvažovali o důsledcích a škodách vlastní badatelské činnosti, a zároveň je to v podstatě příručka zahrnující nesčetné příklady reflexivity v etnografii. Skrze svou upřímnost, tváří v tvář svým mnohým selháním, nám autorka poodhaluje množství emocí, pocitů a nepříznivých situací, s kterými se může terénní pracovnice či pracovník setkat v nepředvídatelném kontextu všední etnografické praxe. Je nám zde ilustrováno s pronikavou přesvědčivostí, prostřednictvím konkrétních výňatků ze spisu, jaké nepředvídatelné momenty mohou nastat v prostředí autoritářských režimů, kde samotná forma zřízení postupuje na nejosobnější rovinu mezilidských vztahů. V tomto ohledu je stále nedostatek podobně laděných prací, které nabízejí detailní vhled do způsobů dozorování a manipulativních praktik v autoritářských kontextech, které by současně s patřičným důrazem zohlednily i to, jak tyto praktiky mohou zasáhnout do procesu samotného výzkumu. Přitom se zde autorka nepodbízí vynášením nějakých zjednodušených morálních soudů, nechce se smířit s odsouzením Securitate za jejich neoprávněný postup vůči ní samotné, ale namísto toho zde usiluje o univerzálnější porozumění a zdůvodnění na základě sociálních souvislostí.

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