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Minorities

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Meet the editor

Dr. John R. Hermann is a tenured professor in the Department of Political Science at Trinity University in Texas. He has published twenty-five peer-reviewed papers. His research focuses on how to protect vulnerable and marginalized groups in our constitutional republic and higher education pedagogy with a focus on the changing demographics in the United States.

Contents

Preface

The research presented in *Minorities - New Studies and Perspectives* adds to the intellectual capital in understanding the treatment of marginalized groups by the majority.

The book is divided into three sections: the first section introduces and explores the different ways that minorities are discriminated against by the majority, the second section examines how minorities are treated by the community in different contexts, revealing the diversity of minorities' plight in society, and the third section examines issues of immigration and migration that adversely influence minorities by the majority.

I would like to acknowledge the support of Trinity University in pursuing this scholarly work and the contribution of the author service manager at IntechOpen, Ms. Elena Vracaric, for her dedication and hard work. Finally, I expresses gratitude to the contributing authors for their excellent chapters.

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Section 1

Introduction

Chapter 1

Introductory Chapter: Minorities - New Studies and Perspectives

John R. Hermann

1. Introduction

Minorities are a group of people "with unique social, religious, ethnic, racial, or other characteristics that differ from those of the majority ([1], p. 1). Minorities frequently lack access to or clout in the political process. And, while minorities are typically non-white, they are increasingly "complicated by immigration of the growth of multicultural people" ([1], p. 1). Facing implicit and explicit discrimination, experiencing a lack of equal opportunity and disparate treatment, confronting structural and institutional barriers, and suffering through policies based on racial threat theory are deleterious elements of the marginalization and stigmatization of minorities.

The treatment of minorities can be examined from at least four dimensions. First, academic scholarship explores issues of lack of equal opportunity (e.g., race, gender, LGBTIA+, religion, ablism, ethnicity, and other forms of discrimination). Second, research details institutional and structural barriers that prevent equal opportunity in practice (e.g., health care, the criminal justice system, education, voting, government and corporate policies, immigration and migration, and other institutions). Third, racial threat and critical race theory are discussed (i.e., micro-aggressions, majority oppression, minority, and intersectionality). Fourth, strategies for overcoming the unfair treatment of minorities are considered (e.g., affirmative action, civil rights legislation, court decisions, and corporate policies).

2. Four central ways to study minorities

First, academic scholarship details issues of lack of equal opportunity for minorities. For example, in the United States, the Fifteenth Amendment ratified in 1870 was supposed to grant African-Americans the right to vote. Yet, African-Americans could not systematically vote in the Southern states until the codification of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 ninety-five years later. Similarly, women were also confronted with systematic discrimination. Associate Justice William J. Brennan of the Supreme Court of the United States laments in *Frontiero* v. *Richardson* (1973) ([2], p. 684) that:

> *our statute books gradually became laden with gross, stereotyped distinctions between the sexes and, indeed, throughout much of the 19th century the position of women in our society was, in many respects, comparable to that of blacks under the pre-Civil War slave codes. Neither slaves nor women could hold office, serve on juries, or bring*

> *suit in their own names, and married women traditionally were denied the legal capacity to hold or convey property or to serve as legal guardians of their own children.... And although blacks were guaranteed the right to vote in 1870, women were denied even that right—which is itself "preservative of other basic civil and political rights"—until adoption of the Nineteenth Amendment half a century later.*

Like African-Americans and women, other minority groups in the United States faced similar discrimination from the majority. Still, the issue of lack equal opportunity for minority groups transcends one country's borders or one issue area. Globally, refugees, indigenous cultures, gender discrimination, LGBTIA+, and racial and ethnic minorities are just some of the groups that face implicit and explicit discrimination in the public and private spheres.

Second, research details institutional and structural barriers that prevent equal opportunity in practice. For example, in the United States, the Baldus study found that African-Americans were more than four times more likely to receive the death penalty than Caucasians for interracial murders when controlling for other key factors [3]. Globally, minorities do not receive equal health care or outcomes than their majority counterparts [4]. Linguistic minority students in primary, secondary, and post-secondary schools face formidable discrimination—both explicitly and implicitly [5]. And, religious and ethnic minorities experienced genocide based on minority status and as a scapegoat to the country's larger problems (e.g., WWII between 1941 and1945 and Rwanda in the 1990s).

The literature on minorities also examines possible explanations for discrimination (i.e., racial threat theory) and perspectives of minorities by minorities (i.e., critical race theory). Racial threat theory, for example, reveals that the majority uses disproportionate power to oppress minority groups based on the perceived danger (e.g., Jim Crow Laws in the United States) ([6], pp. 1–2). These types of oppressive laws discriminate against minorities in social, cultural, and political ways. It is also found that the more of a minority in a political, social, and cultural system, the more likely the laws are to be more oppressive ([6], p. 2). Still, other scholars share how it is perceived to be a minority by minorities. For instance, Critical Race Theory (CRT) was born out of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States to show that institutional and structural factors in society are part of the culprits of discrimination. Equality under the law is not possible, because equal opportunity is defined based on the majority's perspective, not based on the historical discrimination of the minority. CRT is an "academic field of inquiry, a movement, and framework ... which has sought to examine the racialized experiences, structures, and outcomes of contemporary Western social democracies" ([7], p. 1). It explains the minority perspective, the majority's explicit and implicit biases, and the dynamic nature of how an individual can change from majority to the minority based on the precise setting of the racial or minority relationship, commonly known as intersectionality ([7], p. 1).

3. Discussion

While progress to mitigate or even end discrimination is not linear, there are intentional and strategic policies that have helped improve minority standing. Social movements (e.g., Black Lives Matter), Civil Rights legislation, court decisions, and private actors have helped to begin to root out the deep-seeded discrimination. For example, the politically disadvantaged theory postulates that groups that lack access

to or clout in the electoral process regularly turn to the courts to lobby for or redress their grievances (e.g., [8]). Aboriginal or indigenous groups have lobbied for self-determination in their lives (e.g., [9]). In some instances, aboriginal or indigenous groups have retained some semblance of tribal sovereignty. What is more, minorities on college campuses sometimes fear to speak or reveal their true identities now have "safe spaces" (e.g., [10]).

It becomes increasingly apparent that the study of minorities continues to evolve as we try to unearth the different meanings of minorities, and the myriad of ways that minorities are mistreated. Minorities face explicit and implicit discriminatory behavior in virtually all areas of life. Systemic and systematic discrimination and marginalization of minorities take many forms. Research in STEM, Business, Social Sciences, and the Humanities explore minority oppression and marginalization. Additionally, scholars use qualitative and quantitative methodologies to examine majority oppression of minority groups.

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Section 2

Minorities in the Community

Chapter 2

"With Great Power Comes Great Impressionability": A Study of the Relation between Stereotypes and Superheroes

Samuel C. Van Vleet, Everrett Moore, Alvin Akibar, Azlynn Osborne and Yolanda Flores Niemann

Abstract

The present multimethod research examines different stereotypes about race and ethnicity via a comic book superhero lens. This study focuses on the ascription of traits to a superhero figure developed specifically for this research, examining differences in trait ascription based on the race and sexual orientation of the hero. A diverse sample of participants (N = 371) were presented random drawings of either White, African American, Hispanic, Middle Eastern, Asian, or Native American superhero images and asked questions about their perceptions of the hero's traits, character role (hero, villain, and sidekick), powers, and socio-economic status. Additionally, hero sexual orientation was manipulated (Heterosexual × Gay), bringing 12 conditions of hero identity that were randomly assigned to participants in a 6 (Race: White × Black × Latinx × Asian × Arab × Native American) × 2 (Sexual Orientation: Heterosexual × Gay) cross-sectional design. Results indicated that participants ascribed certain traits differently based on the race of the hero as well as how race and sexuality of the hero interacted. Additionally, results supported the use of original, fictional images as a means of examining participant perceptions of race and sexuality. These empirical findings can be helpful in the creation and real-world adaptations of comic book superhero media and understanding effects of comic media on the development and dissemination of stereotypes.

Keywords: stereotypes, comic book superheroes, media influences, sexual orientation, race

1. Introduction

Superhero culture is one of the most popular genres of today's entertainment world [1, 2]. The spectrum of superhero culture ranges from comic books to action figures to cinematic blockbusters. The superhero genre has many outlets for success, ranging from superhero toys that made up 77% of Marvel's revenue in 1998 [3] to the Marvel

Cinematic Universe that earned over 12 billion dollars in sales through 2017 [4]. Although comic book superheroes have been traditionally followed by the "geek" or "nerd" culture, in recent years, their influential reach has become mainstream [5, 6]. Comic stories often express perceptions in culture, politics, and social desires within a given point of time [7]. With the superhero genre fan base increasing and moving from small groups to the mainstream, their media influence grows with it [8]. Yet the effect of the genre on the perception of various demographic groups remains relatively unexamined. The powerful effects of stereotypes in media along with the impact of superhero culture in media inspired this study. We hope to add to the scant empirical data that examines this rapidly growing media culture. The present study examines the relationship between stereotypes based on race and sexual orientation and the portrayals of superheroes. We hope to provide a clearer understanding of how comic book superheroes are perceived when presented to potential fan bases.

2. Representation and stereotypes in comic media

Journalist Walter Lippman [9] described stereotypes as pictures in our heads. Social psychologists further define them as structured sets of beliefs that contain the perceiver's organized knowledge, beliefs, and expectancies about some human group [10–12]. These structures are the foundation of common forms of racism in today's society [13]. Racial/ethnic group stereotypes are considered the most powerful influences in self-image and identity and person perception [14, 15]. They are often acquired through both direct and indirect sociocultural/social learning [16, 17], one such prominent indirect mechanism being the consuming of media messages, such as those from television.

Representation in media presents opportunities for significant social change. Findings show that viewing minority television characters can increase acceptance of members of outgroups to the majority [18]. Research has found that being able to identify with gay fictional characters establishes empathy, which leads to increases in acceptance [19]. A 2016 study by McLaughlin and Rodriguez found that being able to identify with gay fictional characters could lead to acceptance while at the same time reinforcing gay stereotypes. Stereotypes can be both positive and negative [20–22]. When gay characters are shown portraying even positive stereotypes, they do not allow the characters to be full and complex individuals [23]. Chung [24] found that being exposed to media that only contains stereotypical portrayals of sexual minorities results in its consumers developing false assumptions of sexual minorities. The intersection of racial and sexual identities may result in stereotypes surrounding sexuality altering the extent to which racial characteristics/stereotypes are ascribed to racial/ethnic minority men [25].

Stereotypes are often implied from facial appearances and physical attributes [26]. Similarly, superhero figures are often evaluated by their appearance and attributes [27]. Comic books often depict gendered and racialized images [28, 29]. These, in turn, can affect how other media outlets portray gendered and racialized superheroes [27, 30–32]. Although Marvel has taken steps to embrace different angles and diversify their media [33], and there have been attempts at stereotype reduction in the media [34–39] stereotypical portrayals persist.

DC Comics and Marvel Comics have introduced various gay and lesbian comic characters in their mainstream comic books since 1988, but most of these characters have only received minor roles [40]. Portrayals of sexual minorities have historically been rare in media, with existing depictions often represented in a stereotypical way [24]. Despite increasingly progressive legislation and positive gay representation in

television and film, stereotypes of gay men and lesbians have remained consistent in recent media [41]. Regular exposure to media stereotypes can contribute to the development of stereotypes that may then perpetuate upon exposure to further stereotyped content [42].

Many of these effects outlined above are driven mechanistically by priming effects, a cornerstone of media psychology entailing that exposure to a media message or theme triggers thoughts and attitudes within a person related to that message that are already in place [43]. Additionally, the consistent activation of such connections between groups and ideas reinforces them. These connections are picked up and perpetuated upon even if limited only to implicit symbolism and cues within media that may not even be intended, but instead seem to be product of existing, stereotyped-aligned views that appear on the surface to be race-neutral [44]. In one study, participants exposed to equivalently violent portrayals of Black and White media characters more readily associated Black people with violent behaviors and weapons across both implicit and explicit batteries [45], an association that was not duplicated for participants exposed to the White character. Further, some evidence suggests that American media is both rife with stereotyped depictions of people of color [39] and may be excessively prone to depict people of marginalized racial backgrounds in line with negative stereotypes compared to other media sources in the world [46], offering ample opportunity for stereotypes to propagate in media consumers via consistent priming. Marginalized characters that consumers enjoy and identify with, even when maintaining an overall positive public opinion, may still prime and reinforce stereotyped attitudes within consumers if they are portrayed in stereotyped ways, even when such a portrayal may have been intended positively [47].

Much of the prior work has been limited to the use of stereotypical images and stimuli as research primes. Characters in media that stand as foils to these typical stereotypes of people of marginalized identities, such as comic book heroes of color, are relatively uninvestigated in what reactions they elicit compared to more stereotyped oriented characters. This is especially relevant given media representations of people of color may not necessarily be best evaluated by how stereotyped they are, but how distant their depiction is from values of mainstream culture [48], suggesting that limiting stereotype research, especially that involving priming stimuli, to only that which is in line/not in line with a stereotype may be limiting. The present study will advance the sparse empirical literature about the perception of people of different races, especially people of color, while using non-stereotyped stimuli that is matched visually across conditions save for race and gender. Future research can build upon our findings by examining how to combat these stereotypes of comic characters instead of reinforcing them. In line with prior work, we hypothesize that participants primed with images of originally created hero characters of different races will attribute characteristics to the characters that are consistent with the stereotypes of that superhero's race and sexuality, despite such representations being non-stereotyped.

3. Methods

3.1 Participants

This study was approved by the university's institutional review board. The initial number of participants was 512 undergraduate students who completed the stereotype matrix as a part of a larger survey involving the superhero images. During the data cleaning process, participants were flagged for additional screening and possible

exclusion from analyses when they were missing more than 30% of responses to survey items (N = 19), completed the survey in less than 1200 seconds (N = 36), took more than 24 hours to complete the survey (N = 21), or were not old enough to legally consent to the study (N = 1). Furthermore, due to a clerical error in the study design, participants who randomly sorted the condition where they would view the Hispanic Gay hero were shown the incorrect image. Thus, these participants' (N = 44) data were excluded from the study. Lastly, exploratory factor analyses (EFAs) were conducted in order to pare down the number of factors taken from the study. Thirty-two participants were missing data that prevented the computation of factor scores, which lead to their exclusion from final analyses. In sum, the data cleaning process saw the removal of 141 participants, leading to a final analysis pool of 371 participants.

The final sample participants were 371 undergraduate students (34.8% male, 63.6% female, 1.1% nonbinary/ nonconforming, .25% gender fluid, .25% genderless: age 18–60 M = 21.1, SD = 4.5) from a large, public university in the southwestern United States. Additionally, 296 (79.8%) of participants identified as heterosexual/heterosexual, 15 (4.0%) identified as gay/lesbian/ homosexual, 33(8.9) identified as bisexual, 10 (2.7%) identified as pansexual, 7 (1.9%) identified as asexual, and 10 (2.7%) identified as questioning/unsure. Racially, 178 (48%) participants identified as White, 70 identified as Latinx/Hispanic (18.9%), 53 (14.3%) identified as Black/African American, 28 (7.5%) identified as Asian, 1 (.3%) identified as Middle Eastern/ Arab, 1 (.3%) identified as Native American, and 38 (10.25%) identified as Multiracial.

3.2 Procedure

3.2.1 Creating the superhero images

Starting with a blank slate, a diverse (African American, Mexican, Mexican American, White, Japanese American, male, female, gay, and heterosexual) 12-member student research team began developing images. All students (one graduate, 11 undergraduates) were active consumers of the comic superhero genre. After deciding to develop images of American Indian, Arab Muslim, White, Latino, African American, and Asian American male images, the team first developed a generic athletic body image as a base that would be applied to each figure. The team then developed what they perceived to be a generic hero costume that they would apply to each figure. The key element was to create heroes that were unique as to not resemble current mainstream comic book heroes. This was to avoid biases in the attributions within the study. Team members with artistic skills then developed a generic head shape with a blank face, followed by adding eyes, eyebrows, nose, and lips, each of which were tweaked to reflect a recognizable racial face image, with traits based on images of real people of these backgrounds, as well as existing comic/media depictions. As the team developed each figure, the images were shared with fellow students and in classrooms. The images were returned to the team with feedback and redrawn, then reshared with other students for feedback. In an iterative process that took over one full academic year, these six images were finalized (see Appendix C, **Figures 1C–6C**).

3.3 Survey

This study was disseminated via the Qualtrics online survey platform. After informed consent, the participants were randomly presented one of 12 conditions based on manipulation of hero race (White × Black × Latinx × Asian × Arab × Native

American) and hero sexual orientation (Heterosexual × Gay). Participants were asked questions about their perceptions of the hero's powers, character role (hero, villain, and sidekick), traits (intelligent, violent, rich, etc.), and socio-economic status.

3.4 Measures

3.4.1 Validity of images with respect to racial identity

To determine the extent to which participants accurately perceived the intended racial/ethnic identity of the hero characters, participants were presented with an item "What is the race of this superhero?"

Overall, 90% of participants accurately perceived the race of all superheroes. 5.7% of mistakes in race ascription confused the hero with a non-White racial group that was not their own, 1.1% of mistakes misattributed the hero as White when they were not, and 3% of incorrect responses were non-applicable or pointed out that the race of the hero was not stated. Within race conditions, 96.8% of participants correctly ascribed race to the White hero, 95.7% correctly ascribed race to the Black hero, 94.3% correctly ascribed race to the Asian hero, 93.3% correctly ascribed race to the Latinx hero, 85.1% correctly ascribed race to the Native American hero, and 77.8% correctly ascribed race to the Arab hero. The Native American hero's incorrect ascriptions were being mistaken as another Person of Color (13.4%), while the Arab hero was mistaken for another Person of Color (13.9%), as White (2.8%), and in other ways (5.6%) such as being thought of as multiracial.

3.4.2 Stereotypes and attributes

A list of stereotypic attributes was compiled based on previous stereotypes research [49]. Participants were presented with a list of 71 attributes (e.g. intelligent, peaceful, middle class, etc.) and were asked to indicate how they felt the attributes matched with the hero that they had viewed on a scale from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 7 = Strongly Agree. Cronbach's alpha for this index was.81.

4. Results

4.1 Analytic approach

Data analysis took place in two distinct phases. Due to the number of variables present in the stereotype matrix, we conducted a series of exploratory factor analyses (EFAs), paring down the number of variables to more manageable factor scores. These factor scores were then used to chart differences among clusters of variables found in the data. Once factor scores were calculated, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted to determine how factor scores from the stereotype matrix differed based on the race and sexual orientation of the hero. A principal component analysis was conducted on the factors and utilized a direct oblique rotation with Kaiser Normalization due to the perceived interrelatedness of the stereotype variables.

The stereotype matrix asked participants about 71 different traits that the person in the cape may demonstrate, each of which was rated on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree. During initial EFA tests, physical traits – such as blonde hair, dark skin, and dark hair – were dominating the factor

structure and clouding interpretation. Thus, they were removed from further analyses. Then, through an iterative process, the number of factors was reduced from 71 variables to 35 variables. This iterative process involved removing significantly cross-loading variables individually and subsequently rerunning the model to see how the factor structure was affected. This process was repeated until there were no significant cross-loadings, and the factor structure was easily interpretable. The 35 variables supported a four-factor structure. To further support the use of a four-factor structure, a parallel analysis was conducted utilizing Patil, Surendra, Sanjay, and Donavan's [50] web-based engine. Comparing the mean eigenvalues of the web-based parallel analysis to the total eigenvalues of the SPSS analysis, a four-factor structure was further supported.

The four-factor structure possessed some minor cross-loadings but was deemed easily interpretable. The four factors were as follows: Positive Traits, Machismo Traits, Social Status Traits, and Socially Undesirable Traits. Variables that loaded onto each factor were calculated into a single factor score. These factor scores indicate the degree to which participants ascribed stereotypes of that factor to the hero image. Positive scores indicate that participants believe the hero possesses a trait, with higher scores being indicative of greater trait ascription (i.e. strongly agree that a hero possesses this trait). Negative scores indicate that participants believe that the trait is not true of the hero, with more extreme scores being indicative of greater trait denial (i.e. strongly disagree that a hero possesses this trait).

A MANOVA was conducted examining the race of the hero (White × Black × Latinx × Arab × Native American × Asian) and the sexual orientation of the hero (Heterosexual × Gay) in the context of the four factors outlined previously: positive traits, machismo traits, socially undesirable traits, and social status traits. A test for equality of variances, Box's M (100, 122861.79) = 1.656, $p < = .001$, indicated that assumptions of the normality of the data were violated. However, the MANOVA is considered robust to this assumption as long as group sizes are greater than 30 [51]. Thus, the factorial MANOVA was considered cautiously interpretable when using Pillai's Trace due to its robustness, especially when dealing with unequal sample sizes.

Pillai's Trace for each of the IV's indicated differences based on the race of the hero ($p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .039$) and no significant difference based on the sexuality of the hero ($p = .842$, partial $\eta^2 = .004$). However, there was indication of an interaction between the hero's race and sexuality ($p = .011$, partial $\eta^2 = .022$). Due to the statistically significant results of the MANOVA, additional interpretation of the main effects and interaction effects were warranted. The race of the hero supported differences in trait ascription with positive traits ($p = .017$, partial $\eta^2 = .037$), machismo traits ($p = .012$, partial $\eta^2 = .040$), and socially undesirable traits ($p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .066$). The interaction of the hero's race and sexuality supported differences in trait ascription in regard to positive traits ($p = .050$, partial $\eta^2 = .026$) and social status traits ($p = .035$, partial $\eta^2 = .028$).

With regard to race, *post hoc* examinations did not reveal statistically significant differences among the races of hero when it came to positive traits, though the White hero was trending toward receiving more negative beliefs about possessing positive traits in comparison to the Black hero (Tukey's HSD $p = .083$). In terms of machismo, the White hero was considered to have more machismo-esque traits than the Asian hero ($p = .03$). In terms of socially undesirable traits, the Arab hero was considered to have more undesirable traits than the Asian ($p = .014$), Black ($p = .001$), and Native American heroes ($p = .001$).

To get an idea differences along participant identities, the data file was split across a number of participant demographics. The original factorial MANOVA was

conducted again within split subsets of the participant demographics. The MANOVAs were conducted based on race (White × Latinx × Black × Other Races), gender (Male × Female), and sexual orientation (Heterosexual/Heterosexual × Non-Heterosexual). While the research team recognizes that the experiences of each of these identities and their intersections are extremely varied, and that the current analyses may imply a sense of homogeneity, these groups were formed based on the number of participants for each identity being analyzed. Results of these analyses should be used to offer insight into future studies as opposed to being interpretable in their current state.

Participant race seems to contribute to differences in hero interpretation based on examination of Pillai's Trace. Although most of the participant data did not retain enough power for significance, we did see that White participants significantly differed in how they ascribed hero traits based on hero race ($p = .008$, partial $\eta^2 = .055$). Latinx participants did not differ significantly in how they ascribed traits based on hero race or sexuality. Black participants also did not demonstrate differences in trait ascription based on hero race or sexuality. Participants of other racial groups in aggregate also did not differ in how they ascribed traits based on hero race and sexuality.

Men did not demonstrate significant differences in how they ascribed traits based on examination of Pillai's Trace. However, women were significantly different in how they ascribed hero traits based on hero race ($p = .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .050$). Though they did not differ in the ascription of traits based on hero sexuality, there were differences among women in terms of how hero race and sexuality interacted to form their trait ascriptions ($p = .029$, partial $\eta^2 = .031$).

Heterosexual/heterosexual participants demonstrated differences in how they ascribed traits on the basis of hero race ($p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .041$). However, nonheterosexual participants did not demonstrate significant differences in how traits were ascribed to a hero on the basis of race or sexuality.

5. Discussion

The present study had three main goals: (1) to test the hypothesis that participants ascribe stereotypical characteristics to original, fictional characters based on race and sexuality; (2) to examine whether utilizing images developed for research, rather than proprietary images, would be a feasible methodology for testing for implicit biases and stereotype ascription; and (3) to seek evidence of ongoing racial and sexuality stereotypes within the current zeitgeist. The current study offers mixed support for the first goal, strong support for the second, and moderate support for the third.

The results indicate that a relatively diverse sample of participants significantly differed in how stereotypical traits were ascribed to heroes based on race. While trait ascription did not vastly differ as a result of hero sexuality, intersections of race and sex did contribute to differences in how people saw the hero. In this study, the White and Arab heroes – specifically the gay Arab hero – received the greatest endorsement of negative traits. While it is not within the purview of this data to understand the exact causality of this difference, initial hypotheses may be that the White hero was something of an acceptable target, with participants being more willing to ascribe the negative traits to the White image. Furthermore, the Arab hero having a higher endorsement of undesirable traits compared to other heroes of color may lie in the overwhelming portrayal of Arab characters in media as villainous. There also appears to be a significant interaction in the identities of the gay Arab hero. Future studies

should explore these differences further. Thus, our initial assumption that participants would differ in their perceptions of an original fictional character based on race and sexuality were moderately supported by the results.

The images of the heroes (see Appendix C, **Figures 1C–6C**) were created entirely in-house, offering a wholly original, nonproprietary tool in the examination of media effects. The results of this study indicate that such images can be used effectively to gauge how individuals may ascribe stereotypical traits and demonstrate implicit biases in their responses to free-response items. Due to the novel nature of these images, they were devoid of the history, context, and other potential confounds that more well-known comic book images may fall prey to. Thus, original images such as the images utilized in this study have great utility for future research, suggesting that goal two is strongly supported.

As for exploration of racial and sexual stereotypes, this study offers a degree of support that participants ascribe traits differently based on hero race and race × sexual identity intersections. This is increasingly important as the current media landscape moves towards the inclusion of intersectionality within media portrayal. With the increased presence of intersecting identities in media, it will be crucial for researchers to gauge the dynamic differences in consumer perceptions. Future work can further explore these differences with clear factor structures and deliberate study design.

6. Implications of current study

Previous research has shown that media influences can affect self-perceptions. The success of the comic book industry clearly indicates the popularity of this genre within mainstream media entertainment. This critical not only for adults but also for the early impacts that they may have on children. The present study demonstrates that there are underlying imagery trends that should be taken into consideration when these heroes are created or portrayed through movies, television, or print. Through the application of stereotypical attributes to the superhero images, we could potentially see an effect on self-perception. This result should stand as a caution to creators and consumers as the presentation of superheroes of color are being introduced into the mainstream comic book media.

As the comic book media superhero genre [1, 8] continues to grow, it is important for researchers to incorporate these images into the evaluations of media. The present research supports previous work that shows the prevalence of stereotypes in media [34, 35, 39], as well as specifically in comic book media [29, 52]. Therefore, it is vital to evaluate these comic book heroes from a critical race and sexual orientation perspective. The findings of this study may also be used in furthering efforts to create appropriate diversity and equality among the comic book superhero genre.

7. Future directions

Future studies should consider introducing heroes with intersectional race, sex, and sexual orientations. The intersections of these identities may influence stereotype ascription. Future studies may also want to consider utilizing free-response methodology for stereotype ascription as in Niemann et al. [49]. That may allow for further insights into the current state of stereotype ascription in American society. By

pursuing other methods of inquiry within the realm of stereotypes and media effects, we can achieve a greater understanding of the myriad influences that comic books and related media have on how we view others and ourselves. We plan to build upon this study and are willing to work alongside any scholars interested in the use of our superhero imagery.

8. Limitations

8.1 Participants

All participants within this study were undergraduate psychology students attending a large southwestern university. The homogeneity of certain factors, such as education level, environment, and values, may have influenced results and impacted external validity. Future research will benefit from non-college population participants as well as participants from other geographic regions to further generalize results.

Additionally, while the sample had some degree of diversity, certain groups were less represented than others in our participant pool, severely limiting the conclusions that could be drawn on the basis of certain demographics. Though preliminary MANOVA were conducted with participant demographics in mind, we recognize the inherent issues with aggregating the responses of multiple distinct identities in order to have groups large enough to analyze. Future studies should not only recruit for a greater diversity of participants but should also consider the intersections of participant identities such as race, gender, and sexuality.

8.2 Study design

It is also important to consider that due to the study design, it is difficult to match the race of the participants to their responses to the race of the superheroes. Future studies should focus on the participant and the influences of their identities more than the validation of the hero images that this study focused on.

8.3 Female images

This work served as a methodological validation of utilizing novel images to assess changes in participant perceptions. However, female images were not depicted in this iteration of the study. Future studies will also manipulate female hero images on the same bases as the men (Race $\times$ Sexuality).

8.3.1 Research transparency statement

The authors are willing to share their data, analytics methods, and study materials with other researchers. The material will be available upon request.

A. Factor structure

See **Table 1**.

Trait	PV	MC	SS	SU
Intelligence	0.729			
Peaceful	0.796			
Hard worker	0.814			
Sociable	0.714			
Attractive	0.535			
Achievement-oriented	0.718			
Well-mannered	0.862			
Racist	−0.473			0.657
Pleasant	0.839			
Powerful	0.599	0.345		
Humble	0.765			
Confident	0.677			
Independent	0.589		−0.335	
Criminal	−0.549			0.552
Lower class			0.704	0.410
Non-college-educated			0.838	
Aggressive		0.766		
Tolerant	0.620			
Caring	0.838			
Subordinate				0.687
Promiscuous				0.679
College-educated	0.356		−0.770	
Sexist	−0.536			0.652
Honest	0.829			
Loyal	0.807			
Trustworthy	0.853			
Good student	0.712		−0.452	
Family-oriented	0.660			
Speak loudly		0.506		
Compassionate	0.791			
Tempered		0.528		
Hypermasculine		0.626		
Violent		0.757		0.321

Note. PV = Positive valence, MC = Machismo, SS = Social Status, SU = Sociably undesirable.

Table 1.
Results of EFA structure coefficients.

B. Marginal means of MANOVA

See **Figures 1B–4B**.

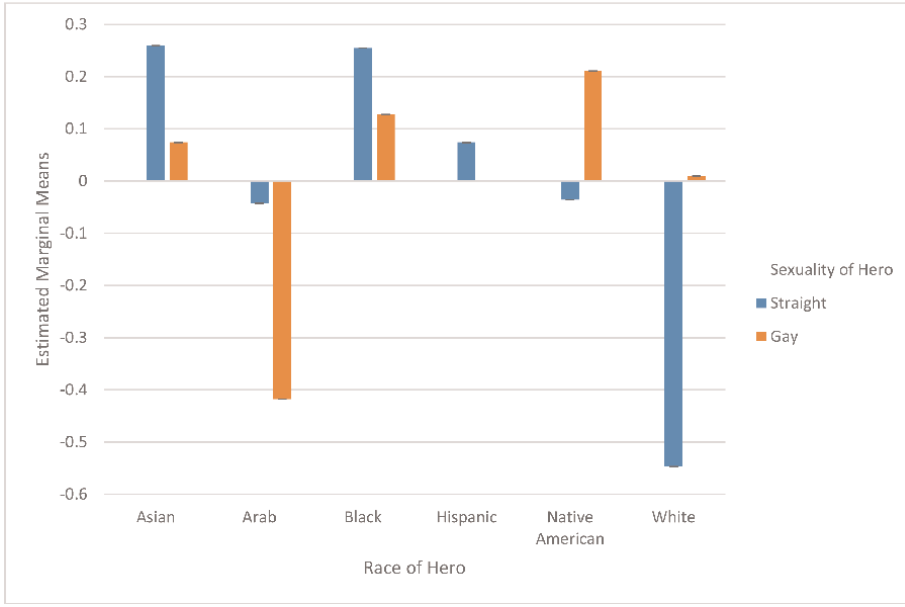

Figure 1B.
Estimated marginal means of positive trait ascription.

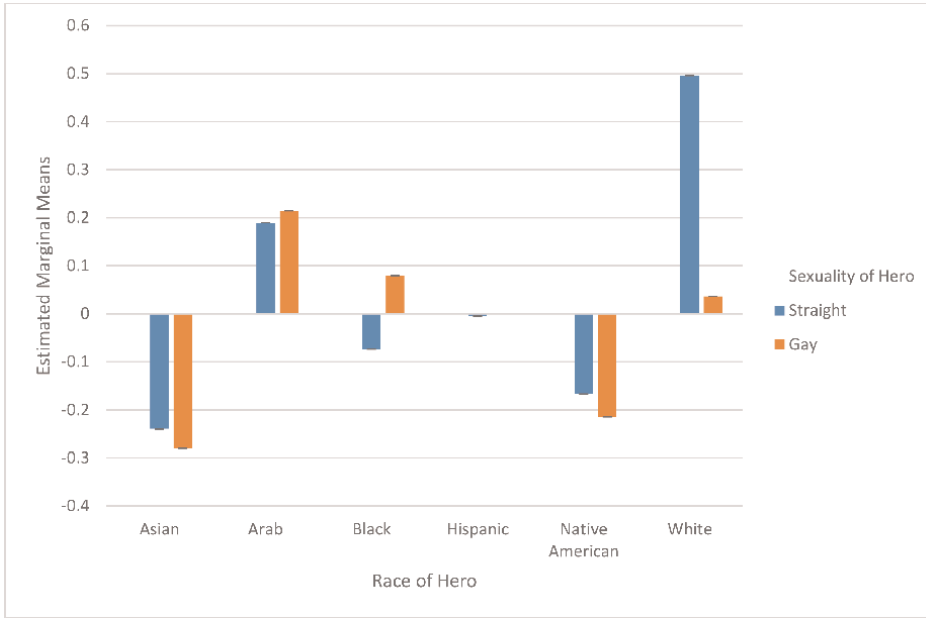

Figure 2B.
Estimated marginal means of machismo trait ascription.

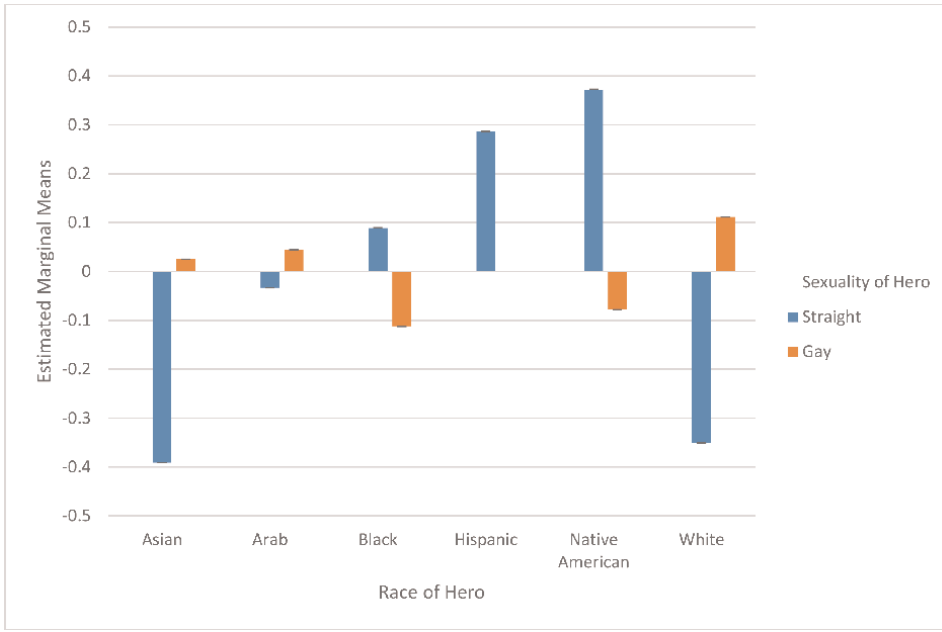

Figure 3B.
Estimated marginal means of social status trait ascription.

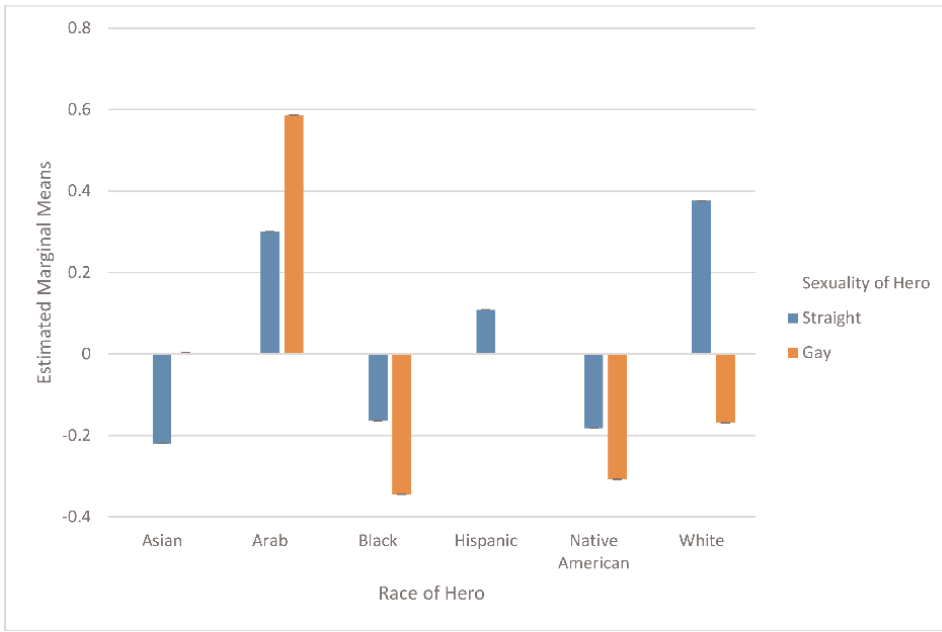

Figure 4B.
Estimated marginal means of socially undesirable trait ascription.

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.110004

C. Superhero images

See **Figures 1C–6C**.

Figure 1C.
Middle Eastern Superhero.

Figure 2C.
Asian Superhero.

Figure 3C.
African American Superhero.

Figure 4C.
Hispanic Superhero.

DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.110004

Figure 5C.
Native American Superhero.

Figure 6C.
White Superhero

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Chapter 3

Perspective Chapter: Is Inclusion Safe? The Importance of Community Among Women Who Sleep with Women (WSW)

Tera McIntosh and Diana Reindl

Abstract

The important presence of community in creating success, well-being, and happiness is essential. Perhaps especially important for those marginalized others where a sense of "community" might be limited due to being different from what society sees as norm. This article explores the different ways women who sleep with women (WSW) evaluate their personal well-being in regards to community and relationships. Specifically, the impact inclusion has on community, practitioners, developers, and professionals who create spaces where others (LGTBQ+) belong. Participants included 37 self-identified WSW from the United States, with a majority being from Southern states. The purpose of the study was to examine perceptions and experiences among women of minority sexual groups. Contributing factors that may lead to more holistic lifestyles emerged. Discussing these questions revealed insight as to why WSW are more negatively affected in health and happiness than their heterosexual counterparts. Most importantly, these questions served as a platform for meaningful conversation, adding rich experiences, thoughts, and perceptions to research regarding the LGBT community.

Keywords: LGBTQ+, lesbian, community, inclusion, emotional well-being, social capital, WSW

1. Introduction

Community represents an essential component to a life of well-being. Various attempts are being made to include members of excluded groups in cities, policies, laws, in workplaces, higher education institutions, teams, recreational spaces, sacraments, or religious practices [1]. Inclusion has been suggested as the key solution to the injustices caused by exclusion [1]. In fact, inclusion has advanced issues like allowing gays to openly serve in the military, women in armed combat and ex-offenders to vote. But what if inclusion hurts us as well?

This article provides a framework for understanding community and inclusion among women who sleep with women (WSW). The authors were intentional in

selecting the term "WSW" (the frequently used public health term for lesbians), as it is often utilized for those who engage in same-sex sexual behavior, irrespective of their sexual identity [2]. This means that someone who might identify a pan-sexual, where the choice of partner is not dependent on gender, also may participate in a sexual relationship with women but not attach themselves to the identity of lesbian. The authors do agree that researchers should not erase the individuality of the identity of "lesbian" [3], however, they specifically chose to utilize the term of WSW as it is more inclusive of a group which has largely been unseen or unheard when it comes to experiences within typical health care systems and policies [4]. Furthermore, it is significant to understand that the authors of this study use several terms to refer to the LGBTQ community including LGBTI, LGBTQ, and various other familiar LGBT+ acronyms. This was a careful choice to give voice and respect to the true population referenced in the supportive studies, as often times research examines this population as one unit, as if, L, G, B and T is an acronym insinuating a homogeneous group. Yet each letter represents an overabundance of different races, ethnicities, ages, lived experience, barriers, socioeconomic status and identities.

With the acceptance and equal treatment of all, comes the disappearing of spaces and places of community. Instead of having an identified "gay" bar or restaurant or community space, LGBTQ+ community are now more included in most mainstream places and welcomed fully pending on their location and proximity to progressive areas.

The connection between health and place is of significant interest to public health professionals [5], yet, WSW have reported disappointment in the quality of community available [6, 7]. A lack of population, the overlapping of gay male scenes, and successful integration into social and cultural spheres were most frequently identified [6]. In the case of happiness, just 18% of LGBT adults describe themselves as "very happy," compared with 30% of adults in the general public who say the same [8].

Inclusion may not always produce positive effects on those that still remain isolated. It is apparent that the LGBTQIA+ community has become more widely recognized in the public spotlight, however, the results of some of those victories and their effect on creating community and diminishing community within the population of WSW has yet to be thoroughly evaluated. As such, this article looks at the impact of inclusion on community as both a physical space and virtual social network among WSW. Moreover, the balance between maintaining a distinct LGBT community versus becoming a more blended part of the American mainstream and its effects on emotional well-being is explored.

The terminology WSW is commonly used in research to describe those who engage in same-sex sexual behavior, regardless of identity [2]. This article examines psychosocial variables in the WSW culture to understand how perceptions, experiences and values impact community.

2. Methods

2.1 Participants

Institutional Review Board Approval was granted for this study and active written informed consent obtained. Thirty-seven self-identified WSW volunteered to participate in 60–80-minute focus groups in person or virtually. In total, the 37 self-identified WSW (either current or in past relationships) voluntarily participated both in-person or virtually. For this study ages ranged from 20 to 64 (M = 34.5). Generally,

participants were largely non-Hispanic/White (94%), residing in Ohio (32%), South Carolina (27%), and Georgia (27%) in the United States of America.

2.2 Design and procedure

The data was collected between October 2016 and March 2017 with a lone, trained interviewer and a student assistant for administration support. Demographic variables including age, gender, orientation, and race were collected from each participant.

Prior to the study the research team gathered relevant information for the proposed studies and developed a list of questions related to core areas that heavily influence one's life. Those influences were identified as: marriage/relationships, family/parenting, community/social fabric, and emotional well-being. These condensed influences were pulled from positive psychologist Vanderweele [9] who proposes that the five domains of human life needed to flourish are: spirituality, family, work, health, and community. The same list of questions was asked to each participating focus group in the same sequence and the questions were open ended in which the participants discussed among themselves the question highlighted by the researcher. If conversation delayed, or illumination was needed the researcher further probed the participants to better recognize the data they were providing by their answer. Following the initial questions follow up probes were administered to gather relevant additional data. The questions were open-ended and were not mandatory, as to ensure emotional and identity safety.

Focus groups were utilized due to the benefit they specifically provide researchers in the health and medicine field, as they provide a safe space for participation from people who are often hesitant to be interviewed individually, who might lack the skills to write or read, and feel as if what they might have to contribution is not important to the conversation [10]. Additionally, the opportunity to join the focus group remotely or anonymously was offered in order to provide safety the already present minority stress or heteronormative pressures often apparent in society. Data collection was planned and conducted using the theoretical framework of the minority stress model [11], as researchers were gathering data that specifically related to

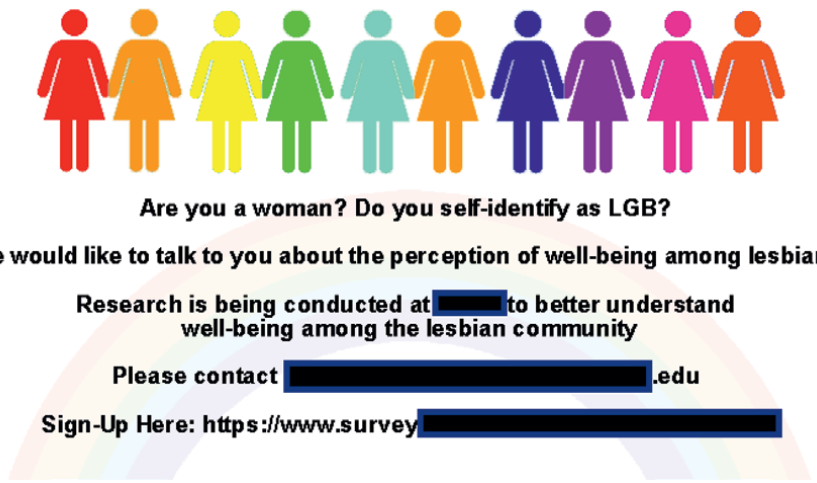

Figure 1.
Recruitment flyer.

collecting the unique and sometimes hostile stressors that might arise within experiences of WSW in regards to social and emotional well-being.

Focus groups were audio recorded and transcribed for validity in collection. After reading the transcripts, two trained coders/researchers formulated a system based on recurrent themes. Codes were preliminary until verified by relevant quotes [12]. As such, findings presented are a description of themes that recur [13].

Recruitment of participants occurred across multiple strategies. Each approach started with an informational flyer (**Figure 1**) describing the study's intended purpose. The flyer was disseminated across social media, Universities and word of mouth. Potential participants accessed a SurveyMonkey sign up link on the flyer and researchers then scheduled focus groups based on availability.

3. Results

Four over-arching core themes were identified including: 1. Shame and Fear, 2. Community, 3. Gender Roles and 4. Normalcy. This article further explores the core them of Community and participants perceptions of community. Community subthemes occurred over 463 times among the transcribed data. Four subthemes within community emerged including the ideas of (a) Community is easy to find, (b) Community is hard to find, (c) Community as a physical space, and (d) community as a social network. **Table 1** references a sample of statements identified under the core theme of Community and further categorized by its subtheme.

3.1 Perceptions and experiences

Through the collection of data it is noted that participants of the study had experiences that differed greatly. From having an easily accessible community immediately available and often right out their door in cities, to only knowing a handful of similarly minority identities within their hometowns that are more rural and having to drive 2+ hours to find a "gay" physical community. In addition, participants noted the drastic ease that comes with being in a city compared to just 30 minutes outside of a city center. The data also represented the experience and ease of use in utilizing social network platforms to find a community, both in physical spaces and online spaces. Lastly, the overarching theme found within these four subthemes is that community and safety often lie within a younger generation as mentioned by participants: it is found in in liberal traditional colleges, and among artsy "kids", etc.

4. Discussion

Results of this study are subject to several limitations worth noting. For example, focus groups were conducted with a small sub-set of the population and all useful information may not have been captured. Socially desirable responses may have been provided and these responses may differ from those that may be gathered through a different format. As participants were volunteers with an interest in the focus group topic selection bias may have occurred. Moreover, the majority of study participants

Subtheme 1: Community Easy to Find P6: In Philly I did not have to find anything, it was just there. P9: There's really only community in major cities I feel like. P3: I found community without even really looking for it.
Subtheme 2: Community Hard to Find P4: So it's still hard to pull women together and try to form a community. I think you are right, because men do it all the time. You can be (..) and there will be a gay men mecca. Because they have money, they have the same interests, they all work out, they are concerned with their bodies, they are concerned with health. P3: For some reason they (gay guys) all come to the clubs and stuff and the women do not. P5: When I lived in New Orleans there was a huge community of women. And there was one lesbian bar. And the rest were gay men bars. There was one lesbian bar! P7: It was a lot harder to find the lesbian community. I was co-chair for City Network. I'd like to say I put my time in there. It's mainly guys, but, I met a handful of women. I found different circles of women but it just seems like the guys will all get together somewhere but the women are just little satellites in various places. P3: I've moved a lot so I've had many experiences. So thinking about growing up, small little town, I knew two gay people. And I wasn't out. Big cities I find easier or when I was in college and had that rugby culture. But the small towns I definitely feel a struggle of less community there.
Subtheme 3: Community as Physical Space P1: I asked someone why there are more gay bars. And they said most of the artistic kids go to all of them. And the bars are owned by the gay people. So they just feel they are comfortable wherever they are. And is not that wonderful? And exactly what we wanted? Inclusion. I do kinda like having a bar though. Maybe it's my age. P10: I remember living in Hattiesburg, Mississippi and the only reason there was gay people was because of the liberal school there. The university, research school. They bring a lot of people in. There wasn't really adult gay people, they were all college aged gay people. And as a young professional working at a university, and I could not hang out with my student athletes because that's wrong. The only adult gay people, I did not really hang out with, because it was people that did not really have purpose in life and they were never community oriented so they were all kind of sporadic and did not really care about education or well-being. Or not being stereotypical I guess. So that was very interesting. We would drive an hour and a half just to go to a gay bar. And XXXX's been to this gay bar. And it was literally as big as this table in the middle of nowhere and you had to bring your own alcohol. And every time I went to this gay bar there was a road block a mile down the road. So they were like, trying to get the gay people I guess. They knew. I mean we would drive and hour and a half to get to the gay bar and it would just be like, all these people who came out of the woods into a shack, and you were frightened because you were like, oh my god. This is a wrong turn—the hills have eyes! You were here and it's just like well we are all gay so its fine. Its okay, we all have the same purpose right now so its cool. And then you would leave and you would not see another gay person for like 3 weeks and then you'd be like, alright load up, we are going to the gay bar. We need to hang out with the gay people. And that's how you would meet other gay people because they lived 2 hours in the other direction cause they drove 2 hours to get to the gay bar. And I remember when I lived in Hattiesburg, right before I moved, that they opened a gay bar. And were all like, what?! Oh my gosh! I'm telling you there were cops outside that gay bar every night. And it was like, they wanted to catch everybody so they could shut that place down. So that was always very interesting. We would always find a DD and be like, come pick us up because there is police. Find a straight person to pick us up.
Subtheme 4: Community as Social Network Spaces P2: I remember when XXXX and I started this we met randomly online and became such good friends. I went on tinder, plenty of fish, all of it and sent a generalized message saying hey this is who I am we are starting a lesbian community please join and I gave them the name of the site and we went from 1 to 200 in a year. P5: I moved here from New York City to here in February. But I put myself on Match. February will be 2 years since Gabby's gone. And I knew I was moving here last year (time is moving by so fast, I'm trying to keep up) Um.. So I put myself on Match cause I knew I was moving here and I wanted to meet people. So I wasn't on there to date, I was on there to meet like people. P8: I was happy to find that (community) recently because of awesome people like XXXX. It was so drastic of a difference between Effingham and Savannah even though they are only 30 minutes apart because there's nothing in Effingham. There's no LGBT community what-so-ever. So social media kind of saved me in that respect in moving to Pooler. When I turned 21 and I could go and find community.

Table 1.
Community subtheme direct quotes.

were under 40 years old, predominantly Caucasian, thus results may not be applicable to all ages, racial and ethnic groups or geographic locations. Lastly, items such as rural vs. city or political background were not collected to offer a further dissection into how "place" and "politics" affects ones shared experience within the data collection.

Since 1969 the concepts of community have evolved and sometimes regressed among the LGBTQ population, as recent studies suggest a united LGBTQ community is often misleading [7]. Such examples of differences in perception between diverse groups under the LGBTQ+ umbrella point to the need to examine specific experiences of WSW community [14].

MacQueen et al. [15] state that community can be seen "as a group of people with diverse characteristics who are linked by social ties, share common perspectives, and engage in joint action in geographical locations or settings" (p. 1929). Block [16] proposes the idea that community is about the experience of belonging. Community is not as a place, but the citizens in the community each time that they discover a place where they feel that they belong. In a simpler sense Block suggest that community is not defined by physical space, but rather the relationships that are formed within the space shared. Community as a sense of belonging is somewhat similar to Anderson [17] who states that "communities are to be distinguished, not by their fallacy or genuineness, but by the style in which they are imagined" (p. 6).

The term "community" takes on a different meaning for many people including WSW. According to Easterbrook et al. [7], a "gay community" is often hypothesized or termed as a "melting pot" in which all LGBT persons are united and integrated into one sexual minority community. For the purpose of the study we identified community as "safe physical space and virtual space that leads to a physical reality" for those who identify as WSW.

The value community provides translates to the term "social capital." According to Putnam [18], social capital is "connections among individuals –social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them (pg. XX)." It is clear we, as humans, derive benefits from our relationships with others. As simple as finding a reliable plumber, which can save you money and frustration, or borrowing a ladder from a neighbor, which can save you time.

Yet, the value of social capital can go far beyond just time and money benefits. Coleman [19] coined this concept "social capital" and suggested that it had the ability to take social ties and common norms and values and increase economic efficiency in variety of ways like better education, job access, raising better socialized children, and even launching long term careers for people [20]. Social capital is critical to a community as it gives citizens the ability to dissect problems more easily, lessens our tendency to be aggressive towards others, and also widens our awareness to many more resources and opportunities [21]. Moreover, our social networks have the ability to not only keep us healthy and happy, but to also assist us in identifying other resources or opportunities that might have not otherwise been made available [22]. McIntosh [23] states that the initial interaction of finding a healthy "community" is of most importance as once it is found the benefits begin to "spill-over" into many different lifeworlds and thus create a positivity train.

There is a great need for locating supportive networks and for connecting with others with similar experiences in order to combat rejection of our perceived differences [24]. In the opposing view, does the presence of such non-heterosexual places alienate the ruling majority? Is this even a valid proposition considering mainstream or "regular" bars/places are more common and accessible in the United States? According to PBS NewsHour [25] there are only 21 lesbian bars remaining in the

United States. Therefore, the need for the relationships we find in community seem to be of even greater importance for populations like WSW struggling due to their identity. But how do you find community if inclusion's goal is to diminish a separation of differences, in physical spaces and virtual spaces of community?

Identified places of safety are extremely important to those others living in rural communities away from progressive cities. Thus, it is important to determine the balance of inclusion. Does inclusion leave behind those still struggling with their identity and seeking a place to come home to and belong? While there is a new wave of virtual communities within the internet, there are still barriers for older populations who come out later in life.

Heavy emphasis on the importance of virtual community exists. Thus far, research further dissecting the new growth and uses of social networking websites which have been designed for non-heterosexual users is limited. A study by Hillier and Harrison's [26] in Australia discovered that commonly online platforms are used by non-heterosexual youth and young adults to practice what might be their new sexual identities, same-sex friendships and intimate relationships that they have been slowly uncovering. Likewise, Addison and Comstock [27] maintain that LGBT-positioned social networking websites are indeed virtual spaces of safety, where youth and young adults can rehearse critical moments in their lives, such as sexual disclosure before "coming out" to their friends and family.

Per a new policy by Social Platform Tumblr, adult content will no longer be allowed to be shared within the platform. While the underlying purpose of this new policy is to keep Tumblr a safe space, these new regulations are blocking posts with LGBT themes that are not considered inappropriate [28]. This means searchable tags like #gay or #bisexual are being banned due to possible association with inappropriate content. LGBTQ people have found Tumblr to be a powerful space for self-representation. Through keyword or hash tagging practices, transgender stories, art, and dialog are often shared. This space allows LGBTQ youth to engage in Tumblr's fan communities and learn about queer culture [28]. This content is not just hidden from youth, but all users. This means that LGBTQ+ persons seeking out positive stories, experiencing conflicting feelings, or facing formative life challenges will not have access to media that may help them learn more about their identity and feel supported and not alone or excluded [28].

As collected in the data, WSW expressed both strain and effortlessness in finding physical spaces as community. Participants also suggested that it was easier to locate community as a physical space near more urban cities or city centers, while others expressed the ease of finding a network through social platforms (apps) which then guided them into a "physical community" space.

The data proposes that access to community is both difficult and easy pending on a person's location, the energy they put into outreach, and access and skills related to technology or social media. Direct correlation between the prevalence of data that suggest community is hard in reference to location (rural), and if community is easy when accessing social networks was not explored further. The research does suggest a need to further explore how to provide a more physical space to those seeking out those connections in more rural areas and also how to access community when relocating to such places. So what might contribute to a more holistic lifestyle for WSW in order to improve both the connection of social and emotional safety? Future efforts might focus on acquiring funding for the training and use of social media platforms for older nontraditional others, the creation of WSW specific applications or national community groups (like gayforgood.org which is only available in 16 cities currently)

or perhaps the creation of pop up LGBTQIA+ events in rural spaces. Creating a community of emotional and physical safety ultimately provides WSW with the ability to "belong". As noted by author and research Brene Brown [29], true belonging only happens when we present our authentic selves to the world without sacrificing who we are, a sacrifice WSW often take when they do not feel safe.

Identifying small things that will contribute to larger scale impact is definitely a start---but the fight is long and requires more attention, research, and funding. Small versions of how individuals can be change makers in creating community have surfaced through grassroots efforts. Community happens without space. How can experiences of all WSW be changed, and not just those in certain locations?

How do practitioners build community without space, or create places where ones once stood? Finding those small items of disorder within the WSW community, could provide an alternative ending and reduce the occurrences of the macro negative perceptions within one's life and offer the chance of a place to ultimately "belong".

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Statement of submission

This chapter has not been submitted elsewhere for review. An overview of the larger dataset used within this chapter was used for an peer reviewed journal articles submitted in 2019 and 2022. However, those articles focuses more broadly on the major themes identified in the study's focus groups. Whereas, this article, focuses more deeply on community, safety, and inclusion within the LGBTQ+ community.

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Chapter 4

Processes of Precarious Living Conditions: Young Men of Ethnic Minority Background Growing up in Socially Deprived Housing Areas in the Danish Welfare State

Kirsten Elisa Petersen

Abstract

This chapter focuses on young men of ethnic minority background, especially young men with refugee and migrant background from the so-called non-Western countries, who grow up and live their childhood and youth in socially deprived housing areas in Denmark. The chapter is based on a research project, which has followed children and young people as well as pedagogues in leisure and youth clubs located in three different socially deprived housing areas. In this context, a particular preoccupation has been addressing the opportunities, which the leisure and youth clubs have to offer in terms of supporting and helping young people, who live in vulnerable and socially marginalized positions. The chapter explores more specifically how some young men of ethnic minority background seem to be subject to vulnerable and socially marginalized living conditions related to dealing with their schooling, education, and later on access to the labor market and the opportunities to create good and safe living conditions in the Danish society. Young men who at the same time growing up in housing areas designated as socially deprived housing areas in the Danish welfare state, which is characterized annually by the residents' lack of education, lack of affiliation to the labor market, as well as crime.

Keywords: ethnic minority, socially deprived housing areas, leisure and youth clubs, pedagogical work

1. Introduction

Although Denmark along with the other Nordic countries is considered one of the least unequal societies in the world, measured by the GINI coefficient, there is a general consensus that economic and social inequality also exists in the Nordic countries [1, 2] and that this inequality has been increasing over recent decades [3, 4].

This may appear paradoxical, given that Denmark and the other Nordic countries traditionally belong to the so-called social democratic welfare model [5] or the so-called Nordic model. Gerven [6] clarifies four key areas that seem to characterize the Nordic model: universal welfare state provision, comprehensive public service, high labor market participation, and gender equality in both policy and practice.

In particular, the comprehensive public service, which, among other things, includes children and young people's schooling and education, including children and young people's association with public institutions, such as day care, school, and leisure pedagogy, is characteristic of the Nordic model. A central focus on child and youth policy applicable to all the Nordic countries is their argument to create equality for all children and young people. Equality that is particularly emphasized through institutional arrangements managed by state and municipal, such as day care and schools, which are also of high quality, where the opportunities to create equality take place through the entire education system.

The results from a research project[1] that has explored the upbringing and everyday life of children and young people in various socially deprived housing areas in Denmark, based on the leisure and youth clubs that children and young people participate in after school and in the evening, show that despite of the welfare state's children and youth policy with a focus on equality-creating efforts through pedagogy and education, there are nonetheless groups of children and youth, and especially children and youth with an ethnic minority background[2], who grow up in socially deprived housing areas facing difficulties gaining access to, for example, good day care services, good schools, education, and jobs[3] [7, 8, 10].

Several studies, both in an international context and in the Nordic countries, have pointed out that children and young people growing up in socially deprived housing areas more often live in conditions represented by growing up in poverty, ethnic minority background, and everyday life in housing areas often identified in urban and housing sociology research as housing areas for urban marginalization forms that at the same time seem to be concentrated in isolated and demarcated territories [13–21]. These housing areas are identified to have a high proportion of children and young people with ethnic minority background, especially from non-Western countries [7, 8, 10, 13, 22–25].

Wacquant's [26] urban and housing sociology analyses show how these isolated and demarcated housing areas, which encompass the poor and most vulnerable citizens in society, are characterized by advanced forms of marginalization processes connected to territorial stigmatization, as the central symbolic characteristic. Wacquant points out how the symbolic characteristic of the area includes a vivid

[1] For further elaboration of the theoretical and empirical foundation of the research project reference is made to Petersen [7–10].

[2] The term ethnic minority is not used as a term as a distinction with numerical proportions but rather as a term related to societal power relations ([7–9, 11, 12] in review). When I use this term in the chapter, it refers to ethnic minorities who come from, or are descendants of, non-Western countries.

[3] Non-Western countries include the European countries, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Belarus, Yugoslavia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Russia, Serbia, the Soviet Union, Turkey, and the Ukraine. All countries in Africa, South and Central American, and Asia. All countries in Oceania (except Australia and New Zealand) as well as stateless. (For this definition see Statics Denmark).

awareness of being "reduced to a wretched space that collectively disqualifies them" ([26], p. 176).

In Denmark, these housing areas are listed by successive governments on an annual official list under the Ministry of the Interior and Housing, a list that is colloquially called a ghetto list, although different governments often seek to find other official designations for these housing areas, for example, list of vulnerable public housing areas, including a list of particularly vulnerable housing areas or areas characterized by so-called parallel societies, where groups (often with an ethnic minority background from non-Western countries) live outside normal society.[4]

In accordance with paragraph 61a of the Public Housing Act, the Ministry of the Interior and Housing in Denmark publishes this list of the housing areas on 1 December each year. The list includes social housing areas that have at least 1000 residents and fulfill two of the following four criteria: (1) The proportion of residents between 18 and 64 years of age without connection to the labor market or education surpasses 40% measured as the average for the past 2 years, (2) The number of convicted for violation of the penal code, the gun law or the law about psychedelic drugs are at least three times above the national average measured as the average for the past 2 years, (3) The proportion of residents between 30 and 59 years of age who solely has a basic education surpasses 60% of all residents in the same age group, (4) The average gross income for taxpayers between 15 and 64 years of age in the area, excluding students is less than 55% of the average income of the same group in the region.[5]

From the first list in 2012 and up to 2018, an additional criterion on the list was "the proportion of immigrants and descendants from non-Western countries." However, this criterion has not been found on the list of socially deprived housing areas since March, 1, 2018, when the government presented the plan "A Denmark without parallel societies—No ghettos in 2030." The plan included, among other things, a number of initiatives targeting the areas in Denmark "where parallel societies are most widespread and where the efforts so far have been insufficient." The government's strategy for a Denmark without ghettos in 2030 focused on four areas of action: "It is the physical demolition of vulnerable housing areas, more firm control of the tenant composition in the housing areas, strengthened efforts by the

[4] In economic analysis no. 30 [27] on parallel society in Denmark, it is pointed out that "Over the last almost 40 years, the ethnic composition of the population has changed significantly. In 1980, there were around 50,000 people with a non-Western background in Denmark. Today, there are around ½ million, corresponding to approx. 8½% of Denmark's population. This show that the breeding ground for parallel societies among people of non-Western background is heavier today than four decades ago. A parallel society is physically or mentally isolated and follows its own norms and rules, without any significant contact with the Danish society and without a desire to become part of Danish society. This challenges the cohesion of Danish society, which has been built up and developed for generations through, among other things, associational life, joint educational and teaching institutions, neighborliness and cooperation with colleagues at work. A large concentration of certain population groups, as is the case with the housing areas on the ghetto list, most likely helps to reinforce the existence of parallel societies." (2018, p. 1). Also see the website: https://im.dk/

[5] For details see the latest report of the housing areas per December, 1, 2022 published on the website of the Ministry of the Interior and Housing.

police and higher penalties, as well as a good start in life for all children and young people."[6]

In particular, the media is periodically filled with stories about some of these socially deprived housing areas, which seem to be connected to young people (often young men) involved in vandalism and crime, and are also connected to gang-related communities, which cause unrest and concern. In some housing areas, for example, ambulances, firefighters, and police cannot drive in without rocks being thrown at them, and it is often said that the crime rate is higher in these housing areas compared to other housing areas in Denmark,[7] just as visitation zones are periodically set up by the police in or around some of these housing areas.[8]

In the three different housing areas in Denmark, where the research project followed children, young people, and pedagogues in the leisure and youth clubs, these stories about the disadvantaged housing areas were also dominant ([7–10] in

[6] An example of legislative measures that must "ensure a good start in life for all children and young people" is, for example, the Danish government's decision that all children from the age of one must attend day care 25 hours per week, if they live with their family in a socially deprived housing area, cf. act to amend the Act on day care and Act of child and youth benefits (mandatory learning provision for children age one in socially deprived housing areas). This act states that all children who live in, or move to, a socially deprived housing area must attend day care 25 hours per week, § 44 b. Children who are enrolled in a compulsory learning offer must be integrated into the children's community day care institution. The compulsory learning offer must be organized in accordance with the substantive requirements according to section II, paragraph 2. The municipal board must decide how the 25 hours are to be placed over the week. The 25 hours must be distributed evenly over the week and, as far as possible, placed at times when the child can actively participate in the children's community and participate in play and activities. Paragraph 3. The municipal board is obligated to ensure that, as part of the compulsory learning offer, at an early stage after admission, targeted courses are launched for the children in preparation for strengthening the children's Danish language skills and general readiness for learning and introducing the children to Danish traditions, norms and values. See further on the Ministry of Children and Education's website, where the entire legal text is presented. In this context, it is important to accentuate that there is no tradition or rules in Denmark for children to attend day care prior to school. This is thus a special amendment to the legal text, aimed at young children in socially deprived housing areas.

[7] These stories often take up in media as well as social housing reports. For example, the Center for Social Housing Development describes in their analyses that: "In some of the most vulnerable housing areas in Denmark, crime among young people is a serious problem, which causes insecurity and contributes to isolate the areas from the surrounding society. The crime rate among residents in vulnerable housing areas is higher than in the rest of the country, the criminals are sentenced to harsher penalties, and they begin their criminal career at an earlier age than elsewhere in the country." The Center for Social Housing Development is an independent institution under the Ministry of the Interior and Housing. The overall purpose of the Center is to examine the effect of social initiatives in disadvantaged housing areas, to collect experiences from national and international social housing initiatives and to provide qualified guidance and process support to key actors within the social housing area—see the website https://www.cfbu.dk/

[8] Related to previous episodes of violent incidents in the same geographical area, it is the police's experience that there may be an escalation in the use of weapons, just as it is the police's assessment that there may be risk of more attacks carried out in connection with the violent attacks already committed. In the light of this, the police assess that a visitation zone can help to avoid future violent assaults. In these visitation zones, the police have the opportunity to search all citizens. Pursuant to the paragraph 6 of the Danish Police Activities Act, the police can introduce visitation zones, in which the police, for a limited period, can carry out random inspections of people's bodies, examination of clothing and other objects as well as vehicles (see the police's website under visitation zones https://politi.dk

review). During the course of the research project, there were thus reports that this particular housing area suffered from "a lot of problems with gangs," or that this housing area suffered from "a lot of vandalism, for example, because young boys, as young as 12 years old, stand by the roadside and throw rocks at buses and motorists' windows when they drive by," or "this particular housing area especially has a long criminal record." Both heads of leisure and youth clubs and the pedagogical staff who participated in the research project point out that growing up in this housing area (in particular) seems to make everything much more difficult for the children and young people, and especially for many of the boys and young men.

The pedagogical staff also point out—across the three housing areas—that many of the children and young people have had an upbringing marked by difficulties, for example, parents' lack of affiliation to the labor market, parents' lack of education, conflicts at home, many children and very little physical space as well as parents who do not have enough strength to take care of their children in everyday life. Most of the children and young people who are associated with the various leisure and youth club activities are children and young people with an ethnic background other than Danish, and primarily immigrants and descendants of immigrants from non-Western countries.

As one of the heads of leisure and youth clubs says during an interview: "there are many ethnic minority children and young people who manage very well in society, but there is also a group who have severe difficulties and find it difficult to cope in society—and they are often concentrated here with us" (Interview with head of leisure and youth club in the housing area Bluegarden).

These children and young people identified by both management and pedagogical staff in the three housing areas, also seem to be supported by several studies that point to the fact that children and young people with an ethnic minority background make up the group of children and young people who are most at risk in Danish society in relation to school, education, and jobs. Boys and young men, who are descendants[9] of immigrants from non-Western countries, seem to be the ones who have difficulties completing primary school, and youth education, as well as a permanent affiliation to the labor market. For example, figures from Statistics Denmark[10] show that only 33% of male non-Western immigrants have a primary school education aged 25–64, while this applies to only 7% of western immigrants and 19% of men of Danish origin.

Likewise, among the 22-year-olds, 17% of the men of Danish origin have completed a vocational education, while the corresponding proportion is only 5% among male non-Western descendants. For the 20–24-year-olds, it is almost one in four who have neither an affiliation to the labor market nor the education system. These are primarily boys/young men with an ethnic minority background and who are descendants of immigrants from non-Western countries.

In addition, calculations show that crime in 2019 is 51% higher among male immigrants and 139% higher among male descendants of non-Western backgrounds than among the entire male population. In terms of different types of offenses, it turns out that the index for male descendants from non-Western countries is highest

[9] Children and young people of descendants are defined by Statistics Denmark as having at least one parent who is a descendant and no parent of Danish origin. There are 28,821 children of descendants as per January, 1, 2020—of which 92% have non-Western origin. 65% of the non-Western children of descendants are under 10 years of age.

[10] Statistics Denmark is the central statistics office in Denmark. This office collects all of society's statistical information for use in administration as well as in research and teaching, etc. (See website: https://www.dst.dk/en).

for criminal offenses—and especially for violent offences—as it is almost three and a half times as high as for the average of all males when corrected for the age composition. For male immigrants from non-Western countries, the index for both violent and property crime is almost twice as high as the average for all men.

In a Danish context, Ejernæs [28, 29] has pointed out that as a result of increased immigration and the development of the Danish welfare state, a new growing class appears to be developing, the "precariat," which based on Standing [30] and Wacquant [18–20], points to a contraction of the English words "precarious" and "proletariat." Both Standing's [30–32] and Wacquant's [18–20] and Wacquant et al. [21] analyses show how this growing class mainly consists of immigrants and descendants from non-Western countries, who work in insecure and poorly paid jobs, often without education, and at the same time at risk of being in socially and politically marginalized positions in relation to the rest of society.

With inspiration from Wacquant's thesis on advanced marginality and precarious living conditions [18–21] and Standing's [33], Standing's [31, 32] analyses of the precariat, this chapter explores how we can understand young men's movements into, or struggle not to enter into precarious living conditions, seen from the young people's own perspectives, but also how the pedagogical staff in the disadvantaged housing areas work to support the children and young people to maintain schooling, support for education and leisure jobs, and constantly be aware of helping the children and young people to live a life outside the disadvantaged housing areas.

With this, the ruling question for this chapter is to explore how both the pedagogical staff and the young boys and men experience and act in everyday life, as well as what strategies children, young people, and the pedagogical staff in leisure and youth clubs use to deal with territorial stigmatization processes and the risk of movements into precarious living conditions? The chapter begins with a closer exploration of Wacquant's [18–20, 34–36] understanding of the precariat, which includes territorial stigmatization processes and the sociospatial isolation mechanisms that seem to both create and maintain specific groups of people in precarious situations characterized by uncertainty, vulnerability, and marginalized living conditions. Standing's [37] analyses of the precariat are also used as an analytical category in particular understanding of how children and young people seem to be caught in so-called "precarity traps" at an early age ([37], p. 26). This is followed by an elaborating presentation of the research project's data and from there the analyses of both the pedagogical staff, as well as the experiences of the children and young people framed by the pedagogical work in the leisure and youth clubs that are physically located in the three housing areas. The pedagogical staff in the leisure and youth clubs begin the analyses, with a focus on how the pedagogical work is based on the patterns of urban marginality and ethno-racial inequality, which characterize these housing areas. Then, follows the children and young people's experiences of growing up in these housing areas and contributes to point out the contours of precarious living conditions, which already seem to begin in early childhood and are followed through youth life, through many experiences of difficulties in terms of schooling, leisure jobs, and education, and at the same time prevention of movements into crime.

2. Territorial stigmatization and precarious living conditions for (some) children and young people in the Danish welfare state

With inspiration from Wacquant [19, 20, 34–36] theory of advanced marginalization, this chapter sets out to frame how specific housing areas, selected by urban and

housing policy initiatives in the Danish welfare state, are designated as explicit housing areas characterized by specific difficulties, for example, juvenile delinquency, ethnic minority women not affiliated to the labor market, or children who do not attend nursery school or learn the Danish language, as well as political concern about the development of parallel society, in which ethnic minority groups in these housing areas seem to live separated and isolated from the rest of society.

While several Nordic researchers rightly point out that we cannot directly copy Wacquant's [19, 20, 34, 35] theory apparatus connected to advanced marginalization in specific urban and housing areas and transfer this to the Nordic countries characterized by a strong welfare state, there are nevertheless several points in Wacquant's theory of territorial stigmatization processes that can be retrieved across the Nordic countries.

The segregated housing areas are discussed, among other things, in a Swedish context by Lunneblad and Sernhede [38] when they point out that despite the extensive research that exists on segregation and simultaneous poverty problems, the tendency still seems to be connected to the fact that socially deprived housing areas must be understood as parallel societies controlled by criminals and to which immigrants have adapted to the norms that govern these housing areas. In a Norwegian context, Rosten [39] points to the importance of how the spatial stigma and symbolic structures that create, develop, and maintain specific housing areas in advanced marginalization processes seem to become important for young men with an ethnic minority background in particular, who as strategy takes on a special masculinity where "playing ghetto" becomes a possible way of dealing with the fact that you live in a local community that is looked down upon by people from outside, and that you yourself cannot always feel sure is good for you either [39]. In a Danish context, Hansen [40] has similarly pointed out how housing areas in the Danish welfare state have been transformed in tandem with the advanced urban marginality and the politics of gentrification that have concentrated stigmatized populations in segregated areas of the city ([40], p. 1).[11]

Wacquant et al. [21] emphasize how some housing areas are affected by territorial stigmatization, which seems to constitute the key symbolic feature of advanced marginalization. According to Wacquant [19, 20], the characteristics of the advanced marginality of the post-Fordist era—the fragmentation and desocialization of wage labor, the disconnection of the poor from the economic conjunctures, the rise of precarious jobs and inequality, and the spatial concentration of poverty—have fostered a transformation of the organization and experience of space itself.

"Second territorial stigma has become nationalized and democratized, so to speak: in every country, a small set of urban boroughs have come to be universally renowned and reviled across class and space as redoubts of self-inflicted and self-perpetuating destitution and depravity. Their names circulate in the discourses of journalism, politics, and scholarship, as well as in ordinary conversation as synonyms for social hell." ([21], p. 1273).

By Wacquant [18–20, 34–36, 43] and Wacquant et al. [21], territorial stigmatization is connected to both Goffman's [44] theory of stigmatization and Bourdieu's [45] work with the concept of symbolic power. Stigmatization is defined by Goffman as encompassing various forms of human characteristics designated as particularly undesirable in individuals or groups of individuals and which are formulated as "discrediting differentness" flowing from the ordinary gaze of others in face-to-face interaction ([21], p. 1272).

[11] In a Nordic context, several researchers have discussed Wacquant's urban and housing sociology analyses See, for example, Jensen & Christensen [41] or Larsen [42] for analyses based on the Danish welfare state.

Goffman points out that stigmata can be linked to the body, people's individual characteristics, as well as tribal affiliation "transmitted through lineages," however, Wacquant et al. [21] take inspiration from Goffman to also add the physical place where people live as something also available for exposure to stigmatizing looks and actions that add to the other stigmata. The territorial stigmatization of physical places in urban and housing areas, Wacquant [34–36] connects to the formation of new social groups, including the precariat. In this context, symbolic power is connected to Wacquant's analyses of how some groups in society have the power to designate physical places, which are then exposed to derogatory and stigmatizing mention, and how these physical places are particularly related to the formation of new social groups, for example, the precariat, that seems to congregate in these housing areas.

As an analytical category, the term precariat is formulated by both Wacquant [19, 20, 34–36] and Standing [31] as comprehensive groups living under exposed and uncertain life conditions, with affiliation to the labor market marked by short-term employment, without security, and at the same time affiliated to jobs that do not require education. Wacquant's analyses is based on understanding of the precariat as "miscarried collective that can never come into its own precisely because it is deprived not just of the means of stable living but also of the means of producing its own representation" [36], but at the same time, he connects the precariat to those urban and housing areas, which are marked by territorial stigmatization processes, as areas in risk of developing and maintaining the residents in precarious living conditions and thus constitute, in this context, a relevant analytical category.

At the same time, Standing [33, 46], Standing [31, 32], although from a different theoretical point of view than Wacquant, in his analyses is concerned with the fact that the new precariat takes place in the increased immigration in the European countries, as well as changes in labor market policy, which seems to create a new class consisting mainly of immigrants, the young and the low-educated.[12] This class is termed the precariat, which at the same time includes new forms of proletarianization and is characterized by uncertainty. Uncertainty that is created and maintained through a lack of job security. Standing [47], Standing [32] points out that this lack of security can be linked to social development to which the precariat encounters, among other things, uncertainty in relation to employment, income, qualifications, and protection of the employees who, for example, work in dangerous, isolated and exposed jobs. In this context, Standing [32] further points out how some groups of ethnic minorities, including immigrants and refugees, are at risk of belonging to the precariat. Standing analyses [32, 37] how these groups, across the countries, are regarded as second-class citizens and not as citizens, and are also covered by many national laws and rules for what they must—and especially must not.[13]

[12] Standing also works with the concept of the precariat as encompassing several different groups in society. We are thus not dealing with a homogenous group, but also young people in their 20s and 30s who are well educated, but whose working conditions are characterized by employment on a shorter contract basis, characterized by, among other things, lack of employment security, lack of security for income and skills development [32, 37]. In this chapter, however, the starting point is the definition of the precariat connected to the increased immigration in the European countries, as well as labor market and social policy, which seems to create a new class living in relative deprivation.

[13] It is important to maintain that Standing argues that we are not dealing with homogenous groups in society. From a lecture with Guy Standing at Reykjavik University, Iceland in June 2022, he also pointed out that he uses the term precariat in two senses. One refers to a specific socioeconomic group, while the other is attached to both young and well-educated people, who live under uncertain working conditions as a result of globalisation.

However, the essence of the analytical categories of stigmatized housing areas and movements into precarious living conditions for some children and young people is the fact that these must be seen in the context of the Danish (and Nordic) welfare state, which is characterized by the fact that "the state is present" in the housing areas also designated as special housing areas marked by special difficulties. Several Nordic researchers point to how the welfare state steps in and formulates housing policy goals and guidelines, which are to prevent, for example, children and young people from acquiring an education, prevention of movements into crime, as well as support and help the area's residents in order for them to take an active part in shaping their housing area in more positive ways [38–40].

In a Danish context, these housing areas thus undergo extensive social housing initiatives in these residential areas, for example, with a focus on improving daycare and school attendance for children and young people, helping with leisure jobs, as well as increasing the employment opportunities for the residents in these areas.[14] However, Kamali & Jönsson [51] bring up a relevant point as they argue for how the Nordic welfare states have undergone extensive reorganizations and reforms legitimized by both political and administrative demands for "increasing efficiency, increasing professionalism, decreasing welfare dependency and cheaper gowernance" ([51], preface). These reorganizations and reforms are characterized as neoliberal movements in the Nordic welfare states, which at the same time also seem to have an impact on children and young people, especially those growing up in socially deprived housing areas characterized by poverty and inequality. Thus, Hansen [40] points out that "The politics of urban marginality are individualizing and racializing, and in a way demonizing the poor populations, considering poverty as self-inflicted, the poor as lazy, unwilling, morally corrupt, and as potential thieves and welfare cheaters. As such, the poor residents are officially categorized as nonhumans, noncitizens" ([40], p. 10).

3. Data and method

The research project elapsed in the period 2018–2019 with the participation of pedagogical staff, as well as children and young people from leisure and youth clubs located in three different socially deprived housing areas. Leisure and youth clubs have been established in all three housing areas, as well as drop-in centers for young people holding various pedagogical efforts. Some of the efforts function as traditional leisure and club efforts [52], but the majority of the efforts have also been extended to deal with different measures that sprung up directly contextualized by challenges that the pedagogical staff consider to be connected to children and young people growing up in these specific housing areas, for example, efforts that prevent crime and vandalism as well as efforts that focus on homework assistance, job searching, and efforts that, so to speak, move out of the housing areas through association with other leisure and sports activities in the municipality.

[14] With the so-called Housing agreement from 2010, it was formulated as an overarching goal that the amount of socially deprived housing areas should be reduced to half, and that the housing areas should be changed and become attractive housing areas fully integrated into the rest of society. The efforts are expected to promote safe and stimulating living conditions for children and young people, employment and business opportunities as well as cultural and leisure facilities in the areas [48, 49], retrieved from Christensen et al. [50].

For the sake of anonymization,[15] the different housing areas have been given the invented names, Bluegarden, Greengarden, and Applegarden. The three housing areas share common features, as they are all periodically covered by the list of socially deprived housing areas, and all three include many citizens with an ethnic minority background from non-Western countries. For children and young people with an ethnic minority background, these include both refugees and immigrants, as well as descendants of immigrants, from many different countries, for example, Syria, Pakistan, Turkey, Albania, Morocco, Palestine, Macedonia, and Somalia. In several of the leisure and youth clubs, there are solely children and young people with an ethnic minority background, and one of the employees in Greengarden specifies that in this club there are "at least 25 different nationalities" ([9] in review).

For the geographical location of the housing areas on the Danish map, they are typically located around the larger cities in Denmark and can be further clarified through the Swedish researcher Sernhede's [17, 53] analyses of stigmatized metropolitan areas in the suburbs in the Swedish society. Sernhede [17] points out, with inspiration from Wacquant's [34, 35], that the key factor seems to be social stratification, which is clearly marked in spatial segregation, in which some urban and housing areas include very wealthy residents while other housing areas delimited to poor citizens and constitute so-called multiethnic housing areas in the Swedish welfare state.

Thus, Bluegarden, Greengarden, and Applegarden are also examples of housing areas to be covered by the term multiethnic housing areas, which appear (sometimes invisibly) demarcated from other urban and housing areas. The pedagogical staff in the various leisure and youth clubs, as well as children and young people, point to this demarcation, although from different angles. For the pedagogical staff, for example, the importance of "helping the young people to get outside the housing area and participate in activities, jobs and training" or the importance of "learning about the Danish society" is pointed out, while several of the young people point out how their housing area is the "best place to live" and they rarely seem to express a need to get outside the area's invisible boundaries.

The project's data includes three leisure clubs, three youth clubs, and two drop-in centers. In a Danish context, drop-in centers are defined by being a physical place, where young people can attend and participate in various activities, and with the attachment of pedagogical staff. Drop-in centers are typically open in the evenings and offer free of charge for young people—often also young people over 18 years of age. The difference between drop-in centers and more traditional youth clubs is thus them being offered free of charge for young people and the participation of young people over the age of 18.

All municipalities in Denmark have several leisure and pedagogical offers for children and young people often unfolded through various forms of leisure and youth clubs.[16] Leisure and youth clubs are aimed at children and young people approx.

[15] In addition to the anonymization of the housing areas, this is also applicable for children, young people, and the pedagogues.

[16] In the Act to amend the Act on day care, leisure and club service, etc. for children and youths, the following is described under Chapter 10, paragraph 43 about financial free space allowance in club facilities for children and young people: The municipal board in the municipality of residence must provide a financial allowance for free spaces in accordance with §76, paragraph 1, subsection 1 of the Day Care Act, when the parents or the one of the parents, who has the right to the club offer space and the free space allowance, cf. § 1, declare a household income per month, cf. § 44, where the conversion to an annual income is within the income limits of the free space scale, cf. § 56.

12–18 years old and includes children's and young people's free time outside school hours, in the afternoon and evening, and is not connected to children's and young people's school life [52]. In relation to the parents' expenses for their children's participation in leisure and youth clubs,[17] this varies from the different municipalities, and it is also possible to apply for so-called financially free space,[18] so that children and young people are able to participate in leisure activities, independently of parents' income. In a Danish context, a report from the Danish Evaluation Institute, EVA [54] points out that children and young people with an ethnic minority background are more likely to be enrolled in clubs than ethnic Danish children and young people, which also seems to apply to the other Nordic countries [25, 55–57].

This is substantiated by a report from the Danish Evaluation Institute from 2018, which states that it is primarily young people in school-leaving age, whose parents have less education, as well as young people with an ethnic minority background and young people of one-parent families, who make use of club offers. Furthermore, the report's studies identify that boys more often than girls as well as young people with an increased risk of so-called socio-emotional challenges are more likely to be enrolled in a club [9, 52, 58].

The research project is based on various qualitative methods to collect data material for the project, consisting of a total of 38 semi-structured interviews, which include three individual interviews with managers from each of the three institutions involved, three focus group interviews with 15 pedagogical employees, also divided between the various institutions in the 3 housing areas and 8 focus group interviews with 20 children and young people. The eight focus group interviews with children and young people include interviews with children and young people across the three housing areas, typically the participation of between three and four children and young people in each interview.

As additional data material for the research project, questionnaires have been sent out to all employees and partners in and around the involved leisure and youth clubs in the three housing areas. All employees, managers, and business partners have answered these questionnaires, which were often distributed at the beginning of meetings, where time was set aside for the forms to be answered and returned.

Ethnographically inspired fieldwork has also been carried out in the various clubs in the three housing areas ([7–9] in review). The fieldwork has, among other things, including participation in the daily life of the leisure and youth clubs in the afternoon and evening, together with the children and young people, as well as participation in staff meetings of the pedagogical staff, as well as in collaboration meetings with schools, administration, police, and participation in supervision and general work meetings, in which the pedagogical work is planned.[19] The ethnographically inspired fieldwork has generally been guided by a focus on the visibility of housing social structures, which form the framework for leisure-time pedagogical work, as well as the lived lives, among children, young people, and pedagogues. The fieldwork, along with the pedagogical staff through their work meetings, their organization of pedagogical initiatives, and their collaborative relationships with, for example, school, administra-

[17] In a review of various municipalities' prices for children and young people's participation in leisure or youth clubs, parental payment appears to vary between approx. DKK 500 and DKK 1000.

[18] Financial allowance for free places includes that "Parents with an income below a certain limit can, in addition to the regular subsidy for a place in day care, receive an additional subsidy from the municipality" (for further details see the Ministry of Children and Education's website: https://eng.uvm.dk/)

[19] See further Appendix, which in detail describes the research project's methodological basis.

tion, and parents, point to a specific preoccupation with creating opportunities for the children and young people in terms of schooling, education, and job affiliations. Opportunities that must constantly be promoted, developed, and supported and whose built-in uncertainty seems to have been created based on the advanced marginalization, which at the same time takes place in these housing areas [34, 35].

The analytical readings of the data material, in this context, are concerned with exploring how the patterns of urban marginality and ethno-racial inequality, as well as precarious processes, seem to be retrieved in the Danish welfare state, already among some children and young people at an early age. Precarious processes can be set in motion before children and young people even enter the labor market. They are also in their childhood and youth at risk of being caught in what Standing terms the precarity traps ([37], p. 26). These traps seem to be connected to growing up in these housing areas and can further be captured through poor or inadequate schooling, lack of leisure jobs, the risk of movements into crime and difficulties in completing further education, and later a permanent connection to the labor market. In particular, the analyses show how some of the children and young people are highly at risk of being in a pre-precariat, which includes processes of poor or deficient schooling, including many and often negative experiences with school life, as well as experiences of failure to maintain further education, and at the same time a linkage to growing up in these housing areas.

4. Pedagogues' work in leisure and youth clubs located in socially deprived housing areas: preventing movements into precarious living conditions

The research project's analyses of the pedagogical work in the leisure and youth clubs contribute overall to showing how societal and political understandings form a direct framework for the pedagogical work in the youth clubs. Managers and pedagogues refer to and justify their pedagogical work by focusing on inclusion in relation to the societal and political exclusion and separation policy characterizing the present social and housing policy, especially in relation to refugees and immigrants. This policy and the results that follow from it seem to constitute a fundamental context for the pedagogical staff who work in leisure and youth clubs with children and young people [24].

It is obvious that the pedagogy relates to the societal circumstances and to the consequences of living in a "ghetto" with the accompanying separation and exclusion that is experienced as a result. However, the pedagogical staff does not seem to spend much time challenging the state and municipal policies, which govern the housing area itself, for example, the housing policy criteria, which define a socially deprived housing area, which results in some housing areas being on the list of socially deprived housing areas or removed from the list.

"We are on the ghetto list. We'll have to see what that brings along. But there is no doubt that it will result in some changes in relation to the composition of residents. Intensive work must be done on how to get citizens out… (interview with manager of the leisure and youth club, Applegarden)."

"The area is not on the ghetto list because it does not meet the criteria for the size of the housing area. It is too small an area. But the area meets the criteria on all other parameters. Including crime, unemployment (75% of the residents are without connection to the labor market), and level of education—parameters that are indicated as massive problems" (interview with manager of the leisure and youth club, Bluegarden).

Both research interviews, participation in work meetings, as well as fieldwork in the leisure and youth clubs in the three housing areas, contributed to identify the fact that both management and pedagogical staff are very aware that the pedagogical work implies special challenges and problems.

The special challenges and problems seem to appear uniformly across the housing areas and were particularly linked to the fact that the pedagogical staff pointed out that they worked in a "socially deprived housing area," in which many children and young people suffer from difficulties in growing up and in their everyday life.

Thus, both management and pedagogical staff point out what they believe to be characteristic of their work in the leisure and youth clubs, with direct reference to the geographical location of the housing areas. Emphasis is placed on how the various housing areas periodically "struggle with" various forms of crime, including vandalism, drug sales, and young people, who gather on corners and areas, where they "take up a lot of space" and create "insecurity" in relation to other residents in the area.

The pedagogical staff in the three different housing areas justify their pedagogy directly in the extension of considerations about helping, protecting, and developing the children's and young people's competencies as a fundamental part of their pedagogical work. They work to prevent crime, vandalism, and insecurity in the housing areas, and they work to ensure that young people are connected to the labor market and the education system.

There seems to be a special knowledge of how to enter into precarious living conditions for these groups of children and young people, as the very special thing, which is the subject of the pedagogical work.

Many of the efforts are about counteracting "the cultural and spiritual poverty," which is one of the consequences of growing up in these housing areas. The children must have some experience and knowledge. As one of the managers points out during an interview, it is important to work pedagogically to create opportunities for the children and young people for them not solely to stay in the housing area but also to relate to the surrounding society. "Culture and television news. That they know what is happening out there in reality" (interview with manager, leisure and youth club, Bluegarden).

"...If we want them to be integrated into society, they must also have a better understanding of society—and that is sometimes the way. We've also been to the theatre, we've been to concerts, we've been to the Academy of Music, where some of our young people were to perform" (interview with manager from leisure and youth club, Applegarden).

"We have seen that it has been necessary. Because otherwise, it was like trying to wipe up the water under a running tap, it doesn't help. We just kept going, so instead of turning off the tap, and then wiping up" (interview with manager from leisure and youth club, Applegarden).

"Of course, we work with the community that we have in the house, but we also work with the larger community called Denmark. You are a part, you are a citizen, you should not be an anti-citizen. In other words, we don't say that to them, but we work toward making them citizens" (interview with manager from leisure and youth club, Applegarden).

The pedagogy itself seems to work in two simultaneous tracks—or a double view. Partly a leisure and club pedagogy, which is traditional and focuses on leisure and club activities, as these appear in leisure and youth clubs in general across the country. Sports, music, socializing, computer games, trips out of the house, etc. form the basis of an invitation to the leisure and youth club community [24, 59].

At the same time, the pedagogical view of the importance of doing something special and helping the children and young people in their lives is constantly present in the pedagogical work. This can be special efforts with a focus on homework assistance, leisure jobs, and help to apply for education, but it can also be in the understanding that when the leisure and club efforts are physically located in these housing areas, then an extra effort is needed in relation to the children and young people. This opens up the possibility of preventing social exclusion processes and increasing the opportunities for the individual young person to be included in the surrounding society—outside the residential areas.

If the children and young people are estimated to have social, emotional, or learning difficulties, and at the same time have an ethnic minority background, it seems as if it "can hit twice as hard." Several of the employees point out in both the questionnaire survey and through focus group interviews that this can be described as "double problems"social difficulties and ethnic minority background— especially for some of the young boys in the different housing areas. These double problems make the young boys vulnerable and exposed in their everyday life both in relation to well-being and development, but also in relation to cooping in school, in the company of other young people, and make them vulnerable in relation to movements into crime and gang-related groupings in the local housing areas.

On the other hand, a lot of time is spent on working to prevent precarious processes as a potential risk for children and young people, as adults, to live in precarious living conditions marked by lack of education, no connection to the labor market, and a life isolated in these housing areas, characterized by social exclusion and marginalization.

Both the pedagogical staff as well as management in the three housing areas point out that this; creating better opportunities for the children and young people for them to "cope" in life, is at the center. Although the traditional understanding of leisure pedagogy seems to constitute the external framework for leisure and youth clubs, the efforts inside the clubs are highly concentrated on helping to create better living conditions for the individual child and the individual young person.

5. Precarious processes in everyday life in socially deprived housing areas for some young people

For some young men with an ethnic minority background, precarious processes seem to begin long before their connection to the labor market. Growing up in socially deprived housing areas and having difficulties in gaining access to good schools and completing the final exam, as well as participation in associational life and leisure activities outside the housing areas, seem to constitute a way into the precarious labor market, not only for some immigrants with an ethnic minority background, but also for some descendants of immigrants, that is, the young people who on the whole all have grown up in Denmark, have attended primary school, and had opportunities for upper secondary education and beginning further education.

The precarious processes seem to include movements associated with lack of or poor schooling, several upper secondary educations, which have not been completed, difficulties in finding work or changing periods in work with low-paid jobs, which do not require special educational qualifications, but also a lack of expectations or hope of being able to complete an education and get a permanent job with a good income. Many of the young men attending the youth clubs and the drop-in centers have experienced involvement in crime, for example, vandalism, theft, drug sales, or assault.

While several Nordic studies have pointed to everyday life in housing areas [17], as well as the gendered aspect [39], the analyses of the data show the importance of the fact that children and young people experiencing and handling the housing area differently, across their age.[20] Different strategies appear to be linked to age, while the vast majority of the children and young men indicate that they live in a place associated with a lot of crime. For the very young people in the leisure clubs, interviews indicate that they are preoccupied with avoiding involvement in crime but at the same time an understanding of it being present in various forms of appearance.

It is across the housing areas and the young people's stories—especially the very young boys—in which they tell about a daily life, where trouble and crime are constantly present:

"Not because you want to, but if you're outside with your friends, if the club isn't open. If we were outside, and someone said something stupid, then I could easily be fighting, because this club was missing."

"It sounds like it's very easy to get involved in crime, when you put it that way?" (interviewer)

"Walla it is easy." "If you have this childhood friend who is older than you, then you become a criminal yourself, then you become like him."

"If the club had not been open on Mondays and Tuesdays and such, I think all of them in here, might have ended up in crime. Because there are a lot of (city name) boys, who commit crime (...) they are like a magnet, you know, you just go to them. So, if I hadn't attended this club, I think I would have become like that" (from a focus group interview with young people from Bluegarden).

Several of the young boys also have many experiences with older brothers, or others, who are "criminals." More precisely, the term "criminal" seems to encompass many different actions; from hanging out on the street and "making trouble," to moving into groups of young people, who stick together, and are "enemies" with the ones from another housing area, to participating in burglaries, assaults, robberies and "taking substances."

A strategy to deal with these experiences in the local housing area, as a place considered to be "easy to become a criminal," seems to be the possibility of having a physical place to stay together with friends and with the pedagogical staff. The leisure clubs in the afternoon, across the three housing areas, are full from the time they open until they close. There are many children and young people there playing on computers, making music, and also many different sports activities take place across the housing areas.

The children and young people point out that it is important to be in the club. This is where you "hang out with your friends," and it is also here that the pedagogues are "perfectly okay" to be with. The pedagogues "play football" with the young people and the pedagogues are also pointed out as someone who is "trustworthy," who has "computer skills," or who "helps" if needed.

At the same time, the place where the young boys live is also a "good place" even if there is "crime." Several of the young boys have in common that they grew up together in the housing area and have lived there all their lives. They point out that all their friends live there, their family, including grandparents, uncles, or cousins.

[20] In the research project, there has not been a focus on gender and gender differences in relation to participation in leisure and youth clubs. Across the three housing areas, there are "equally as many girls as boys" in the leisure and youth clubs in two of the housing areas, while in the third housing area there are no girls, but instead a small girls' club, which participates separately, and separate from the boys [24].

During the fieldwork in the leisure club in Greengarden, where the leisure and youth club is physically located in the middle of the housing area, the young boys point out of the windows, and can show where they live, where their grandparents live, or their best friend, who "lives in the stairwell right next to it." We take a break from playing billiards, drink soft drinks, and talk about "living here with your best friends." "That's the best thing about living here" (from fieldwork notes in the leisure club in Greengarden).

Although Greengarden from the outside looks like a large housing area with a long row of identical blocks of flats, the young boys can still point out that "there is a lot of crime down there." Down there points to a place further down the road, perhaps 500 m, where someone who "commit a lot of crime" live. One of the strategies for these young boys is to stay away from "down there." "We stay up here," "here it is best to stay," seems to be the shared story (from fieldwork notes in the leisure club in Greengarden).

Wacquant et al. [21] point out how different strategies of the individual resident or groups must be analyzed with reference to social positions, which can be connected to, for example, class, life situation, and ethnicity, but age is also pointed out as a factor, which becomes important for strategies to deal with stigmatization in housing areas.

One of the key findings, which stands out in the data material, in relation to the analyses of how the children and young people act on the local stigma, associated with the specific housing area, is the difference in age, especially in terms of how the young boys are handling the stigma of their housing area, a stigma that is spoken of as a place where "crime takes place." Among the young boys, there seems to be an omnipresent knowledge that crime is connected to these housing areas, but also that it takes place in "this block of flats," or down at the "other end," and not "up here, where I live."

6. Being young and at risk of precarious living conditions

In the data material, which includes both focus group interviews with young boys in the leisure clubs, as well as the young men in the youth clubs and drop-in centers, differences in age seem to appear, as a factor that seems to have an impact on how they perceive and handle their experiences of the housing area in which they grow up and live.

While several of the very young boys are preoccupied with avoiding getting involved in "crime" and seem to use the leisure club as a stamping ground, there also seems to be a period of the young boys' everyday life, where precarious living conditions loom on the horizon, provided they do not stay out of crime. If you become a "criminal," then you "destroy" your future, or if you do a crime, it will affect your "schooling," the young boys explain. Precarious living conditions, in which you lose the opportunities for schooling, education, and work, seem to preoccupy the consciousness of several of the young boys, which is also supported by several of the pedagogues in the leisure club. Standing [37] characterizes how precarious processes can include experiences of being without a secure identity or a sense of development achieved through work and life choices.

Several of the pedagogues point out that it is important to "hold on" and offer "alternatives to crime." It thus seems as if there are several traps that one can be caught in, along the way through childhood and youth life, traps that seem endless to overcome once one is caught up. Standing [37] uses the term traps as "a combination of poverty traps exploitation and coercion outside the workplace, and precarity traps

that amounts to a tsunami of adversity [37, 47] analyses are concerned with the working lives of adults and insecure living conditions, especially associated with a lack of rights in working life, the concept of traps, associated with children's and young people's schooling, education and working life, also seems to be identified, especially in terms of the young boys and men.

The pedagogical staff, across the three housing areas, point out that growing up in these housing areas is in many ways difficult for children and young people. There is "nothing wrong" with the children and young people, but they must have support to "step out of the housing areas" and "live their lives."

Through leisure and youth pedagogical work, strikingly appear stories about giving children and young people the competencies and skills to "cope in life," for example, by completing primary school, obtaining a secondary education, perhaps also an apprenticeship, and eventually a permanent job ([7–9, 24] in review).

But several traps seem to be able to be identified by the pedagogical staff; growing up in socially deprived housing areas, attending schools that do not have the resources and time to give young boys and men a good education, as well as the risk of moving into crime, are all precarious processes, in which the children and the young people can be caught and entangled in traps. All these traps seem to be present for the young boys and young men, and the pedagogical staff is constantly preventing the children and young people to be caught up in these traps. The young men from the youth clubs and drop-in centers point to their experiences with these traps. "Not having completed school," "having committed crime," and feelings of abandonment and powerlessness.

"It is my own fault," says Hassan, for example, during the fieldwork in Greengarden's youth club, where we sit together with one of the pedagogues, Michael, who has helped Hassan to apply for upper secondary education. Hassan tells how he started to "commit crime," and at the same time started to "cut school," but also about how he has been "stupid," and now "has pulled himself together." Michael has helped and got Hassan into an upper secondary education, so now "no more acting stupid," as Hassan puts it (from fieldwork notes in Greengarden's youth club).

Thus, the data material points to the fact that a difference can be identified in relation to the young people's age—while the young boys to a great extent emphasize the community in the leisure club and the importance of avoiding involvement in "crime," the older young men are to a far greater extent aware of precarious living conditions associated with the risk of lack of education and lack of work. The differences in age should not necessarily be perceived as a physiological age difference but must be seen with reference to the societal ways in which the welfare state has arranged the overall education system, and in which the youth period deals with choosing education, completing education, and becoming associated with the labor market.

Getting an education is the most important thing, to "cope," or to "become something," seems to preoccupy many of young people, but there is also an experience of having been in situations or periods, where it seemed hopeless. To cope thus also rests on the shoulders of lived experiences of not "having coped."

7. Concluding remarks

Inspired by Wacquant's theoretical work connected to advanced marginality, which in symbolic form seems to emerge through territorial stigmatization processes, this chapter has focused on children and young people who grow up in socially

deprived housing areas in Denmark. Children and young people, all of whom have an ethnic minority background, and who live their everyday lives in these housing areas characterized by stigmatization and marginalization. The chapter's analyses show how specific urban and housing areas in Denmark stand out as housing areas that, on the one hand, are identified as holding specific difficulties, for example, with crime, people without a connection to the labor market as well as stories about so-called parallel societies, and on the other hand, is woven into welfare state policies. Welfare state policies, which include both social housing and pedagogical efforts and massively present in the physical space, as in no other urban and housing areas in Denmark and in all aspects of the lives of the people who live in these housing areas.

Wacquant [19, 20, 34, 35] emphasizes that processes of territorial stigmatization can neither be viewed as a static condition nor a neutral process, but something that highly functions through housing policy decisions—in the Nordic context, particularly connected to the public housing sector, and delimited to special housing areas designated as having special difficulties with, for example, unemployment, lack of education, and crime, as turning factors.

Thus, this chapter is based on three housing areas in Denmark, where welfare state policies have designated these housing areas as deprived, and with a specific view to the upbringing and everyday life of children and young people in these housing areas, as well as the work of pedagogues with the children and the young people in the locally rooted leisure and club facilities.

There is nowhere in the data material where the children and young people identify the housing areas they grow up in as places they do not want to live, although both the young boys and men refer to the risk of crime as an omnipresent condition to be dealt with. Strategies for dealing with local stigma seem to highlight how the housing area provides a community for the children and young people, across the three housing areas. The community is both about living close to one's "best friends" and living "close to one's family." At the same time, there seems to be experienced attention to how "easy" involvement in crime is in this housing area, or perhaps rather that it requires something special from the young boys to stay out of it. As actively acting young boys, the movements into the leisure club seem to provide a form of protection, which at the same time provides opportunities to participate in leisure activities, such as sports, computer games, and music with friends and pedagogical staff. For the older young men, who are on their way into adulthood, their experiences, however, include stories about how difficult it can be to create a secure future for yourself, through school, education, and work. The precarious existence, or the contours of it, seems to be connected to lack of schooling, lack of upper secondary education, several interrupted educational courses, the risk of or actual movements into crime, and experiences of having difficulties in finding a spare time job.

At the same time, the analyses show how the pedagogical staff takes on the local stigma in their work in the leisure and youth clubs. In particular, the emphasis on supporting and helping children and young people to move out of the risk of not completing primary school, not obtaining leisure jobs, and upper secondary education, as well as crime prevention efforts, fills the pedagogical strategies aimed at helping children and young people.

With the concept of precariat, this chapter's analyses show how young men with an ethnic minority background experience processes of exclusion from school, education, and the labor market. And at the same time points to the importance of recognizing the connection between the individual subjective experienced point of view and perspective in contexts with wider and deeper societal structures of social and economic inequality.

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Appendix

Further description of the research project's data:

As described in the chapter, the analyses of the pedagogical work in leisure and youth clubs geographically located in socially deprived housing areas are based on a number of research methods collectively placed within the qualitative research tradition. Ethnographically inspired fieldwork has been carried out in the leisure and youth clubs, across the three housing areas, which has included participation in the daily pedagogical life, but also participation in staff meetings, collaboration meetings as well as supervision meetings. In addition, individual semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews were carried out with management and pedagogical staff across the three housing areas, and focus group interviews with children and young people in the leisure and youth clubs. The data material also consists of a questionnaire survey aimed at both management and the pedagogical staff in the three housing areas, but also aimed at a number of collaboration parties, including school, SSP, housing social workers, and administration.

The questionnaire survey was aimed at management, pedagogical staff and relevant parties, in and around the pedagogical leisure-time work in the leisure and youth clubs across the three housing areas. The questionnaire partly involved questions about education, work tasks, employment duration, as well as more specific questions related to the individual employee's daily work tasks. A number of these questions were thus related to the pedagogical work in everyday life; what the work consists of, which pedagogical efforts are organized and how does a week look like, for example, in relation to opening hours, activities, and work tasks. In addition, the questionnaire also included questions about the participating children and young people in the leisure and youth clubs, for example, age and gender, as well as questions about cooperation with parents, as well as schools, SSP, social services and other relevant parties.

Common to both the individual semi-structured interviews as well as focus group interviews with management and pedagogical staff, is the structure of the interview guide as it involved a series of general questions particularly concentrated on defining the pedagogical work in everyday life, structures and conditions for carrying out the pedagogical work, the importance of leisure pedagogy in socially deprived housing areas, as well as an exploration of the ways the pedagogical staff act in and with the conditions and opportunities they consider to be present in everyday pedagogical work.

The same applies to the structure of the interview guide related to focus group interviews with children and young people. The interview guide was built around questions primarily focusing on the children's and young people's descriptions and narratives of why they participated in the leisure and youth clubs, what was particularly important to them from their points of view and perspectives, as well as exploration along with the children and young people, what seem to be challenges, dilemmas and difficulties related to growing up and living in the various housing areas.

The research project's ethical guidelines.

All children, young people, and the pedagogical staff, as well as the specific institutions and housing areas that have participated in the research project, are anonymised in accordance with the current guidelines.

The research project has been notified to Aarhus University/The Danish Data Protection Agency and complies with Aarhus University's guidelines for responsible conduct of research (Responsible conduct of research and freedom of research (au.dk)) and the Data Protection Agency's guidelines for conducting ethical research.

The research project also complies with the formal guidelines for safe storage and proper handling of data/GPDR (Protection of personal data (GDPR)) (au.dk)

Further readings in relation to the research project:

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Chapter 5

Tiny Religious Minorities in the Middle East: The Case of the Bahai, Druze and Yazidi Minorities

Yakub Halabi

Abstract

This article seeks to compare the experiences and features of the three post-Islam tiny religious communities in the Middle East: Bahai, Druze and Yazidis. Each one of these communities had encountered an existential threat to its survival or genocide at one point or more throughout its history, and all of them are considered heretic movements by radical Islamist groups. Among these three religions, only the Druze is considered a militaristic community that was always ready to use arms in order to defend itself. In contrast to the Druze and Yazidis, the Bahai community is a proselytizing religion that accepts new believers, while its followers in general live in urban centres and belong to the upper middle class. The article also refers to the international law regarding minority rights and highlights the shortcomings in this set of laws in protecting these minorities.

Keywords: tiny religious minorities, Druze, Yezidis, Bahai, Islamist movements

1. Introduction

There are three forces that affect and threaten the existence of minorities across the Middle East in various democratic and non-democratic countries. First are the forces of globalization. Minorities usually reside in peripheral areas and in order to integrate into the labour market and occupy decent jobs that require high skills, members of minorities have to travel to metropolitan areas. This economic integration is usually followed by social and cultural integration and even assimilation, which leads to sidelining and even elimination of a minority's identity over generations [1]. Second is that minorities are forced to fight in a civil war for the survival of authoritarian and dictatorial regimes, such as the Assad regime of Syria. They are compelled to sacrifice their young men for such regimes, otherwise, they would be attacked and harassed by this same regime. And third is the harassment and indiscriminate assaults by Islamist and fundamentalist regimes as well as movements against religious minorities. This article focuses on post-Islam tiny religious minorities, such as the Druze, Bahai and Yezidis, where in this regard members of these religious minorities in the Middle East are regarded by Islamist movements as heretics, who should be subjugated and forced to convert to Islam. Tiny religious minorities have no mother

state and consequently are unable to conduct transnational relations with such a state. For example, while Jews all over the world can conduct transnational relations with Israel, as their mother state that represents their interests, these tiny religious minorities have no mother state that otherwise can represent them. Thus, tiny religious minorities are found in a self-help situation and have to manipulate the various actors in their arena in order to survive.

These three forces mentioned above are not mutually exclusive as more than one factor can take place simultaneously with others. In addition to the major threats that these minorities encounter, each of them had experienced a 'Final Solution' or (an attempted) genocide of its own, as will be explained below. In addition, the article refers to international law regarding minority rights, while despite major progress in this set of laws, it remained ineffective, given that states ignored it out of hand and regarded it as illicit interventions in their internal affairs, while the international community has refrained from taking additional steps to implement, let alone enforce it [2, 3].

It is worth noting that the harassment and persecution of post-Islam minorities are not typical merely to ISIS, where in the past there were attempts of coercive mass conversion into Islam and execution of those, who resisted such conversion. These attempts were vindicated by several verses from the Quran that were interpreted as a call for the execution of those who refuse conversion into Islam and to enslave their women. These verses in the Quran include Muhammad 47:4, Al-Tawba (Repentance) 9:5 & 9:12 and Al-Nissa (Women) 4:24, among others.

The verse in the book of Muhammad (47,4), for instance, instructs the following: 'So when you meet those who disbelieve, then strike their necks until when you have inflicted slaughter upon them, then secure their bonds, and either favor afterwards or ransom them until the war lays down its burdens'. These verses were interpreted by Islamist followers as instruction from God to fight and execute those who resist surrendering and converting to Islam.

The tiny religious minorities in the Middle East are invisible religious minorities, who are not different in their external appearance from their surrounding society. They could be visible by choice in case members of these minorities decide the dress in their traditional customs. Another feature of these minorities is that they live in the periphery in their own villages and hamlets, where they constitute a majority of these villages, but they have to travel to metropolitan cities in order to seek education and employment. Further, many of the non-Dhimmi, post-Islam, religious minorities follow the practice of *Takiyya* or Dissimulation. Based on this practice, members of these religious groups seek at the personal level to conceal their true religion and to appear in front of their surrounding communities as if they belong to major religions, mainly Sunni Islam. Concealing one's true religious affiliation and the pretension of belonging to another major religion is a strategy of survival for members of these minorities.

2. Tiny religious minorities under imminent threat: bahai, Druze and Yezidi

In contrast to the Druze and Yezidi that are non-proselytizing, monolithic and closed religions that do not allow conversion into their own ranks, the Bahai religion is an open religion that accepts new followers, encourages conversion into its ranks and even openly practices proselytizing. This practice jeopardizes the security of the whole community and makes it vulnerable to attacks by fundamentalist forces,

especially in Islamic countries, given that Islam forbids its followers from ditching Islam. The Bahais usually live in major cities and many Bahais in Iran are well-educated and belong to the upper middle class. As a post-Islamic and proselytizing religion, the Bahai community in Iran has encountered a major threat to its survival from the Iranian regime. Given that the Bahai religion was established long after the advent of Islam, they are regarded by Islamists as heretics, simply because they were aware of Islam, refused to accept it as, what Sunnis claim, the true religion and opted to establish a new religion. In short, Islam is very strict against the practice of proselytizing and imposes severe punishment on Muslims who decided to ditch Islam and convert to another religion.

Table 1 provides a comparison of the characteristics of the three religious communities: Bahai, Druze and Yazidis. These characteristics include:

Proselytizing: whether the religion encourages conversion into its ranks.

Monolith: Whether the community is closed or it accepts new members through inter-marriage. Both the Druze and Yazidis are considered to be monolithic.

Post-Islam: whether the religion was established after the advent of Islam, where all three religions were established after Islam, and all of them are monotheistic religions that believe in 'One God'.

Militaristic: To what extent the community is ready to defend itself when it is attacked? In contrast to the Bahai and Yazidi communities that reject militarism and practice pacifism, the Druze practices a positive neutrality policy, where they were ready to carry arms and defend themselves when attacked.

According to the Bahai International Community (BIC), Iran under the leadership of Ali Khamenei has drafted a 'Final Solution' Plan for the Bahais in Iran [4]. The main clauses of this plan include blocking access to the Iranian education system by Bahai citizens for the sake of curbing their economic base [5, 6]. The BIC published a translation of a document 'Drafted by the Supreme Revolutionary Cultural Council and signed by Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei… the memo establishes a national policy to promote the gradual eradication of the Baha'i community as a viable entity in Iranian society: The government's dealings with [Baha'is] must be in such a way that their progress and development are blocked,' says the memo, which was obtained by the UN and released in 1993′ ([4], p. 163).

Likewise, the Druze community also encountered a major threat to its survival in the past. In Lebanon, although the Druze applied the practice of Taqiyya by labelling themselves as Muslims, yet, for outside world, the Druzes were treated once as a separate minority and some other times as a separate Muslim minority. When Ibrahim Pasha invaded Lebanon in 1831, he singled out the Druzes in Mount Lebanon and gave them two ultimatums: disarm themselves and second conscript into his

	Bahai	**Druze**	**Yazidis**
Proselytizing	Yes	No	No
Monolith	No	Yes	Yes
Monotheistic	Yes	Yes	Yes
Post-Islam religion	Yes	Yes	Yes
Militaristic	No	Yes	No

Table 1.
Comparison of the characteristics of the three tiny religious communities.

army all Druze men aged 15–25 for an indefinite period to fight against the Nussaires (Alawites) ([7], p. 986). The Druze had no choice but to comply, because the alternative was an all-out attack by his forces with the support of the Maronite forces in Mount Lebanon. The Druze had to fight a war that they never wanted against another sect that outnumbers them.

Furthermore, in 1860, when the Maronites started planning to establish a Maronite State in Mount Lebanon, they opted to create a homogeneous Maronite state. Given that Mount Lebanon was composed of Maronites and Druzes, the former opted to eliminate any Druze presence in this region. In other words, the 1860 civil war in Mount Lebanon was a result of the desire of the Maronites to establish a Maronite state that is free of Druzes. The aim of this war from the point of view of the Maronite leadership was the total extermination of any Druze existence in Mount Lebanon [8]. Despite being labeled as Muslims, the Druze in Mount Lebanon never received any support from Muslim communities and had to rely on themselves in the war. The only community that extended military support to the Druzes in Mount Lebanon were the Druzes in the Druze Mount in Southern Syria [9].

The Druze community in Palestine, which numbered a total of around 15,000 residents, was the first community that was susceptible to sheer transfer during the late 1930s. During this period, the Druze as a small minority was reluctant of taking part in the Palestinian great revolt and opted to maintain neutrality. Yet, persistent attacks by Palestinian insurgents against Druze residents raised the possibility of the latter's transfer to the Druze Mount in Syria ([10], p. 8). In return for purchasing all Druze land in Palestine, the Zionist movement was ready to purchase land for the Druze residents in the Swaida district and help them in their transfer to Syria. This plan was shelved due to the outbreak of WWII and the petering-out of the Palestinian great revolt.

Moreover, during the civil war in Syria, the Druze encountered a major threat not only from ISIS but also from other radical, fundamentalist Islamist movements, such as Jubhat al-Nusra. In Syria, Druze numbered around 800,000 in 2011 or 3% of the total population. Most of them lived in the Swaida district. With the exception of Jabal al-Summaq, most of these Druze areas are points of strategic support for the army. The Swaida district has given the regime a continuing land link to Jordan, as well as an airport for aircrafts that is crucial to the defense against rebels in Daraa and the whole South and South-West Syria.

With the eruption of the civil war in 2011, the Druze found themselves, however, between the hammer of the regime and the hard place of the Islamist, rebellious movements. The regime demanded full conscription of the Druze young men, otherwise, the regime would prosecute and persecute those who refuse conscription and even impose severe collective punishment on the community as a whole, such as blocking the provision of basic essential goods, such as energy supplies and even refusal to provide the community with collective security. The Druze community thus suffered from discrimination (deprivation of negative rights) by the regime. Given the weakness of tiny minorities, due to their small population size and the fact that they have no allies, they are deprived of their negative rights (rights to which they are entitled similar to every other citizen), while members of a majority group enjoy these rights automatically, such as the supply of power, clean water, security and health services. In other words, the entitlement to negative rights could be proportional to the size and political power of a group.

Since the onset of the civil war in Syria, sectarian struggle has been a main factor in protracting the conflict, without bringing it to a swift end. Assad utilized all

available means at his disposal to cling to power, including tactics that aggravated sectarian strife and struggle. Major portions of Syria's minority supported Assad, whether out of fear of the rise of Islamist movements or fear of threats by the regime itself, while Islamist opposition groups attacked civilian minorities that were perceived to be allying with the regime. At the same time, displaced Sunni residents of Damascus fled to the Druze Swaida district or the Druze of Jaramana town in the suburbs of Damascus. In contrast, rebel areas are mostly Arab Sunnis, where the few minorities who lived in these zones had fled or were forced to convert to Sunni Islam. This was the fate of the whole Druze minority in the district of Idlib, where around 15,000 Druze, who used to reside in about 12 villages, were forced to convert to Islam in 2015. These Druzes were given the ultimatum of converting to Sunni Islam or being eliminated and they reluctantly chose the former [11].

Given the sectarian strife, the Assad regime managed to secure, however, a strip of territory stretching from the Alawi zone around Latakia to the Druze zone around Swaida, with key strategic points in the hands of religious minorities, which enabled Assad to pacify the local Sunni majority within areas under his control. Traditionally, the Assad regime since the 1970s managed to build good relations with the Damascene bourgeois milieu in order to bolster the regime and Bashar al-Assad persisted with this policy of his father. Many Sunni officials are represented within the state apparatus, and powerful Sunni economic elites likewise had little reason to revolt given the benefits they received from Assad's liberalization policies (apart from a handful of notables who ran afoul of the Assad family's personal interests). Given this alliance between the regime and the Sunni bourgeois milieu, the regime opted to invest in Sunni districts, at the expense of other districts, in order to pacify the Sunni majority.

The Druze district around Swaida had a few anti-regime demonstrations since the beginning of the war, and most Druze residents did not join the Sunni-led opposition movement that originated in the nearby city of Deraa. The Sunni rebels ignored the few Druze who tried to join them, kidnapped Druze villagers, assassinated certain Druze notables and engaged in full-scale military operations against the Druze district.

However, the Druze relationship with the Assad regime has had a bitter history. They were excluded from power following the 1966 coup led by the Druze officer Salim Hatoum against heads of the Baath Party at the time. Since then, the regime had established several military bases in the Swaida province, whose main function was to monitor anti-regime activities in the province. During the 1970s and 1980s, the Swaida district was deprived of government investments, which caused a high rate of exodus to Damascus, the Gulf states and even Latin America (mainly to Venezuela). The remittances and investments from diaspora Druze helped maintain adequate employment and living standards in the district. During the 1990s, there were improvements in the relations between the Druze minority and the regime, which also contributed to the generation of employment jobs.

At the onset of the civil war in Syria, the Druze kept their neutrality, among other things due to the fact that the Druze as members of a closed religious' community do not have an open and public worship house that parallels the masque that otherwise would attract the masses and mobilize them. The Druze worship house, *the Khilwa*, is open and accessible merely to the few who are religious. Thus, most of the Druze in the province of Swaida remained neutral, despite a strong desire to topple the regime and seek democratization. It is possible that many Druze figures were connected to the regime, while the clergy feared that toppling the regime would bring Sunni

fundamentalist forces to power. Despite this passive neutrality, a few demonstrations did take place in Swaida in the summer of 2011, organized by intellectuals, who called for limited demands of respecting human rights by the regime. Hence, prominent Druze figures and clergies refused to take part in the wider uprising, but they also refused to publicly support the regime. As the civil war escalated, the Druze were attacked by opposition groups and consequently had to take measures to defend themselves, given that the regime was either unable or uninterested in protecting them. As mentioned above, the Druze community in Jabal al-Summaq around the city of Idlib were forced to convert to Sunni Islam, while the Druze of Jaramana fled to Swaida. In contrast, internally displaced Syrian Sunni Arabs (IDPs) found refuge in the Swaida district, where this influx of Sunni refugees had altered the demographic sectarian distribution of some minority strongholds, including the Swaida district.

The regime agreed to keep Druze conscripts in the Swaida province rather than deploying them elsewhere as part of the tacit agreement that Assad reached with the community's spiritual head in order to maintain control over the community and to use it to defend against rebels in Daraa. The rebels nonetheless called the Druze heretics and sanctioned attacks against them.

In a climate of growing Islamist incitement, some Druze residents were kidnapped and then ransomed or killed. These included a leading Druze dignitary Jamal Ezzeddien; he and sixteen of his colleagues were kidnapped by Jabhat al-Nusra in December 2012 and executed a few months later. Similarly, Druze residents in Jaramana fell victim to car bomb explosions in the spring of 2012. In response, the Druze abandoned their neutrality and formed a local militia with the regime's help. From this point on, Jabal al-Druze was regularly attacked by Sunni Arab forces. In August 2014, rebels fought a serious battle against the Druze near the village of Thaaly, where the Druze fighters managed to push back the rebels. Such cooperation with the regime, however, was unimaginable in the past. These rebel actions may seem unexplained given the Druze posture at the start of demonstrating against the regime. Yet the opposition refused to meet the Druze's demand for separation of religion from politics. Despite being rejected by the rebels, the Druze were initially hesitant to link their fate to the Assad regime, since its fall would leave them defenseless under an Islamist regime. In mid-2015, at a time when the army was on the verge of being defeated, some Druze began contemplating the option of connecting the Druze district to Jordan and making it an autonomous region under international supervision. This idea was championed by Sheikh Wahid Balous, who established one of the first Druze militias in 2012. Balous also called for political reforms to address living standards, corruption and Druze conscription [12]. Yet when Jabhat al-Nusra led another offensive to seize al-Thaaly military airport in June 2015, his forces refused to defend the regime; instead, he called to seize army positions and government buildings. As a result, the regime determined to get rid of Balous, who was assassinated and his militia was dissolved. It is possible that Balous thought that the regime was on its way to being defeated and he wanted to seek some understanding with the rebels. Yet, Russia's intervention soon after Ballous's death completely changed the balance of power on the ground, so the Druze were unlikely to contemplate further secessionist attempts. As a small minority, the Druze would not put an end to their alliance with the regime unless they come to the conviction that either the regime was on its way to collapsing or that there is a powerful counterbalance to the regime that respects the religious autonomy of the community, and even then, they would need tangible assurances that international forces will protect them from Islamist Takfiri groups and spare them the fate of their co-religionists in Jabal al-Summaq [13].

Similarly, On 25 July 2018 at dawn, ISIS carried out a coordinated attack that included four suicide bombings in the Druze city of Swaida and a simultaneous assault on six other sparsely populated and isolated small villages in the Swaida periphery against its Druze residents [14]. These ISIS terrorists were also assisted by local Sunni Bedouins. The suicide bombings took place in the market square of Swaida at dawn, as the vendors were preparing their carts at the time while another massive attack was carried out in the isolated villages. The aim of ISIS was to exterminate all the residents of these isolated villages and take some children and women as hostages. All in all, around 250 Druze residents were killed and 30 were taken as hostages, while the residents managed to kill around 70 ISIS terrorists [13]. The claim of the residents is that the regime was able to predict this attack by ISIS, given that ISIS established a base not far from Druze villages. Further, once the fighting began, the regime did not send any troops to protect the civilians. The only fighters who rushed to protect these villages were Druze young men, who enthusiastically rose to protect their co-religionists.

Regarding the Yezidi community, much has been written about the plight of the Iraqi Yezidis and the genocide attempt by ISIS to eliminate this minority [15, 16]. This genocide includes the following practices:

- Forcing all of its members to convert to Islam.
- Executing all members of the community who refuse to convert to Islam
- Kidnapping Yezidi young women and turning them into sex slaves.

After the fall of Mosul, the ISIS terrorists launched an attack in 2014 on the Sinjar district, a major centre of the Yezidi community in Iraq [17]. Consequently, over 90 per cent of the community members were forced to flee [18]. Several villages fought back but were overpowered and its male residents were killed and their young women were turned into sex slaves [19].

Some survivors were kept captive and moved to prisons. Males were given the ultimatum to convert to Islam, yet even those who converted became slaves, others were forcibly conscripted into ISIS combat units, whilst the ones who resisted to convert were executed.

Young women were forced to convert to Islam, but even then, they were enslaved regardless of their answer. Further, boys were separated from their family members and were taken into training camps with the aim of instilling in their minds Islamic teaching and transforming them into ISIS combatants. Other Yezidi females were sold as slaves to the local Sunni residents, who used them as slaves.

This is not the first time, however, that the Yezidi community encounters a major threat to its survival. The Ottoman Empire neither recognize the Yezidis nor the Druze nor the Bahai as a separate millet or religion. The Yezidis were subject to forced conversion by the Ottoman authorities, but they also suffered from massacres perpetuated by their Sunni Kurdish neighbors in 1832 and 1844 ([18], p. 10–11). These practices under the Ottoman Empire included imposing conscription on Yezidis men and forcing them to convert to Islam, while forcing Yezidi women to marry off Ottoman Sunni soldiers ([18], p. 11).

Despite the atrocity crimes mentioned above against these tiny religious minorities, the international law regarding minority rights has remained impotent when it comes to protecting such minorities or seeking justice for the victims. Further, the

international community came out with some declaration of expressing solidarity with the victims, but without concrete measures to either protect the victims or penalize the perpetrators. Regarding the International Court of Justice (ICC), given that these tiny religious minorities have no mother state that also happen to be a signatory of the Rome Statute and given that neither Iraq, nor Syria nor Iran is a signatory of the Rome Statute, then the ICC has no jurisdiction within these states [20]. The ICC can exert jurisdiction over crimes committed in a state and/or by nationals of ICC states parties or if the UN Security Council referred the situation to the ICC. Given none of these conditions was met, then the JCC cannot do anything to prosecute ISIS war criminals. In this case, it remains up to the states on which soil the crimes were committed or to states whose nationals committed the crimes to prosecute these terrorists [21].

3. Conclusion

The international order is founded on the principle of state sovereignty, where states have a monopoly over the use of force within their territorial jurisdiction, while any external intervention in the internal affairs of states is prohibited. Further, minorities in the Middle East live within either failed states (Lebanon, Iraq) or predatory states (Iran) or both failed and predatory (Syria). Under this order and circumstances and given that tiny religious minorities have no mother state or close powerful allies, then authoritarian regimes in the Middle East and Islamist movements have persecuted tiny religious minorities, while the international community turned a blind eye to these violations. Protecting these minorities requires greater intervention by the international community, which should convince Muslim states, in particular, to explicitly accept the principle of religious freedom that would allow these minorities to freely practice their traditions.

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Chapter 6

Perspective Chapter: Internal Forced Displacement and Accumulation by Dispossession in Sierra de Guerrero

J. Kenny Acuña Villavicencio and Georgina Vázquez Moreno

Abstract

Guerrero is considered one of the poorest states in Mexico. The structural violence and terror generated by organized crime in recent years have disrupted social and economic relations. Such event caused hundreds of families to be uprooted from the countryside who were obliged to escape to the regions of Costa Grande, or even outside the country with the intention of reproducing socially and culturally. Having said that, this paper analyzes the causes that provoked the internal forced displacement in communities of Sierra de Guerrero and explains the way how such phenomenon has become a contemporary form of social exclusion and capitalist accumulation. To conduct this research, fieldwork was done, as well as certain type of specific literature was reviewed with the aim of revealing the contradictions and paradoxes faced by displaced persons nowadays.

Keywords: accumulation by dispossession, state, internal forced displacement, violence

1. Introduction

How to carry out the study of a rural society completely transformed by organized crime, capitalism, and the state? What are the consequences of such individual and collective subjectivities, which have been obliged to abandon their jobs or social work? These basic questions are important in order to know the origins of the internal forced displacement in Sierra de Guerrero as well as reflect on the role the state plays in the maintenance of inequality and uprooting suffered by hundreds of peasant families. These are individuals who, in addition to having been forced to renounce all, that is, leaving their homes, fulfilled lives, and properties, are in conditions of marginality and abandonment. Such displacements in modern times are part of an expanded process of capitalist accumulation and it is manifested in its necrotic version. We refer to a predatory, extraeconomic, and necropolitical phenomenon, which during these last few years, has come to affect radically in the 16 municipalities, which are part of the following regions: Costa Grande, Tierra Caliente, and Centro.

In such municipalities, there are about "1,287 locations with a total population of 104,956 inhabitants" that have been affected by the organized crime cells [1]. What is more, their presence in these locations has generated abjection forms and eradication that are related to the conflict among criminal bands, the little capacity of the state in order to warranty the human sociality, as well as the mining of natural resources. However, such event will not be possible without the "blood quota" needed that supplies the negation of the democracy and official power, because the disposable and cheap manpower of this helps to make eternal the capital cycle of human creativity and human collective. Truth be told, these are the processes that set up, make sense, and make existence of a state that has been the center of attention in the last years due to its high rates of insecurity, (systematic) violence, and social margination. Once said this, the current search is divided into three parts and has as a final goal to explain the possible origins of the forced displacement, the territorial dispossession by violence, as well as the function of the state in the legitimation of the dynamics of the market. On the other hand, we have to point out that the results of the research that will be presented hereafter are part of both lab work and fieldwork done since November of last year, on such date when the pandemic began and made the gathering of interviews or data more complex in order to make a discourse to give an account on the difficulties and paradoxes that are faced by the Guerrerense society.

2. The origins of displacement

The rising of the organized crime in Guerrero has not only dislocated the social and economic relationships, above all, from the rural zones, but it has also promoted a way of displacement for violence: the internal forced displacement. It is about a *social fact* (original italics from author) that has been invisibilized and it is part of the social domination, which currently takes place in many parts of the globe. In Mexico, this phenomenon has its contemporary antecedents in the security policies as the Plan of Mérida was promoted at the time by Felipe Calderón and, further on, continued by the government of Peña Nieto. For many specialists in the field, the implementation of such types of politics not only provoked the disappearance of more than 62 thousand people but also caused the elimination of political leaders, human rights defenders, social activists, and peasant populations, which were found in extreme poverty conditions and exclusion [2]. Added to this, 310, 527 thousand people were displaced from the poorest states of the country, as a result of the internal war between law enforcement and drug trafficking [3].

As a historical review, we may affirm that the phenomenon of displacement remits to the Dirty War (capitals from author) from 1969 to 1979 and extended to scenarios such as Petatlán and Coyuca de Catalán. What has been said is connected to the so-called war against drug trafficking that started in 2006, the time when violence was exacerbated and the displacement of peasant and indigenous communities were generated. In the case of Guerrero, in that same year, this issue was intensified due to the rupture of the Sinaloa Cartel and the armed crossing of La Garita in Acapulco city [4]. This outcome gave cause to be disarticulation of territorial commands and control that directly affected entire communities, which were in the need of an escape to different parts of the state and even outside the country. Beneath such ending, it currently highlights the disgraceful displacement cases in "Zirandaro, Apaxtla de Castrejon, in the Zona Norte: Teloloapan and Iguala. We head toward the municipalities of Montaña Baja as Chilapa or Icaltenango, which has also provoked displacement. This issue

emerged with the division of the so-called organized division, above all, practically, in Guerrero when the so-called crime group Los Pelones was divided and each resulting group began to act. Some of them acted in Acapulco, others in Tierra Caliente [5]."

In the state of Guerrero, such issue provoked legitimate violence and murder was seen as device of power that build forms of being and acting in the society; the battle between crime organizations is associated with the territorial uprooting and its dispute with the state; the local political systems are seen conditioned by the forces of the organized crime; and the internal forced displacement affects especially all peasant families [6]. During fieldwork done at the beginning of this year, several displaced families located at the boundaries of Técpan, a municipality where a refuge existed, shared the idea that criminal bands forced the inhabitants to abandon their communities or forced them to work and extract their natural resources such as poppy, wood, and minerals. To this point, it is understood that the internal forced displacement must be seen as part of the dynamics of the market and the relations of domination. From this, it derives the fact that systematic separation of the individual facing the space where a relationship of (social) production is developed and it intensifies through the imposition of war and transformation of territorials in controlled economical enclaves, in this case, by the organized crime. This implies to consider the fact that not only life is objectified but also the death that also becomes valued and revalued as a part of the capital circuits.

It should be noted that the displacement does not only constitute a fact inherent to the dynamic populations but to the reorganization of capitalist society as well. For this, it is necessary to know if mobility is a condition generated by human drives or human necessities, or failing fact, it is the result of the rearticulation of capital in convulsive scenarios as the one being explained. This means that, indeed, there is a clear difference between the individual who migrates and the one who is obliged to be displaced. Perhaps a tangential difference is about the fact that a migrant individual does it for a deliberate and altruist matter, moreover, his mobility is done for his own benefit or for the well-being of some relatives that have been left behind; in contrast, displaced individuals are forced to move alongside their families or their community. In that sense, a migrant seeks to improve his life and work conditions, thus, such action has to be considered intentional. In such kind of mobility, the precarious socioeconomic conditions are the factors that constitute a reason to oblige certain people to abandon their home area [7]. The migrant, however hard he might be led to suddenly migrate due to the loss of his/her job or his/her purchasing power, he/she opts for a strategy of social reproduction that revolves around wage labor. In contrast, a displaced individual is compelled to escape and save his/her life.

Although force migration is not a novelty, because traditionally this phenomenon had been driven by unfavorable socioeconomic situations, above all, in rural areas, however, in the last years, many people were forced to leave their properties and sever their family bonds for fear of violence [8]. In that sense, forced displacements are massively produced due to the arrival of criminal bands, which lessen the economic activity of the cities and force people to pay dues. Salazar and Castro are right when they point out that displacement in Guerrero is not only explained by the deployment of the State force and the fight by drug corridors among criminal gangs but also as a result of the structural and systematic mismatches [9]. Undoubtedly this is a hard reality to deny because the economic and social inequality that does exist in several regions of the state leads to organized crime and is manifested in assassinations, persecutions, mass slaughters, forced displacement, and the disappearances of people [10]. This obliges us to consider that such displacement is rooted in political processes that are

translated into moments of exception, liquidation of liberties and suppression of human rights, capital dispossession, and the restoration of hegemonic power [11–14].

2.1 Territorial dispossession and organized crime

The results from control policy imposed by the governments of the political parties PAN and PRI brought with them a radical division of territories and work that was translated into abandonment, marginalization, and impoverishment of sectors where natural resources and social fabrics can be found, which are important for the progress of capitalist accumulation. This allows us to pay attention to the places or scenarios where displacement takes place since not all forced displacements are neither manifested in the same intensity nor under the same local problems. In this regard, Marco, who is a displaced individual from San Miguel Totolápan, and whom I could interviewed in the municipality of Técpan, pointed out that "many people that have been displaced, that includes groups and communities have been defeated", they "belong to a specific group, and their contrary group defeat them, they escape and then they go shouting all over that they are displaced, but they are all part of it. Most of the displacement is like this, they belong to criminal bands, then they are defeated, they soon go shouting all over they are displaced individuals, the truth is that they belong to criminal gangs. On the contrary, we are the ones who have escaped, because we did not want to be part of any criminal gangs called themselves: Los flacos, Michoacanos, Guerreros Unidos, or whatever they are called themselves. We are oblivious to them" [15]. Displacement is due to the struggle for the territorial control among the same organized crime gangs, and even among them and the state. It does not exist an exact data about the number of armed groups in control of communities, but "seems to exist at least 200 groups in the entire state of Guerrero" [16, 17].

In rewarding the places of expulsion, displaced individuals in their majority belong to rural areas of Sierra, and their destinations have been the cities of Técpan, Atoyac, and Chilpancingo. It is worth noting that during the year 2020, there were eight episodes of displacement in seven municipalities and 23 locations, we are talking about around 5128 people who were placed under the margins of the municipalities already mentioned [18]. People who were forced to displace did it due to the social conflicts, persecutions, and criminal violence [6]. The term "forced" implies coercion of an entity or organization (whether is legit or not) that executes or makes use of the violence to contravene the individual and collective integrity. For the United Nations [19] for the purposes of this phenomenon, it must be understood as "persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized State border." Forced displacement is not a new category, this refers to experiences of necropolitical character, what is more, its understanding must start from understanding the fact of restructuration of society and the circuits of the (drug) market, as well as from the articulation of labor.

The extermination of the nature and precariousness of work silted by the presence of drug trafficking are evidence of capitalist accumulation that is being legitimized by necropower. The wave of discomfort sheathed by peasants against the territorial dispossession in rural zones of Guerrero force us to rethink concepts and categories that help us to rescue the (historical) individual from social tearing. We refer specifically

to those peasant populations that have been in the necessity to fight the cells of the organized crime and the state either opposing at all or generating a "negotiation."

Displacement led peasant populations to be unable to defray their own existence. We refer to the most violent and horrifying side reproduced by our society since such forced mobility is linked to the subjugation of the creative capacity of men in relation to the territory or nature. In other words, such occurrence inherent to the anatomy of capitalist accumulation is kept alive not as a mere event of transformations from the so-called precapitalist populations or peasants but in a manner of speaking to a continual and antagonist open process.

This is known by Marx as "The so-called capitalist primitive accumulation" and as such, accounts for the origins of the transformation and valuation of labor, the making, or the creativity in capital [20]. Unlike certain ideas that support that in this form of capital accumulation lies the metamorphosis of labor and the shift from traditional societies into industrial societies, it must be considered that its existence is only possible through its historical phase. That is to say, as it is made known by the author Zerenka "the accumulation of capital properly named without the need of the adjective primitive includes the force and the violence to reach the capitalist objectives of separation between producers and means of production" [21]. It is needless to resort to the word "primitive" to recognize this fact. Reflections made by Rosa Luxemburg are consistent with our perspective. Lenin, in defining the accumulation of capital as reproduction on an amplified scale, was indeed responsible for such distortion, but following certain ambiguity present in Marx himself, a problem that Luxemburg addressed, on the other hand, is sustained that the original accumulation does not only consists of mutation from labor done by rural individuals into free individuals able to sell their labor force in the so-called capitalist society, it rather refers to the existing antagonism between the relationships of capital-labor, and therefore, allows us to comprehend the social emergencies and social rejections.

This event is described as "the midwife of history," which externalizes the transformation that is suffered by the work, but this time, in its double dimension to know: *concrete labor and abstract labor*. In other words, this "original sin" does not only explain the mutation of "expanded reproduction" that is being carried out in conditions of "peace, property, and equality", but instead, it shows us enough evidence to understand the reorganization of life and work through forms of elimination of the creative doing of others [22]. Human potential of the denied individuals is considered a needed energy and essential in the process of capitalist accumulation. However, this will not be possible without the presence of a political form that has no other function but to guarantee the rhymes of its expanded reproduction. Such forms of submissions of the individuals are updated and carry out cycles of dispossession that in the long term destroy the social fabric. As Harvey states [23]:

Ultimately, the processes of dispossession are constitutive and intrinsic to the logic of accumulation of capital, or, in other words, they represent the reverse side needed in the expanded reproduction. If the latter is present as a mainly economic process –of surplus production–, which takes pre-eminence during the periods of stability and sustained growth, the dispossession is generally expressed in extraeconomic processes of predatory type and take control under moments of crisis, as a mode of "spatio-temporal fix" or "headlong rush". This means that the surplus production struggles over internal and external borders of the system, in order to permanently incorporate new territorials, areas, social relationships and/or future markets to allow its profitable execution. In that sense, both logics are "organically entwined", i.e., they feedback to each other, as part of a dual and cyclic process that is inseparable.

Such process of dispossession leads to an "apparently" population of workers that are in the pending of being absorbed by capitalism. This responds to a systematic law in the sense that "the greater this reserve army in proportion to the active labor army, the greater is the mass of a consolidated surplus population, whose misery is in inverse ratio to its torment of labor" [20]. In that latter phase is where the state is found in the sense that it is in charge of applying policies of protection and social security, as well as taking part in the reorganization of local powers, that is, the elites and their links with the organized crime. Illades [24] does not spare when he states that "dirty war and narco war, the dispossession in the communities of territories where later on the criminal economy was expanded with the acquiescence of public authority, the transfer of police commanders and military elements to the ranks of crime, the submission of the population to the law of the strongest" might not exist without the presence of a state power that dominates the subaltern classes.

2.2 The state and management of death

Insecurity and forced displacement are not only merely understood as the class between the state and the criminal organization but as a result of the crises of social relationships, which are forms of contemporary domination. It is important to point out, since it allows us to understand how violence is materialized, because it is not coincidence that the destructuring of social and political fabrics in which the state of Guerrero is found becomes margination, poverty, and oblivion. For CONEVAL [25], we refer to one of the most unequal states in the whole country, 66.5% of its population lives in poverty, 26.8% of such in extreme poverty, 3% is vulnerable population, 32.2% is vulnerable population due to social deprivation, and 7.3% belong to the nonpoor and nonvulnerable population. What has been addressed above leads to rethink of the grounds on which Guerrero is anchored in a political moment to the point of necrosis. The idea is that the changes produced from above instead of protecting the organic character of society have generated, among other problems, phenomena that have gone unnoticed as the internal forced displacement of thousands of rural communities. This problem gives a guideline to see inside the anatomy of society not only the contradictions and antagonisms of capitalist society but also the possibilities of developing from the memory of the displaced individuals a rich matrix of alternatives that place dignity and labor at the center of debate.

The answer for those phenomena widely questioned by most of the states of law is translated into the creation of moments of pacification or states of peace that in the long term become true silences of all human creativity that calls into question necropolitical reason. This makes sense, since the state despite strenuous efforts to create conditions of sociality and democracy, makes it more difficult for human existence. In this point of view, we can affirm that necropower is the reason for being of modern politics, since it has begotten its outcasts and, above all, it has not managed to meet the real needs of those from below. On the contrary, during the last decades what has been most highlighted has been a profound delegitimization of power and the destructuring of society. Additionally, the extreme polarity that permeated and the high indices that exist with respect to the maelstrom of violence, that is, the war as a result of the clash between organized crime and state forces have caused that the daily life is translated in moments of social crisis.

The existence of political forces, as well as the presence of factual powers or, as considered by certain academics, powers parallel to the state have eroded the historical meaning of political participation. This fact is important to highlight, because

it is related to the way the regions in Guerrero have been spatially and politically reconfigured and how capitalist accumulation is consolidated. It is well known, for example, that the Sierra is home to a large number of criminal cells that dispute the territorial political control with the state. What is more, in these scenarios not only is social domination reconstituted but also unofficial forces push actions that contradict the social order.

According to what was previously said, Armando Bartra [26] states that democratization of the country has passed through different temporary natures of fighting, resistance, and domination that were tied to a kind of reinvented colonization. The rise of elites, the spatial rearrangement, and the political administration of such issues in the hands of certain family clans gave meaning and reason to a society anchored to processes of corruption, bureaucratization, and political despotism. The interest of the state does not only consist of promoting the "internal conflicts and militarization that are centered in important geographies for energy and resources extraction projects but also in the management of historical form of "letting die" and the extension of the such in creating "organizational forms of accumulation that involve dispossession, death, suicide, slavery, destruction of habitats, and the organization and administration of violence" [27].

3. By means of conclusion

Displacement in Mexico is a contemporary form of social exclusion that is being silently legitimized by the state because in principle it does not desire to recognize the emptiness of power and does not attend to the necessities of families and victims of organized violence [28]. This phenomenon has been aggravated in recent years by the territorial dispossession and internal war generated by armed drug trafficking groups. Such kind of abandonment of state power has reasons to be, because refugee families in different scenarios as in the case of the municipality of Técpan, who had to escape from the Sierra due to the persecution of criminal drug trafficking cells and the violent response of law enforcement, they are under conditions of abandonment. Hernandez argues that the displacement phenomenon has not been understood per se, due to the fact that the issue refers to the struggle for natural resources from the 60s in the municipalities of Costa Grande [29]. That is the reason why the state has not been able to restore society as such despite the fact of existing, for instance, Law *487* published on July 22, 2014, at Periódico Oficial del Gobierno del Estado (Official Journal of the Federation) [30]. There are also other similar experiences, such as "Ley para la Prevención y Atención del Desplazamiento Interno en el Estado de Chiapas," published as Decreto N° 158, at Periódico Oficial del Estado, on February 22nd, 2012 [19].

The absence of the state in territories where drug trafficking operates gives a glimpse of the crisis of legitimation of Mexican power and democracy. This is related to the gap of power that exists in many Guerrerenses municipalities and the lack of governmental aid in order to such municipalities could fulfill the needs of the displaced people from the region of Sierra de Guerrero, who continue to live in precarious conditions and at the margins of official power. There is every indication that, despite the fact beyond looking at this phenomenon as a national problem, the purpose of the state consists of normalizing relations of domination, as well as languishing the dreams of the "common people." This means that if the basic subsistence needs of the families who were forced to leave their lives are not met, then marginalization

and inequality will continue to reproduce, what is more, peasant people might be part of a disposable army of laborers, we refer to the last link in the chain of production of illegal drugs goods and trade imposed and controlled by organized crime, or, in the absence, therefore, to join the ranks of such organization.

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Section 3

Immigration and Migration

Chapter 7

Acculturation Orientations among Russian Youth in Finland

Anita Stasulane and Terhi-Anna Wilska

Abstract

Despite the fact that much academic attention has been directed to the acculturation of immigrants in Finland, the need to more fully understand how immigrants cope with acculturation is timely. Since the Russian-speaking immigrants represent the biggest immigrant group in Finland, this chapter explores the acculturation orientations among Russian immigrant youth approached from the angle of the festive culture. The findings are based on the data of ethnographic observation and qualitative interviews (n 16) conducted in the central part of Finland. To capture the nuances of dynamic acculturation experiences, the authors applied a bottom-up methodological approach which gives voice to young people. The Introduction familiarises readers with the research context, the objective of the study and its key research questions. Part two explains the data collection methods and describes the methodology used in the research. Part three presents the analysis of young people's experiences at festivities. Building knowledge by mapping customs, traditions and novelty of celebrations, the authors found three acculturation orientations among Russian immigrant youth in Finland: assimilation, integration and separation. Research into festive culture plays a role in exploring immigrant communities, allowing identification of the network of social ties, which reflects the connection of immigrants with both the host culture and the heritage culture.

Keywords: festive culture, assimilation, integration, separation, marginalisation

1. Introduction

Integration of immigrants is one of the most important items on the agenda of social and political discussions taking place in the European Union. Many experts and leaders of some countries have acknowledged that the integration policy thus far pursued has been unsuccessful. It is expected that immigration will follow an upward path in the future, requiring more effective policy for managing it. To implement a targeted integration policy, those who develop it need to have a clear understanding of the integration process. Therefore, studies aimed at gathering information on the integration process, identifying obstacles to integration and measuring its success gain importance with each day. With global migration picking up, research pays increasing attention to acculturation, as integration is one of acculturation strategies.

Acculturation is often understood as a one-way path from heritage culture to host culture. Such understanding is based on the conceptualisation of acculturation observed in the first half of the twentieth century [1, 2]. According this conceptualisation, acculturation occurs "when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original culture patterns of either or both groups" ([2] p. 149). Such understanding means that an immigrant would have to decide whether to accept host culture or remain faithful to heritage culture. In the first half of the twentieth century, biculturalism was rejected, as it was believed that it causes conflicts, stress, isolation and identity confusion [3]. By contrast, today biculturalism is understood as a positive psychological and social type of adaptation [4].

Nowadays, acculturation is understood in a different way: as a choice between "origin" and "destination" cultures ([5] p. 626), emphasising its two-way movement determined by the extent to which immigrants want to preserve their heritage culture and the level of their interest in familiarising themselves with and integrate into host culture [6, 7]. Depending on immigrants' attitudes, acculturation occurs according to several strategies: assimilation, separation, integration and marginalisation [8]. Taking into account the diversity of strategies, the definition of acculturation can be summarised as follows: "the ways people prefer to live in intercultural contact situations" [9]. Assimilation means that immigrants abandon their heritage culture and adopt host culture. Separation is observed when immigrants practise traditions of their heritage culture and do not accept host culture. Integration takes place when immigrants practise their cultural traditions and take over traditions of the host culture simultaneously. Marginalisation arises if immigrants do not retain links with their heritage culture and avoid host culture. The latter acculturation strategy is the least preferred one, but integration can take place if the host country accepts multiculturalism.

Finland, like other European countries, faces challenges posed by immigrant acculturation. Although Finland was not part of migratory routes for a long time, today population with immigrant background represents 8.5% of its population [10]. Arrival of Chilean refugees and Vietnamese in Finland started in the 1970s [11]. The 1990s saw a higher influx of immigrants when the implementation of the migration programme launched by Finnish President Mauno Koivisto started. It was aimed at people who had ethnic Finnish Ingrian ancestry and who inhabited the territories that became part of the USSR after World War II (Ingria – the current Leningrad region). As a result of this programme (1990–2016), so-called rights to resettle were used by approximately 30 thousand people [10].

A series of studies focusing on acculturation of immigrants in Finland have been carried out to find data-based solutions. The impact of acculturation on psychological well-being has been studied by measuring teenagers' acculturative stress, behavioural problems, self-esteem, life satisfaction and sense of mastery [12, 13]. Being well aware of the fact that problems do not arise only after taking up residence in Finland, researchers have explored the ways in which immigrants' well-being is affected not only by postmigration factors but also by premigration issues [14]. To investigate the process of immigrants' psychological, sociocultural and socio-economic adaptation, data on immigrants from the USSR were collected for eight years (1961–1976). Findings show that the success of immigrants' adaptation is driven by sociocultural adaptation measured as the proficiency in understanding, speaking, reading and writing Finnish [15]. Taking account of the fact that the process of acculturation is affected by attitudes of both immigrants and the host society, it has been analysed

whether the acculturation orientations of the immigrants and the hosts are concordant or discordant [16]. It is a comparative study analysing the data collected in Germany, Israel and Finland. The study concludes that the acculturation profiles of hosts and immigrants are discordant in Finland.

Discussions on the process of immigrant acculturation in Finnish society gained pace after the refugee crisis (2015), heightening academic interest in this issue as well. Although the acculturation orientations are most frequently explored from the perspective of immigrants, there are examples of studies carried out from a different angle. When exploring the attitude of Finnish society, focus is placed on the question concerning the immigrant acculturation orientations preferred by Finnish teenagers [17]. When investigating the relationship between feelings of prejudice and support for acculturation preferences, it has been concluded that Finnish teenagers are inclined towards supporting integration rather than assimilation of Russian immigrants. The comparative study on the impact of media use on acculturation conducted in the Russian communities of Finland and Latvia should be mentioned among the most recent studies. The findings show that Russian immigrants in both countries scored closer to biculturalism than monoculturalism [18].

Russian-speaking immigrants make up one of the largest groups of immigrants in Finland. This has been driven by Finland's geographic location adjacent to Russia and particularly by the above migration programme. Given that the reasons behind migration are manifold, the Finnish Immigration Service distinguishes between three types of immigrants, using different terms: returnees (in Finnish – *paluumuuttaja*), refugees (*pakolainen*) or forced immigrants and voluntary immigrants (*maahanmuuttaja*). Those who moved to Finland from the USSR or the Russian Federation within the migration programme offered by the state can be referred to as returnees from the legal point of view. However, social sciences consider them voluntary immigrants. They face identical immigrant acculturation problems, as they moved to Finland after they had already lost the cultural ties (first and foremost—the language) with the country of origin of their ancestors. Therefore, the term *Russian immigrants* is used in this chapter without making a distinction between ethnic identity and linguistic identity. From a historical point of view, in this particular case, we cannot talk about returnees, as ethnic Finnish Ingrians, who inhabited the territories incorporated into the USSR, moved to Finland. Despite their ethnic origin, people who moved to Finland from the USSR or the Russian Federation continue to speak Russian within the family and consume products of Russian media and culture, as well as establish organisations whose purpose is to preserve Russian culture. Taking account of the fact that Finland remains an attractive destination for immigrants, particularly after the war started by Russia against Ukraine (2022), it is expected that the number of the Russian immigrants will increase further.

The quantitative research approach has been mostly used when exploring both attitudes of immigrant acculturation and expectations of the host society. The qualitative approach is applied rather infrequently when conducting studies. The authors of this chapter hope to contribute to raising awareness on the acculturation of immigrants in Finland based on their experience analysed using qualitative research methods. One peculiarity of the chapter is that immigrants are given their chance to have a voice. Another peculiarity relates to the analysis of the of immigrants' experience gained from celebrating festivities.

The central research question of the chapter is: how does a dialogue between the heritage culture and the host culture develop when celebrating festivities? An essential part of models for the integration of immigrant culture [19] is customs,

traditions and novelty of celebration. Today, anthropologists pay particular attention to festivities as social or religious rituals that strengthen social ties [20, 21]. Research into festive culture plays a role in exploring immigrant communities, allowing identification of the network of social ties which reflects the connection of immigrants with both the host culture and the origin culture. The interviews with young people conducted during the fieldwork provide an insight into the festivities celebrated in their families and the way it is done, how the Russian community preserves its traditions of celebrating festivities and what the manifestations of the interaction between Russian and Finnish festive culture are in Finland. The answers to these questions help identify the acculturation orientations of the younger generation coming from the Russian community.

2. Data collection and the research methodology

The study among Russian youth living in Finland was carried out from 1 October to 31 December, 2021. A city located in the central part of Finland was chosen as a study site. The city is home to 144 thousand people, of which 136 thousand use Finnish, 293—Swedish, 16—Sami and 8052—other languages in a family environment on a daily basis. Study participants believe that approximately 2000 Russians live in this Finnish city (Olga, female, 52 years old, group leader, 26 October, 2021).

To ensure the anonymity of study participants, the chapter reveals neither the location where the study was conducted nor the group names. Meanwhile, references to interviews include the pseudonyms chosen by study participants themselves, and all data that could disclose their identity directly or indirectly have been anonymised.

The sample was selected using the non-probability sampling technique. Study participants were chosen by means of both purposive sampling and the snowball method. Purposive sampling was employed when selecting groups of Russian immigrants living in Finland; these groups have emerged around cultural activities and involve young people. The snowball method was used to identify Russian-speaking youth who arrived in Finland in early childhood or who were born in this country. These young people find themselves in Finland as a result of their parents' choice who used the Finnish migration programme to resettle to Finland from the USSR, later – the Russian Federation.

The sample consisted of Russian-speaking young people – members of groups where the Russian language is a tool of communication and intergenerational transmission of cultural traditions: in the religious community, in the group of learning Russian and two groups dedicated to the preservation of cultural traditions. It was important for the researcher to seek support from gatekeepers at the beginning of field work. Group leaders understood the relevance of the study and provided their support to the researcher by emailing the informed consent forms containing the researcher's contact information to all their group members. Due to the positive attitude of group leaders, the researcher could participate in group events and make ethnographic observations. The informal socialisation between the researcher and group members played a crucial role in the fieldwork, as the young people whom the researcher had approached personally during events agreed to be interviewed rather than those who had received information from group leaders. The informal socialisation led to a high response rate: all young people approached by the researcher agreed

to be interviewed, except one person who changed his/her mind to participate in the interview and showed no willingness to contact the researcher.

The major obstacles to recruiting interviewees were: first, young people's busy schedules (work, studies, social, cultural and sports activities) and second, the Covid-19 pandemic. Although Finland had not introduced gathering restrictions during the fieldwork and group activities were not restricted as long as epidemiological safety regulations were complied with, an account had to be taken of the fact that the epidemiological situation could change abruptly. Interviews were planned carefully for weeks ahead. Only one of them was a face-to-face interview, but others were conducted via the Zoom platform because of the uncertain epidemiological situation. All interviewees, except one, turned on the video camera and contacted the researcher face-to-face during the interview.

The key research instruments used were participatory observation and interviews. Participatory observation was made on a regular basis over a three-month period, several times a week, peaking on Saturdays and Sundays. 16 individual qualitative interviews were carried out during the fieldwork: 3 group leaders (aged 46–51) and 13 young people most of whom were 19–23 years old were interviewed, but the ages of two interviewees were 34 and 35. The dominant presence of females in the groups led to the following breakdown of interviewees by gender: 12 women and 4 men.

Interviews with group leaders were conducted in a narrative form; that is, they were unstructured interviews allowing group leaders to tell their story. This provided the opportunity for group leaders to express their opinion and to elaborate on the topics and problems of concern to them. Semi-structured interviews were used for working with the young people; that is, these were undertaken and followed previously developed sets of questions, frequently changing their sequence and posing more in-depth questions [22]. The interviews took place in the language used within the young people's families, that is, Russian, with their average length being one hour. These were recorded in an audio format and later transcribed into the Russian language, noting emotions and longer pauses in the text and observing the accepted norms for transcription in research [23]. The interviews were listened to again after transcription to avoid mistakes, with the anonymisation of data being carried out simultaneously.

No ethically dubious situations arose during the course of the study. Having familiarised themselves with the information on the purpose of the study, its performance, interviewees' rights, data anonymisation and storage rules, all interviewees confirmed their participation in the study. Before each interview, young people were encouraged to ask questions concerning the information sheet, and the answers provided were open and meaningful.

Qualitative content analysis, which is not strictly regulated, was used as a research instrument [24] and provided the opportunity for the researcher to be flexible [25, 26]. Acculturation indicators which were the object of the analysis were clearly defined on the commencement of the content analysis, and a word, sentence or several sentences which formed a unified concept were used as a unit of analysis [26]. As the number of interviews was not large, they were coded manually: the main categories or codes were initially identified and were then divided up into subcategories or subcodes. In this way, analysis was done by following the text [27]. Codes were created based on interview data, and in turn, after reviewing the created codes, they were evaluated according to their correspondence to the conceptual framework, the goals of the research and the research questions. In this way, a deductive and inductive method was applied to the data analysis [24].

3. Festivities as an indicator of sociocultural adaptations

Celebrating festivities is an integral part of young people's life; therefore, interviewees willingly talked about the festivities they usually celebrate and the way it is done. Due to the fact that the fieldwork was carried out during the last months of the year, young people first mentioned Christmas and the New Year.

3.1 Festivities of religious origin

As a result of cultural interaction, families of the interviewed youth celebrate "both Finnish and Russian festivities" (Anna, female, 20 years old, student, November 17, 2021.). However, young people drew a clear line between Russian and Western culture during interviews: "Question: What festivities does your family celebrate? Answer: It is the Russian festivities that we celebrate, we also celebrate Western festivities" (Aleksandr, male, 20 years old, student, November 13, 2021). Differences between the Gregorian and Julian calendars dominated in separation of Russian culture from European culture. "In Finland Christmas is on December 25 unlike in [Russian] Orthodoxy [on January 7]" (Veronika, female, 19 years old, school student, October 14, 2021). Russian immigrant groups make a clear distinction between Russian and Finnish cultural traditions; for example, young people said during interviews that their group attends "their [Finnish] Christmas [celebration]" (Valentina, female, 55 years old, group leader, October 11, 2021) and that December 25 is "their [Finnish] Christmas, their *Joulu*" (Alisa, female, 19 years old, student, December 1, 2021). Moreover, mixed families also make a distinction between Christmas traditions: "Q: What kind of festivities do you celebrate at home? A: We celebrate the "Finnish" Christmas. Usually together with my dad's parents, that is, together with my grandma and grandpa from that side" (Lermontov, female, 23 years old, student, November 19, 2021). It is easier for mixed families to make their choice regarding the celebration of Christmas according to Finnish traditions, as "there's no Christmas in Russia, there's only the New Year" (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021). This view reflects young people's understanding that the same festivities are celebrated differently and with varying degrees of intensity in different cultures.

As to the celebration of "Finnish" Christmas, it was emphasised in one case that it was the "most favourite festivity" of the interviewee's family (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021), but in another case, it was added that "["Finnish"] Christmas is important for us, but we don't celebrate it every year" (Karla, female, 19 years old, student, November 19, 2021). Although young people have absorbed the Christmas traditions specific to Finnish culture, they do not always enjoy them: "Typical Finnish Christmas. The traditional Finnish food, we give gifts – the same things recur each year. All relatives arrive, we spend time together, go to sauna, eat the same food [year after year]" (Lola, female, 21 years old, student, December 14, 2021).

During interviews, Christmas celebration on December 25 was described as an informed choice: "After our arrival in Finland we, for some reason, decided to celebrate Christmas, although many Russian families that have arrived in Finland or were born here, they celebrate the New Year. But it is Christmas that we celebrate" (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021). Interviewees attributed the celebration of Christmas on December 25 to belonging to Finland. This came to light when young people talked about their future plans, that is, what kind of festivities they would like to celebrate in their own families: "I'd love to continue the Christmas

tradition, since I believe that if we live in Finland, it is important to celebrate Finnish festivities. Other children will talk about Christmas but if we don't have Christmas, it will be very sad, I think. Therefore, Christmas in my own family will be a family festivity with gifts" (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021).

According to the Russian youth living in Finland, Christmas has no religious value. Interviewees did not refer to the religious attributes of this festivity, and they did not mention attending church. As a result of cultural interaction, Russian families have adopted the Christmas celebration elements that are typical of Finnish culture. It should be made clear that gifts are not given at Christmas in Russia and that Christmas is celebrated in church rather than in the family circle. By contrast, Russian youth in Finland try to find a sense of family even in the event of the divorce of parents. "I celebrate in my family. I usually spend half a day together with my father, at best, but as evening approaches I go to my mum and celebrate together with her family" (Lola, female, 21 years old, student, December 14, 2021). It should be emphasised that group events at Christmas organised by the Russian community are complemented by elements of Finnish culture: "Q: What did you celebrate yesterday? A: We celebrated Christmas. We prepared a programme, we had porridge and different cakes, and tea, coffee. We just sat together, ate and drank, then we had a quiz, one member of the group even sang for us. Then everyone bought gifts for each other and distributed them. Q: What kind of songs did she sing? A: Some kind of Finish Christmas songs" (Karla, female, 19 years old, student, November 19, 2021).

According to the interview data, in the case of Christmas, elements of Russian culture are gradually replaced by elements of the Finnish traditional culture. An interviewee said, "in my childhood *Ded Moroz* [Grandfather Frost] usually came and gave gifts to children. Since we don't have children for the time being, I and my wife, we don't need *Ded Moroz*. Later on, when we have children, we'll have to sustain this culture, as it is said that *Ded Moroz* comes from Finland, from Lapland. He is known as *Joulupukki*, that Santa" (Bil, male, 34 years old, ITC specialist, December 12, 2021).

Unlike Christmas, interviewees referred to church in relation to Easter without mentioning the religious significance of this festivity. Young people talked about "Russian Easter", meaning celebrations according to the Julian calendar. The interviewee emphasised that it is only the "Russian Easter" that his family celebrates: "We have the Orthodox Church therefore we celebrate Easter. We somehow don't celebrate Finnish Easter, but when Easter is celebrated in Finland and people have holidays, it is clear that we stay at home" (Aleksandr, male, 20 years old, student, November 13, 2021). The interviewee, by making a distinction between Orthodoxy as a Russian denomination and Lutheranism as a Finnish denomination, has not taken account of the fact that a significant part of Finnish people are Orthodox believers, and the Finnish Orthodox Church celebrates its festivals according to the Gregorian calendar. Data of another interview suggest that Russian immigrants consider the calendar a dividing line between Orthodoxy and Protestantism; therefore, the family celebrates both "Russian" and "Finnish" Easter. "Q: What festivities does your family celebrate? A: We celebrate Easter two times: Orthodox Easter and Finnish Lutheran Easter. Q: Why two times? A: My parents are believers, and it is important for them to celebrate "Russian" [Easter], but since we live in Finland, we also celebrate "Finnish" [Easter]" (Veronika, female, 19 years old, school student, October 14, 2021).

As to the Easter traditions practised in the family, it was said: "Well, we don't do anything special at Easter" (Lola, female, 21 years old, student, December 14, 2021). Interviewees mentioned making *paskha* and dying eggs as the main Easter attributes (Aleksandr, male, 20 years old, student, November 13, 2021). These traditions have

not been preserved by all Russian immigrant families (Veronika, female, 19 years old, school student, October 14, 2021).

According to the interviewees, Easter in Finland is a syncretic festival – "a very mixed culture having a little bit of everything" (Alisa, female, 19 years old, student, December 1, 2021). Russian youth have identified the traditional Finnish culture elements characteristic of Easter and talked about them positively: "At Easter, children here [in Finland] wear costumes, collect sweets. Easter costumes: somebody dresses up as a rabbit, somebody is a girl with freckles, red cheeks and a braid. It is a common thing here, it is the good *noita*, a witch, but with freckles, a neckerchief, very brightly dressed. Most probably, this costume is easiest to make. With freckles and a braid. My mum always dressed me up like this" (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021).

3.2 Festivities of traditional culture

Juhannus, the summer solstice, stands out in the Finnish festivity culture. It is actively celebrated, and this has been observed by the Russian youth living in Finland. An interviewee, when describing solstice celebration in Finland, pointed to the individualism inherent in Finnish mentality: "[..] *Juhannus*, we have this festival, then they [Finns] celebrate wholeheartedly, and even then [only] together with the family. They always celebrate by themselves" (Aleksandr, male, 20 years old, student, November 13, 2021). A bonfire, staying awake all night, alcohol and fun were mentioned as attributes of summer solstice: "There is usually a large bonfire, and... bonfires are made in all cities, in all possible places, people don't sleep and just drink a lot. Nobody sleeps. Everybody is having fun" (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021).

In the case of the summer solstice, it was evident that the Russian youth were open to the host country's festive culture, but at the same time, these young people remained faithful to their heritage culture. "We celebrate Finnish festivities in summer. We also celebrate Russian festivities. It is sort of our tradition" (Aleksandr, male, 20 years old, student, November 13, 2021). Russian young people have celebrated the summer solstice together with relatives of their own age and have gained new experience: "Over the past two years, I was part of my sisters' company, that is, together with their [Russian-speaking] friends, I had fun together with my sisters throughout the night. We just sat, had fun, welcomed the dawn... Very peacefully. Having fun, peacefully, keeping an eye on the bonfire. I didn't celebrate [the summer solstice] before" (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021). Young people did not talk about other traditions related to the celebration of *Juhannus*, thus implying that they are not familiar with these traditions: "Q: What is the traditional food of this festivity? A: There is no such food, I think. No such food. None" (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021).

Russian immigrant groups do not organise a joint celebration of the summer solstice. On the one hand, this could be explained by the vacation period that makes it difficult to organise group events. On the other hand, this points to the desire of the Russian community to preserve, first and foremost, its traditional culture, for instance, by organising the celebration of Maslenica. Speaking about Maslenica and the related activities, the group leader emphasised the openness of the Finns: "Even Finns look forward to it [Maslenica]" (Veronika, female, 55 years old, school student, October 11, 2021). The local government has allowed the group to organise this celebration in the city square, sports stadium or at a course for skiing. This illustrates

both the scope of the event and the enthusiastic response of Russian immigrants and the Finnish community. When describing the celebration, the group leader pointed to the particularly fascinating atmosphere of Maslenica: "We make it loud, cheerful, with music and [folk] dances on the street, with the obligatory pancakes and different bright elements" (Valentina, female, 55 years old, group leader, October 11, 2021). Such an extensive celebration requires financial support, and the group has often encountered obstacles, but it has always coped with them: "When we are very short of money, we, for example, cannot invite anybody, organise a musical show, then we organise just an open sports day, but it is still Maslenica" (Valentina, female, 55 years old, group leader, October 11, 2021). The interview data suggest that it is the Russian traditional culture that makes the local community of the host country interested in it and creates a favourable environment for intercultural dialogue.

3.3 Festivities of popular culture

Halloween, having originated in the Irish traditional culture, has strengthened in the Western culture as a phenomenon of mass popular culture, and it is also present in Finland. It is an indicator of the contradictions in the Russian immigrant community. First, the attitude towards Halloween marks a dividing line between the host country's society and the Russian community in Finland. According to the group leader, Halloween reveals "wide divergences in cultural codes when the Russian cultural code is fundamentally different from the Finnish [code]. Then some kind of difficulties arise, especially when family traditions clash" (Olga, female, 52 years old, group leader, October 26, 2021).

Second, Halloween brings to light the diversity of views among Russian immigrants. The group leader, who organises Halloween events, explained that "a couple of people don't celebrate [Halloween], in principle, due to various religious considerations. And, look, the children of my group, for example, don't attend this celebration, although we prepared for it together" (Olga, female, 52 years old, group leader, October 26, 2021). The Russian youth take individual decisions regarding their participation in Halloween activities, even if the celebration is organised by the group. However, the dismissive attitude of Orthodox believers towards Halloween has not affected the relations between Russian immigrant groups. "A large share of the [Russian] diaspora attends church, they organise services in Russian here, and children also attend them. Look, they [children] will not come to celebrate Halloween, but they will participate in other events. [..] We are closely linked together, for example, we organise camps in their [Orthodox believers] base" (Olga, female, 52 years old, group leader, October 26, 2021).

The leader of another group has observed that "our young people actively engaged in Halloween celebration at one time. But they celebrated for two or three years and then ceased to do so" (Valentina, female, 55 years old, group leader, October 11, 2021). She could not explain why Russian youth living in Finland have lost interest in Halloween, but she saw it in a positive light: "We are glad. Such a festivity… it is not our festivity" (Valentina, female, 55 years old, group leader, October 11, 2021). According to the interview data, this festivity is not very popular in Finland; therefore, the younger generation of Russian immigrants does not actively engage in its celebration: "At Halloween [..] I never dressed up. That is, I arrived [at school] as usual. Somebody had dressed up awfully. But since half of the pupils didn't dress up, I somehow didn't notice this festivity, it somehow hasn't been successful. But there were attempts [to celebrate]" (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021).

The New Year is at the heart of the Russian festivity culture; therefore, young people were particularly emotional when talking about this festivity. "I love the New Year, but I always feel that the New Year could be made more festive [*prazdnichnym*]. I think that my friends or their families usually don't consider it a very important festivity, but I have fun organising a big New Year celebration" (Lermontov, female, 23 years old, student, November 19, 2021). The statement that "both the Finnish and Russian" New Years are celebrated (Aleksandr, male, 20 years old, student, November 13, 2021) demonstrated the festivity celebration habits specific to Russian culture: "We are trying to celebrate a Russian-style New Year as far as it's possible" (Lermontov, female, 23 years old, student, November 19, 2021). Interviewees have noticed a significant difference in how this festivity is celebrated in Finnish and Russian cultures. "The Russian New Year – it's a great, more magnificent festivity [*bolshe prazdnichniy*]. It has more *fejerverk*, there is more of everything. But the Finnish [New Year] is much calmer, people just sit together for a while and then carry on doing their own things or do something together with their friends" (Aleksandr, male, 20 years old, student, November 13, 2021).

Being aware of cultural differences, interviewees pointed to several elements which differentiate the New Year celebration typical of the Russian culture from the Finnish culture. First, the time when the New Year sets in was mentioned, as Finland and Russia are in different time zones. Therefore, the New Year is celebrated twice, that is, according to the Moscow time in the family circle and then according to the Finnish time outside the family. "Q: According to which time do you celebrate the New Year? A: First according to the Moscow time, I think, an hour earlier, but then according to the Finnish [time]. Q: What time do you fire petards on the street? A: Look, immediately when it's twelve o'clock according to the Finnish time, we raise our glasses and then we go out to the street, we watch fireworks, fire [petards]" (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021).

Second, watching Russian TV programmes was mentioned as an element of the New Year celebration typical of Russian culture. It should be added that Russian young people living in Finland gradually distance themselves from watching these programmes. "Parents just have a tradition of listening to the speech made by [Russia's] president, always on the New Year eve" (Aleksandr, male, 20 years old, student, November 13, 2021). The attitude towards watching Russian TV marked a hidden conflict of generational values. "Q: Do you watch Russian TV on the New Year eve? A: Last year my mum switched it on, but then it was just on all the time [*krutilsa*], and we did something else... I wanted to listen to music or something like that. My mum decides, more or less, she says, look, let's switch on, watch them welcome the New Year in Moscow" (Lermontov, female, 23 years old, student, November 19, 2021).

Third, contrary to the political aspect of welcoming the New Year in which young people have little interest, the consumption of "cult" films produced by the Russian film industry at the turn of the year is willingly adopted: "I and my mum watched the "Irony of Fate"" (Lermontov, female, 23 years old, student, November 19, 2021).

Fourth, in cases where Christmas is not celebrated on December 25, the aspect of family spirit becomes more evident during the New Year celebration: "Q: Do you have guests on the New Year eve? A. No, it has always been just family celebration" (Alisa, female, 19 years old, student, December 1, 2021). Interviewees are pleased to welcome the New Year in the family circle: "I love very much to celebrate the New Year together with my family, at least partially, but the family has to be together. Of course, often that is simply not possible, as everybody has his/her own family and

it is impossible to bring everyone together. But we willingly celebrate the New Year together with those who can come" (Alisa, female, 19 years old, student, December 1, 2021). However, the family is not the only environment for welcoming the New Year, as young people admit that they "can entertain or do something else together with friends on the New Year eve… For example, go somewhere" (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021). However, the family environment is exactly what young people long for; therefore, their memories were nostalgic: "Some time ago we celebrated the New Year together with granddad and granny in Petersburg. Then somebody visited us, but didn't stay long – just wished a happy New Year and left to go about his/her own business. Frankly, I miss those times when all our family was together: granny, granddad and guests who arrived and left. All this had a special atmosphere" (Alisa, female, 19 years old, student, December 1, 2021).

Fifth, welcoming the New Year according to the "old style" is an element differentiating the Russian festivity culture. Although people in Russia and the Russian diaspora often celebrate the New Year according to the Julian calendar as well, the interview data suggest that this habit is disappearing gradually in Russian families living in Finland. "Q: Have you heard about the "old New Year"? A: Well, I've heard, but we never celebrate it. When the "old New Year" is over, we remove decorations, the Christmas tree. It is another festivity when you can have a drink, celebrate again. It is a festivity for Russians, but we in Finland somehow never celebrate it" (Maria, female, 19 years old, student, December 10, 2021).

3.4 Historical remembrance days

May 9 stands out among the other remembrance days of Russia's history with its political and ideological character. The celebration of the end of World War II or the Victory Day on May 9 was introduced in 1965. The position adopted by the leaders of two groups is differing with regard to the continuation of this tradition in the Russian diaspora in Finland. The leader of one group underlined in particular that 9 May is "celebrated" (Valentina, female, 55 years old, group leader, October 11, 2021). By contrast, the leader of the other group was opposed to a targeted use of the Victory Day in Russia's ideology. She explained that the celebration of May 9 in Finland "is directly linked to the fact that Russians living here watch Russian TV and that the volume of propaganda crosses borders [*zashkalivayet*]. And parents, naturally, pass on their attitudes to their children" (Olga, female, 52 years old, group leader, October 26, 2021). As a result of the politisation of history in Russia, the celebration of May 9 has turned into a secular religion [28]. Being aware of the problem, the leader of the second group explained that she treats the Victory Day "with dignity and respect [*s pochteniyem, s trepetom*]" (Olga, female, 52 years old, group leader, October 26, 2021). However, the "exaggeration when children are dressed in uniforms of soldiers and required to do things adults do, which they [children] actually don't understand" (Olga, female, 52 years old, group leader, October 26, 2021) is not acceptable to her. Given that the objections to the celebration of the Victory Day may give rise to emotionally charged discussions in the community of Russians living in Finland, the group leader avoids expressing her position actively: "We sort of sidestep this topic. [..] We, rather, do it not because we have doubts, but we just don't want any tensions, we don't want any stress" (Olga, female, 52 years old, group leader, October 26, 2021).

The way that the supporters of the leader of the first group celebrate May 9 reveals a desire to find a balance between the use of the Victory Day for the purposes of

propaganda and paying tribute to those who lost their lives in World War II: "There is a place 80 kilometres from here where Soviet soldiers, who died in captivity, are supposedly buried. [..] This is our common place where we get together on 9 May. We clean it up, care for it, lay flowers, light candles, since memory is memory, whatever it is. This is a place where to come and think about the world free of it [war], about friendship among the neighbouring countries living side by side. They must make friends, since a war is the most terrible thing that can happen. [..] Buses full of people hit the road, it's just a place of remembrance" (Valentina, female, 55 years old, group leader, October 11, 2021). Although efforts are made to involve masses of people in the celebration of May 9 ("buses full of people hit the road"), the response is not overwhelming, as people have an opportunity to watch live coverage of the Victory Day celebration in Moscow on Russian TV: "When we are at home, we watch the parade on the Red Square, sometimes I make a dish of Russian cuisine together with my mum. We listen to Putin's speech" (Anna, female, 20 years old, student, November 17, 2021). There is no intergenerational conflict in this particular case; that is, young people do not reject the Victory Day celebrated by the older generation and do not consider that the celebration should be abandoned. However, there are indications that Russian young people living in Finland distance themselves from this event. One of the interviewees said: "9 May is sort of festivity, it is celebrated in Russia, it means nothing to me" (Lola, female, 21 years old, student, December 14, 2021). Festivity culture is one of the factors determining self-identification of the Russian youth living in Finland. "According to festivities, I consider myself to be more Finnish, and I, probably, don't have the feelings Russians have with regard to 9 May" (Bil, male, 34 years old, ITC specialist, December 12, 2021).

Although interviews were conducted before or after the celebration of Finland's Independence Day on December 6, both group leaders and young people mentioned it only when answering the questions directly asked by the researcher. Interviewees are of the opinion that historical remembrance days, including the Independence Day, are marked in Finland without the magnitude characteristic of other cultures. Young people compare the celebration of this holiday in Finland with practices in other countries where crowds of people are attracted. "The magnitude of this celebration cannot be compared to that of the Independence Day celebration in Russia or the USA. In Finland, the magnitude is smaller, much smaller" (Aleksandr, male, 20 years old, student, November 13, 2021). Given that Finnish festivity culture is neither politicised nor oriented towards the mobilisation of the masses, interviewees have not witnessed an active Independence Day celebration at educational institutions: "The only time when it [the Independence Day] was celebrated, it was when Finland celebrated its centenary. Then it was marked at school" (Veronika, female, 19 years old, school student, October 14, 2021).

Flags in the streets and a holiday from school and work were mentioned as attributes of Finland's Independence Day (Veronika, female, 19 years old, school student, October 14, 2021). The interviewee said that "something like a parade is organised in Helsinki, the capital" (Veronika, female, 19 years old, school student, October 14, 2021). When asked why it is not a big celebration for the Finns, an interviewee offered his reflections: "It is a riddle for me, because Finns are nevertheless rather patriotic, but why are they so calm during the celebration? I don't know, maybe there is something in Finnish culture that makes Finns celebrate in a more down-to-earth format. The New Year – it is a major festivity for everyone, but other festivities are not. All people celebrate their festivities very calmly. This is probably related to their culture, mentality" (Aleksandr, male, 20 years old, student, November 13, 2021).

The celebration of Finland's Independence Day is unattractive to Russian immigrants; therefore, it appears that their participation is low. When asked: "Did you attend the events organised on the occasion of Finland's Independence Day in this city or in Helsinki?", interviewees provided a short answer: "No!" The following obstacles to participation were mentioned: the distance from celebration venues: "I live far away from the [city] centre, Helsinki is very far away from here" (Oleg, male, 46 years old, group leader, December 10, 2021); emotional estrangement: "I feel that the Victory Day on 9 May is my festivity" (Anna, female, 20 years old, student, November 17, 2021); the lack of information about events: "Some events are organised by the city administration" (Oleg, male, 46 years old, group leader, December 10, 2021); and an opportunity to watch the celebration of Finland's Independence Day remotely: "We watch [events] on television, we see the reception by the president" (Oleg, male, 46 years old, group leader, October 10, 2021). Russian immigrants have adopted the widespread practice of Finnish society to closely follow the reception by the president on TV and assess the attire and behaviour of participants in the event [29].

Russian young people in Finland do not actively engage in the celebration of Finland's Independence Day on an individual basis, but events are nevertheless organised in Russian immigrant groups. "6 December is the Independence Day here. We'll definitely have a public… a kind of… an event, organised by ourselves, we also invite some guests. And Finns willingly come to us, as our celebration is a little livelier, different" (Valentina, female, 55 years old, group leader, October 11, 2021). On the one hand, the willingness of Russians living in Finland to celebrate festivities of historical and political nature together with the host country's society is emphasised, but on the other hand, the desire to mark them "differently" is apparent. The interviewee expressed her perplexity as to the best way of celebrating this holiday. Finland's Independence Day is also celebrated in the religious group. The group leader said, "[..] it is a very great holiday for Orthodox believers – the Independence Day. Why? Because it's the day of Saint Nicholas the Wonderworker" (Oleg, male, 46 years old, group leader, October 10, 2021). The ethnographic observations made by the researcher confirm this statement. The event of December 6 brought together an unusually large number of participants, and the attributes of religious festival and the historical and political holiday melded during the event organised by the religious group.

4. Discussion

In this chapter, we have tried to find out what the habits, traditions and novelties in the celebration of festivities are telling us about the acculturation orientations of the Russian immigrant youth in Finland. An understanding of how immigrants interpret their behaviour and attitudes is like a window looking upon both their social positioning and self-identification. The qualitative interviews conducted during the fieldwork allow us to have a bottom-up understanding of how Russian immigrant youth "take root" in the host country, how the new understandings gained in the interaction with another culture are accepted and what is the function of heritage culture in the acculturation process.

The study conducted among Russian youth in Finland provides proof that acculturation should be conceptually understood as a process; respectively, it is necessary to "shift from a focus on developmental end-states (like "integration" and

"competence") towards a more process-oriented notion of acculturation that can account for situated, negotiated and often contested developmental trajectories [30]". Mutual adjustment of people coming from different cultural backgrounds is a complex and long process involving both cultural and psychological changes. Therefore, social psychology concepts can be helpful when studying acculturation.

The understanding of the dynamics of the acculturation process can be improved by the social representation theory [31–33]. It explains that an individual's behaviour and relationships with representatives of one or another culture are determined by social representations as collectively constructed systems of meanings. In other words, social representations are socially cognitive systems of values, ideas, beliefs and practices helping an individual in self-orientation as well as orientation in the world [34]. When interacting with a different culture, immigrants meet new social representations and formulate their attitude towards them. Moscovici has observed that, depending on the social setting, individuals may have a different and even absolutely opposite attitude towards one and the same thing or phenomenon. To denote that, Moscovici has introduced the term of *cognitive polyphasia* [35]. It helps us understand that, depending on specific cultural and social and political aspects, immigrants balance between assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation. To classify immigrants according to their acculturation strategies would be an overly simplified approach; yet the data obtained within the framework of our research enable to conclude that Russian immigrant youth balance mainly between assimilation and integration.

Interaction with different cultures yields a variety of identity positions ([36] p. 148), and an individual must find a solution for such polyphony. This results in identity hybridity [37]. The findings among Russian youth in Finland coincide with the conclusions of the research conducted elsewhere. The studies of immigrant youth confirm that biculturalism is characteristic of the young generation of immigrants [38–40]. Researchers have developed theoretical proof that migrants may identify themselves with two cultures at a time [4, 41]. This study conducted among Russian youth in Finland provides an empirical proof that immigrants participate in two cultures: they accept the host culture without giving up the heritage culture. In the case of Russian youth in Finland, we can talk about conformity with Berry's bidimensional acculturation model [8], which is characteristic of the acculturation of individuals in an environment of two different cultural contacts, where the acculturation strategy is determined by the dynamic relationships between an individual's willingness to preserve the ethnic heritage culture and participation in a non-native culture. The existence of biculturalism in the Finnish immigrant environment is determined by the fact that the country is still on its way to a multicultural society where a tridimensional cultural model exists.

Acculturation strategies are unstable, and they are not mutually exclusive [42]. Moreover, the latest research suggests that new acculturation strategies are developing all the time. Under the impact of globalisation, multiple cultural affiliations are emerging [43, 44], as technological innovations provide opportunities of interacting with other cultures in an indirect or intermittent way, thereby resulting in a new acculturation strategy – remote acculturation [45–47]. In the case of Russian young people in Finland, we cannot talk of a remote acculturation orientation, because their interests do not reach beyond the Russian and Finnish cultures. This has been primarily determined by the language proficiency. Fieldwork observations suggest that the Russian young people have a considerably poorer English language proficiency than their Finnish peers, because they spend a lot of free time with

Russian speaking peers and choose Russian language products on social networks, music platforms and media. Hence, the Americanisation characteristic of the Finnish youth culture [48] has not reached the Russian immigrant youth yet.

Host country society expects assimilation or at least integration of immigrants, while immigrants prefer integration [49, 50]. Moreover, the willingness of integration is higher with respect to the well-being indicators (life satisfaction, self-esteem and social adjustment) than with respect to culture [4]. This enables us to understand why the immigrants' orientation towards integration still does not yield the expected results. Those who are oriented towards integration find out that the values of the heritage culture and host country differ. In the case of festivities, the young Russian immigrants in Finland want to celebrate the festivities loudly, splendidly and pompously, and they are perplexed as to why the Finns do not have major celebrations even to mark Finland's National Independence Day on December 6. One culture singles out solidarity as a value, whereas the other praises individuality, which the leader of one group conceptualised using the term of "cultural code".

Interviews with the young Russians highlighted changes in acculturation orientations depending on the age group. Telling about their first experience of studies at a Finnish school, young people recall their willingness to be like the Finnish children, thus confirming their orientation towards assimilation. During the years of their adolescence, however, they felt as labelled "other" mainly because of their language proficiency, hence they changed their acculturation orientation. They started to stick deliberately to the heritage culture; respectively, their orientation changed from assimilation to integration. With regard to future research, this study conducted among the Russian youth in Finland suggests that it would be worthwhile to focus more actively on children acculturation problems, using the qualitative approach, which would enable a more in-depth understanding of the social challenges faced by children in the acculturation process. Developmental research shows that children see the importance of social categories (ethnicity, gender etc.) and tend to formulate their social identity [51, 52]. Acquiring a social identity is one of the components of children's development. Previous findings show that during early school-age children are exposed to interaction with various social identities and start understanding the relationships between them [53]. Through this experience, they acquire multiple social identities. When deciding, for example, who they want to be friends with, what music they want to listen to and what books they want to read, children start making choices between their heritage culture and the host culture. In order to discover the acculturation orientations of children, it is important to take an account of their experiences.

5. Conclusion

The acculturation concept developed by cultural anthropologists is used to explore changes occurring in different cultural groups when they interact with each other. Meanwhile, psychologists focus on changes experienced by an individual. The authors of this chapter have viewed acculturation from both the collective and individual perspectives. The sample of this study was drawn from young people – members of Russian-speaking groups, and ethnographic observations were made during group events. By contrast, interviews with some young people revealed deeply individual aspects of acculturation, leading to the conclusion that everybody follows his/her own acculturation path. A conclusion from this study is therefore that the acculturation

process is an individual search for balance between preservation of the heritage culture and integration into the host culture, and this process is affected by many factors.

This chapter discusses the acculturation orientations among the Russian youth in Finland by investigating celebration customs of young people. The experience gained by Russian youth from celebrating festivities shows the course of immigrant acculturation in Finland. Out of four acculturation strategies defined in the academic literature (assimilation, integration, separation and marginalisation), orientations towards assimilation, integration and separation were identified among the interviewed youth during the fieldwork. The data obtained from the qualitative study do not provide evidence supporting the fact that marginalisation of the Russian youth might be observed in Finland. This would mean distancing from the host culture and alienation from the origin culture.

The study reveals several indicators of Russian youth acculturation orientation. As regarding assimilation, these indicators are: first, adoption of Finnish festive culture traditions in families through an informed choice, giving up Russian traditions; second, young people's efforts towards learning Finnish at the level of a native speaker and difficulties to answer questions beyond common topics in Russian; third, willingness of young people to celebrate festivities together with their Finnish peers. The indicators of Russian youth's orientation towards integration are: first, celebrating festivities within the family according to Russian traditions, complementing them with elements of Finnish festive culture; second, young people's willingness to acquire Russian alongside Finnish to talk freely about various topics in Russian; third, the practice of inviting Finnish friends, acquaintances and the local organisations to festivities of Russian traditional culture; fourth, young people's willingness to broaden the circle of their friends, which consists mainly of Russian-speaking youth, with the local Finnish peers.

The issue of cultural inclusiveness, exclusiveness and the essentialisation of cultural identities directly relates to the family which assists in providing the next generation with the ideal sociocultural inclusivity and helps prevent "culture wars" [54]. During the process of analysing the data, a hidden intergenerational conflict was identified. It is highlighted by the acculturation process: young people move away from the heritage culture, but parents try to stick to it. Although young people did not talk about conflicts with their parents during interviews, data suggest that views on the value of festive traditions vary between generations. Given that acculturation among youth occurs at a faster rate and more easily compared to their parents [55], there is a risk of stirring up an intergenerational conflict. Sharp intergenerational dissonance that might lead to intergenerational "culture lag" [56] was not identified in the study conducted in Finland. However, this conclusion should not be generalised. Data of one interview reveal a sharp intergenerational conflict in the family: the interviewee condemns his/her parents' decision to immigrate to Finland and rejects their encouragement to integrate into Finland, threatening to burn his/her Finnish passport. This individual case shows that sometimes, alongside the dominant assimilation and integration orientations, the orientation towards separation can be observed. It should be added that the data obtained from an interview with one of the group leaders, who particularly emphasised "our" in her narrative, show the orientation towards separation. By making a distinction between "we" and "they", separation is unavoidable.

The data presented in this chapter show that acculturation is not only the issue of accommodation of two cultures; it also involves other aspects that are frequently ignored in exploring acculturation. The interviewed Russian immigrant

youth in Finland pointed to their religious identity that determines the dates when they celebrate their festivities or their political position that determines their participation/nonparticipation in historical remembrance events. This confirms that acculturation is a complex process linked to various systems and fields of social relations, including religion and politics.

This study shows that, in the case of migration, intercultural dialogue does not take place outside an individual but between his/her various identities (a Finn, Russian, Orthodox believer, Lutheran, European, non-European etc.). The experiences of celebrating festivities revealed by young people illustrate that the dialogue between identities is profoundly personal, situational and strongly influenced by the festive heritage culture. Strictly speaking, these conclusions are valid only for the young people who participated in the study. However, there are reasons to believe that the acculturation orientations identified here might be found among other Russian immigrant young people as well.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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Chapter 8

Disappearing Community and Preserved Identity: Indigenous Gottscheers in Slovenia

Ksenija Šabec

Abstract

The chapter is a case study of the indigenous Gottscheers in contemporary Slovenia. They were one of the eldest German ethnic communities outside of German and Austrian territory and the only agrarian German linguistic island on Slovenian territory after the WW1. However, their settlements and cultural landscape and heritage had been wiped out almost entirely due to the Gottscheers' wartime and postwar emigration/eviction (mainly to the USA and Canada), the WW2, and post-war decay, marginalization, depopulation as well as village and cultural monument destruction and Slovenianization. According to the UNESCO Atlas of the World's languages in Danger, the Gottscheer language is defined as "critically endangered". The number of today's Gottscheers in Slovenia is small, less than 300, or around 1000 including descendants and sympathizers. However, on the other hand, contemporary *Association of Cultural Societies of the German Speaking Ethnic Communities in Slovenia* as an umbrella organi¬zation of predominantly Styrian Germans aspires to acquire legal minority status for the German-speaking community in Slovenia (including Gottscheers). The aim of the chapter is therefore to detect contemporary perceptions of a marginalized and disappearing Gottscheers' community and mechanisms to preserve and finally incorporate its identity into the Slovenian (and broader) cultural space and collective memory.

Keywords: Gottscheers, identity, language, emigration, minority

1. Introduction

Indigenous or native Gottscheers, also referred to as Gottscheers or Gottscheer Germans, were one of the eldest German ethnic or national[1] communities outside

[1] While we are aware that the terms "ethnic" and "national" bear different meanings on an analytical level (nation being a politically conscious ethnic group), we use them as synonyms for the purposes of this text. This "arbitrary" use of concepts stems from the names of particular societies, associations, and communities (e.g. the *Association of Cultural Societies of the German Speaking Ethnic Communities*) and a similar lack of coherence in scientific terminology. The German community in Slovenia in particular is defined through various names. Scientific literature proposes the German-speaking national community or the German national community as the most appropriate terms ([1], Komac in Polzer et al. 2002, [2, 3]).

of German and Austrian territory and the only agrarian German linguistic island on Slovenian territory after WWI. However, these settlements and their cultural landscape and heritage had been wiped out almost entirely due to the Gottscheers' emigration/eviction (mainly to the USA and Canada), WWII, and post-war decay, depopulation, marginalization, as well as village and cultural monument destruction and slovenianization. While there is a significant amount of literature available on the topic of the Gottscheer region and its indigenous inhabitants, studies on its contemporary dwellers are relatively scarce. This chapter provides a case study of this indigenous community from the point of view of those individuals, ever fewer today, who belong to this community and are (or were) active in particular Gottscheer societies or engage in Gottscheer-related topics as amateurs and descendants of Gottscheer parents, or whose one or both parents are Gottscheer, and identify themselves as such, but do not necessarily have any connections to the Gottscheer community or any particular interest in the topic.[2] The purpose is to identify how indigenous Gottscheers or their descendants perceive Gottscheer identity on an individual and social level, how (if at all) they identify with it, what is the significance of cultural heritage and the Gottscheer dialect, what mechanisms should preserve them, and finally how Gottscheers and their identity should be incorporated in the Slovenian (and broader) cultural space and collective memory.

Methodologically, the study is mostly based on semi-structured interviews with people whose life stories are directly or indirectly related to the Gottscheer community. The data collection was carried out in two ways: the main representatives of two Gottscheer societies and one institute were interviewed, while the rest of the interlocutors were obtained mostly by the snowball method. Two out of eleven interviewees[3] are not of Gottscheer origin: one is a precious information source about this community, having grown up in a Gottscheer village, having studied Gottscheer issues, and being familiar with the dialect; the second one is a Styrian German and a member of the *Association of Cultural Societies of the German Speaking Ethnic Communities in Slovenia*, which includes the indigenous Gottscheer society, and, as an umbrella organization, aspires to acquire legal minority status for the German-speaking community in Slovenia (including Gottscheers). The interviews were conducted in various places in the Kočevska region, in Ljubljana, and Maribor and lasted from 30 to 90 minutes. The methodological starting point that framed the choice of interviews was that identity issues and cultural needs of indigenous Gottscheers primarily manifest themselves through the existence of cultural societies of the community. However, fieldwork in which two societies and one institute are studied revealed a discrepancy between the two leading cultural societies as a major backlash. The two societies differed in the ways they were run, in the priorities of their programs, in the amount of funding they received in Slovenia and abroad, as well as in terms of Gottscheer identity and dialect ("German" vs. "Slovenian"), which was the reason many representative members of the society declined participation in this study, either because they were no longer active members or because they were in the process of exiting and/or transferring to another society.

[2] The case study was executed in 2012 by the *Center for Cultural and Religious Studies* at the Faculty of Social Sciences (University of Ljubljana) with the author of this chapter as the principal researcher and commissioned by the *Cultural Diversity and Human Rights Service of the Ministry of Education, Science, Culture, and Sports of the Republic of Slovenia*.

[3] Due to anonymization, all interviewees in the chapter are listed in the feminine grammatical form.

2. The cultural historical context of indigenous Gottscheers

Gottschee is a region in contemporary south-eastern Slovenia; until 1941, Gottscheers had populated this region, for around 600 years, forming a relatively consolidated ethnically mixed island, located on around 800 km^2 of land in the regions of Dolenjska and Bela krajina. The region changed significantly in the thirteenth century due to internal colonization. Slovenian inhabitants spread to the slopes around the region, which were more accessible and easier to cultivate, while their advances into the heart of Gottschee were much slower, as the forest-covered and rocky Karst terrain was not as accessible. Judging by old Slovenian place names, there had only been around 30 Slovenian settlements in the main valleys and transport routes of the region (Kočevsko polje, the Črmošnjice valley and the Gotenica-Kočevska Reka valley).

2.1 German colonization of Gottschee and the Pre-WWII Period

In the 1340s, the Ortenburg counts started populating this scarcely inhabited region with German colonists from their estates in Carinthia, mostly for economic reasons. But the core of German colonization took place in 1349–1363, involving migrants from Franconia and Thüringen. According to Ferenc ([4], 19; [5]), Gottscheer colonists were the last German agricultural settlers on Slovenian territory. Later, Germans would only move to towns, markets and larger villages as officials, miners, manufacturers, and merchants. It was during this period of German colonization of Gottschee that the center of the region, Kočevje, had first been identified as *Gotsche* in a document from 1363, later lending the name to the entire region.[4]

It appears that what followed this external colonization was internal colonization, which entailed shrinking and gaining more farmland, and the emergence of new settlements. One hundred and thirty-seven settlements existed in the area in the 1570s, accounting for around 9000 inhabitants. Turkish incursions, dire economic and social circumstances, as well as the resulting riots of the Gottscheer peasants hindered the development of the region in those times. Due to the Turkish attacks on the region from the first Turkish incursion in 1469 to the end of the sixteenth century, the inhabitants of this newly-populated land were at least partially displaced, particularly in regions near the river Kolpa and Kostel, their living space taken up by the Uskoks.[5] In 1492, Austrian Caesar Friedrich III wished to aid the impoverished economy, granting the region peddling rights, i.e. the right to trade their woodenware, cattle, and cloth freely in Croatia and other lands. Gottscheer peasants lost this privileged position they had under the Ortenburg nobles (free inheritance, which could be sold or exchanged, privileges related to urbar duties and serf duties) during the rule of the counts of Celje who took over Gottschee after the end of the Ortenburg dynasty in 1418, and never managed to regain it under later noble landlords (the Thurn, Ungnad, and Blagaj dynasties), who had rented Gottschee from the Habsburgs, which had inherited the land. In 1641, the Turjaks,

[4] There are two explanations for the Slovenian name, Kočevje: the first one relates the name to the word "hoja" ("fir tree") (Hočevje), and the second to the word "koča" ("hut") (Kočevje).

[5] The Uskoks is the name given to groups of people who, between the 15th in 17th centuries, retreated from their homes due to the invasions of the Ottomans. Orthodox Serbs were predominated among Uskoks living in the Vojna krajina area, that is the area in today's Croatia and the southern part of Slovenia, which was formed as a result of defense against Turkish incursions.

who had been promoted to dukes, bought Gottscheer lands from the Khisls. Thus, Gottschee was turned into a duchy. According to Karl-Markus Gauss's observations ([6], 49) on this period: "The Celje counts were bad, the Thurn counts were bad, the Croatian von Blagaj counts were bad, but the Habsburgs were the worst, robbing Gottschee, until the settlers were completely impoverished, then leaving them on their own in their battles with the Turks, and finally pawning the land to various changing landlords."

In 1809–1813, the region was occupied by the French, resulting in an exodus of 56 Gottscheer families to Banat.[6] During the reign of Maria Theresa and Joseph II, Gottschee was part of the Novo mesto district and the greater province of Ljubljana. According to ethnographic data collected by the Austrian monarchy in 1857, there were 22,898 German residents in the region in the mid-nineteenth century, the peak being in 1855, right before a breakout of cholera in the area. In 1880, 18,958 out of 21,000 inhabitants of Gottschee were German, 98–109 villages inhabited exclusively by the German population. "In 1921 and 1931, Yugoslav statistics which only took mother tongue into account for censuses, only found 42 and 31 villages with no Slovenian residents, respectively, and the so-called nationality register of 1936 speaks of 47 villages with no Slovenian population" ([4], 23).

In the 1880s, the agrarian crisis forced the inhabitants of Gottschee into seeking profit mainly resorting to seasonal jobs and, particularly after 1880 and at the turn of the century, mass emigration, mainly to the United States of America. This caused a continuous drop in population in the region in 1880–1921 ([7], 15). Peddling was also one of the motives for permanent emigration of numerous Gottscheer families to neighboring regions. Before WWII, it turned out that there were more Gottscheers in the USA than in Gottschee, which is why numerous farms died out and villages were displaced ([4], 27; [8], 104–106). Furthermore, the second half of the nineteenth century saw a nationalist revival among the Gottscheers, mostly due to the activities of German immigrants and the *Deutscher Schulverein* and *Südmark* associations. In March 1891, Vienna started publishing the *Mitteilungen des Vereines der Deutschen aus Gottschee* biweekly, later known as the *Gottscheer Mitteilungen*, which was followed by *Gottscheer Boten*. Upon German request, the Austrian parliamentary elections reform of 1907 introduced a special Gottschee electoral district, allowing Gottscheers to elect their representative in the provincial and state councils.

This is one of the reasons the Gottscheers felt at a great disadvantage after the disintegration of Austria–Hungary in 1918, so much that they first wished to join German Austria, and later requested the establishment of their own "Gottschee republic" as a US protectorate. Moreover, Yugoslav authorities disbanded the German national council for Gottschee, as well as almost all of their associations, abolished the German higher gymnasium, woodwork school, the German student dormitory, and gradually also German schools and German departments in Slovenian schools (due to a similar attitude taken by Austrian Germans in relation to Carinthian Slovenians). Furthermore, Slovenian was introduced into German schools as a mandatory subject, public use of the German language was restricted, and German place names were slovenianized. In 1929, after the dictatorship, the Gottscheer political party (*the Gottscheer farmer party*) had also been disbanded ([4], 27). All of these measures contributed to a fast and massive affinity towards Nazism, developed by the Gottscheers

[6] Banat is ethnically mixed historic region of eastern Europe, bounded by Transylvania and Walachia in the east, by the Tisza River in the west, by the Mures River in the north, and by the Danube River in the south.

in the 1930s. According to INT3 (2012, September 10)[7] and INT6 (2012, October 4)[8], since the disintegration of Austria–Hungary, the pressure of slovenianization had been an important factor that—coupled with strong propaganda, a desire for a better life and a fear of moving to southern Italy—contributed to "voluntary" emigration of such a large number of Gottscheers in 1941 (INT3 (2012, September 10); INT6 (2012 October 4); Makarovič 2008, 23, 25; Gauss 2006, 53). Slovenianization or the aversion of the newly formed Yugoslav state against "everything German", as well as the loss of privileges that Gottscheers had been accustomed to in Austria–Hungary, is a topic that requires further research, in order to clarify why the emigration of Gottscheers in 1941–1942 took place on such a large scale and only appeared as "voluntary" (INT6 2012, October 4). On the other hand, the *Gottscheer Zeitung* had been published by Gottscheers in Kočevje from 1918 till 1941.

Allegedly, there had been a high degree of cooperation between the Gottscheers and the Slovenian population until the rise of Nazism. However, after the new Gottscheer authorities expressed a Nazi affinity and organized the Gottscheers according to the Nazi model in 1936, national dissonance had begun to become more and more apparent. Since autumn 1939, Gottscheer authorities had established 25 district groups of the *Schwabisch-German Cultural Association* (SDKB), which the vast majority of Gottscheers had joined before the occupation that followed two years later. The same number of *sturms*[9] and the same number of armed departments of *Volksdeutsche Mannschaft* were also formed, as well as seven partly armed units of security services, and 25 groups of the youth organization ([4], 29; [5], 29–112).

2.2 Gottscheer resettlement and the end of the war

Gottscheers were not thrilled about the Italian occupation of Gottschee, having expected Gottschee to become part of the German occupied territories. As early as on 23 April 1941, Gottscheer ambassadors had secured an agreement with Himmler in Bruck on the Mur, about the resettlement of Gottscheers into the German Reich, directly to the new farms by the Sava and Sotla rivers, extending to around 100 km in length and 10–15 km in width, without bridging stops in resettlement camps, unlike other German resettlers ([4], 31). By expelling almost all of the Slovenian population (around 37,000), as well as Croatians and others into around 15 German camps, this would create a German bastion; in the process, around three Slovenian farms would be united to form one German (Gottscheer) resettler's farm.

According to their own census, there were 12,498 Gottscheers living in Gottschee (around 2754 families) in March 1941, spread across 170 villages in four former Yugoslav districts or twelve municipalities, most of the population being farmers and artisans. The central part of the Gottscheer Island was mostly populated by German families, whereas the edges, the valleys, were nationally mixed. Particularly the younger population followed the propaganda of Nazi Gottscheer authorities, whereas older and wealthier urban residents, as well as several clergymen had their doubts. Intimidation (slovenianization, Italian authorities that would move the Gottscheers to southern Italy, …) and even concentration camp threats were common [4, 5, 8]. This atmosphere made the vast majority of

[7] Audio recording of the interview, in the form of raw data, is available from the author.

[8] Audio recording of the interview, in the form of raw data, is available from the author.

[9] Sturm is a Nazi term, meaning a military unit the size of a troop.

Gottscheers (12,147 or 97%) opt for resettlement. After an agreement was signed between the governments of the German Reich and the Italian Kingdom on 31 August 1941, the optants were checked for their race, political views, and health. Only 66 were not allowed to move. The resettlers' property and assets were first taken over by a German association, *Deutsche Unsiedlungstreuhandgesellschaft*, which passed it on to an Italian real estate institution, *Emona*. 11,509 persons, i.e. 2833 families moved between 14 November 1941, and 22 January 1942. Upon arrival, they were disappointed, as they had to live in provisional winter housing units and on temporary estates. In October 1943, former Slovenian farms near the Sava and Sotla rivers housed 10,666 Gottscheers, Gottscheer authorities had been abolished by the Nazi regime (some individuals were sent to the Russian front (INT6 2012, October 4)), Gottscheers now subordinate directly to the Nazi authorities in Brežice. Displaced Gottscheers were therefore put into the position of defense pawns for the south-eastern border of the German Reich. The number of people wishing to return to Gottschee grew steadily, but this wish was not granted by the Nazi leaders ([4], 39, [8], 142–150).

Different fates awaited the Gottscheers at the end of the war in May 1945. Some, particularly women and children were taken to Austria by train, others successfully attempted to flee, while others were detained by Yugoslav authorities, placed in gathering camps (Teharje, Strnišče by Ptuj), and deported to Austria. The regions near the Sava and Sotla rivers were once again populated by the surviving Slovenian deportees, while most Gottscheer houses and villages in the Gottschee region were destroyed and burnt down, Yugoslav authorities having no interest in populating this emptied region with "Germans" again. Now definitely homeless Gottscheers were first temporarily placed into the Mürztal, Kapfenberg, and Wagna camps in Styria, and Feffernitz in Carinthia, and then settled in Austria and Germany, while many left to the USA ([4], 39; [5], 113–170).

According to the population and settlement census of 1948, 83 villages were empty, and some consisted of a mere family of two. After the war, the population of Gottschee was almost entirely different, only just over a quarter of people living in their hometowns in 1953. Postwar immigrants (first from nearby and then from all around Slovenia) had begun to renovate old buildings and build new ones, but only a small percentage of them had actually come to the region to stay. After the war, most of Gottscheer land had been nationalized, and real transformations would only become apparent decades later, as the forest would expand further and further into former farmlands. According to some assessments, ([4], 69, 73; [5], 263–672) the forest eventually covered up an entire quarter, i.e. around 200 km^2 of the former Gottschee region.

3. Cultural heritage, organization, and identity of indigenous Gottscheers

Gottschee cultural heritage that emerged before WWII entailed particular farmer houses, customs, folk beliefs, a dialect and a linguistic geography, folk poetry, art history objects, films and photographs of ecclesiastic books and archive materials. Despite the general readiness of the special German cultural committee that was to take care of the preservation and transportation of these Gottschee cultural items to new settlements from October 1941 to June 1941, few of these plans had been realized successfully.

3.1 Indigenous Gottscheers' cultural heritage

Tradition and conservativeness appear to be the most characteristic traits of Gottscheer heritage. Ecclesiastic architecture did not differ greatly from the one in Slovenian settlements, and there was almost no secular art on the Gottscheer linguistic island. Church monuments, chapels, and signs of various shapes (such as individuals' or neighborhood vows, the memory of cholera) were most prominent. Residential architecture also had its specificities (*inter alia*, the settlements and house types were rather diverse). The houses' interior design also had its peculiarities, just like Gottscheer songs and, to a certain extent, cuisine (INT7 (2012, September 13)[10], INT9 (2012, September 18)[11]). Several factors have made it difficult to do research on some of Gottscheer cultural heritage (folk dances, food, farming tools): the Gottscheers' displacement (to the USA and to other countries, as well as to the regions near the Sava and Sotla rivers during the war), villages, abandoned and destroyed during the war (particularly arsons of settlements by the Italian army, carried out as part of a big Italian offensive in the summer of 1942, when the Italians purposefully burnt down abandoned villages to make it impossible for the partisans to use them for accommodation purposes; as well as arsons carried out by the German army and the Home Guard), post-war conditions and inadequate post-1945 settlement, economic and employment policies, as well as the purposeful ideological destruction and removal of secular and sacred remains. In practice, these factors caused the collapse of the Gottscheer cultural landscape, particularly in Kočevski Rog (due to the Italian offensive) and Kočevska Reka (because the territory was closed down in 1953–1954, when almost all sacred objects and cemeteries were destroyed and removed; Ferenc [4], 55). "Today, [...] at least from the point of view of art history, we can regret that this minority is no longer with us. It is erroneous to only remember the years when the Slovenians and the Germans opposed each other, when there are also centuries to be remembered, when we not only lived by each other's side, but lived with each other" ([4], 95).

The life story of one of the interviewees is a telling example of such Gottscheer–Slovenian cohabitation. She was born to Slovenian parents, who had moved to Gottscheer village Verdreng (Podlesje) from Carinthia and were the only Slovenian family in the village. Despite her Slovenian descent, she learnt the Gottscheer dialect before she learnt Slovenian, as she had spent most of her time playing with Gottscheer children. She had also been accepted into the Gottscheer community, according to the local "cheln" (friendship, camaraderie) custom, and actually spoke Gottscheer to her mother, who replied in Slovenian, for quite a while. She only properly learnt Slovenian in school. This Gottscheer–Slovenian cohabitation lasted until the mid-1930s, when individual Gottscheers had picked up on Nazi ideas and begun inciting people against the Slovenians. This was when the interviewee's family moved to Črni potok, a Slovenian village. As a child, she perceived that move as a great loss, as she had to leave all of her friends behind. She proceeded to study Gottscheer tradition and heritage later and does a lot of translation from the Gottscheer dialect. Knowing the dialect saved her from Auschwitz: the prison commander in Klagenfurt, where she and her mother were stationed before being taken to Auschwitz, noted

[10] Audio recording of the interview, in the form of raw data, is available from the author.

[11] Audio recording of the interview, in the form of raw data, is available from the author.

her knowledge of "German" and relocated her to a youth center in Thüringen (INT1 2012, September 19).[12]

According to Ferenc ([4], 79), "[i]t would probably be difficult to find a similar region in Europe, one whose cultural landscape had undergone such dire transformations as Gottschee." It is the ethnographic museum in Vienna that possesses the biggest collection of items from Gottscheer lives today, and there is a small representational museum in the Občice Gottscheer Cultural Center, established in 1998 and run by the *Society of Native Gottschee Settlers*. The state is aware of the importance of preserving cultural diversity and has been making efforts to ensure the conditions for the preservation of indigenous Gottschee cultural heritage, greatly endangered due to the aging and scarcity of the population in their area of origin. In 2006, the Ministry of Culture's Cultural Diversity and Human Rights Service proposed continuous funding for the preservation of Gottscheer heritage, in the form of annual predetermined sums. This was meant to ensure specialist-oriented and long-term reconstruction of artistic heritage, publication, exhibition, and promotional activities and registration of intangible heritage, particularly language. In 2012, the Ministry of Culture's Cultural Heritage Directorate also produced an assessment of the state of affairs in the domain of Gottscheer cultural heritage, authored by Gojko Zupan. The assessment concludes that the community is dealing with quite peculiar circumstances: the number of Gottscheers is small (less than 300, or around 1000 including descendants and sympathizers), displacement, depopulation, wartime and postwar emigration, village and cultural monument destruction. However, Zupan [9] believes that, considering the abovementioned circumstances, Gottscheer heritage has been exceptionally well-presented since the mid-1990s. The locations of important abandoned Gottscheer villages are marked with explanation boards, maps, and distinct images, which are under the authority of the owners and tourist organizations. Municipalities took care of installing signs for acknowledged cultural monuments. Moreover, Šeškov dom, housing the regional museum Kočevje and a permanent exhibition on Gottscheer history, everyday life, cultural heritage, etc., is a monument of national significance. The state also financed setting up or reconstruction of certain sacral objects and signs. According to Zupan [9], it is impossible to determine the exact amount of funding that Gottscheer societies are receiving for their community, heritage, language, and culture promotion activities, as they are aided by various sources: ministries, the Slovenian Forest Service, private investors, enterprises, and from abroad.

3.2 The organization and cultural needs of indigenous Gottscheers

In this study, we approached the questions of heritage, identity, and cultural needs of indigenous Gottscheers through the perspective of the activities of two Gottscheer cultural associations (*The Society of Native Gottschee Settlers* and the *Peter Kosler Association*). Due to the small size of the community and substantial differences in views expressed by the two societies, the study was supplemented with interviews with Gottscheer descendants, who are not directly involved in society activities, or are not listed as members of these societies, or are professionally involved with Gottscheer heritage and its preservation, and are striving towards connecting cultural activities in the field of Gottscheer heritage and dialect into a more cooperative, synergic and internally coordinated, complementary, but at the same time diverse creative dynamic (*Institute for Preservation of Cultural Heritage Nesseltal Koprivnik*).

[12] Audio recording of the interview, in the form of raw data, is available from the author.

The Society of Native Gottschee Settlers[13] comprises the abovementioned Cultural Center of Native Gottschee Settlers in Občice which is where all of the society's activities take place; the Center also houses a small museum in the attic. The society has a special unit responsible for promoting the Center and tourism. The unit organizes visits and meetings of expatriates in Slovenia, prepares programs for visitor groups from Slovenia and abroad, offers guided tours of the Cultural Center, and guided tours around the surrounding region, where Gottscheers used to live and where there are still remains of Gottscheer villages, sacral monuments (churches, cemeteries, and chapels), natural heritage, and developing industries (such as the Podstenice Beekeeping Museum). Special attention is granted to Gottscheer descendants, who, when possible, are the ones guiding tours around the region where their ancestors used to live. INT7, a member of the society, states (2012, September 13) that Gottschee and their Center were first visited by those "who knew where they were going and why they were going there"; these groups were followed by others, who were not personally connected to this place, but were attracted by the Gottscheer story and the story of this space. Over the past years, schools started appearing in the latter group, too. Often, the Gottscheer topic is linked to the umbrella theme of people within the region that speak different languages and live in their own particular way, such as the Uskoks. "We, who have our homeland, do not know what it means not to have one or to have one somewhere but to be unable to reach it, and not to be part of it anymore. We will never be able to feel that. But this is what the Gottscheers are feeling" (INT7 2012, September 13).

The society has explicit demands regarding formal, official recognition of the status of a German minority; it shares these with the Styrian Germans, which it also cooperates with as part of the abovementioned *Association of Cultural Societies of the German Speaking Ethnic Communities in Slovenia*. According to INT2 (2012, September 18)[14], INT4 (2012, September 18)[15], and INT5 (2012, September 24)[16], only official recognition allows one to ensure legal protection and a dignified attitude of the state and the citizens of the Republic of Slovenia towards the Gottscheers and the Germans left in Slovenia. Namely, among other things, such recognition would be a legal basis to secure legally guaranteed financial means for the societies' activities.

[13] The *Society of Native Gottschee Settlers* (*Gottscheer Altsiedler Verein*) was established in 1992 by Gottscheers from the Črmošnjice-Poljanska valley and is a full member of *Federal Union of European Nationalities* (FUEN), as well as founding member of the *Association of Cultural Societies of the German Speaking Ethnic Communities in Slovenia*. The aims of the society are: cooperation in order to preserve linguistic, cultural, ethnic and architectural characteristics of indigenous Gottscheers that are an important part of the shared reality of Gottscheer–Slovenian history in 1330–1941 and preserving their identity, Gottscheer culture, and the Gottscheer dialect among Gottscheer natives and expatriates; establishing and reinforcing links with the remaining Gottscheers and their descent dents in Slovenia, as well as expatriates and their descendants; collecting historical and contemporary materials about Gottscheers in the past and present, at home and abroad; carrying out educational activities for its members, organizing cultural and social events; cooperating with related societies in Slovenia and abroad; caring about and restoring monuments and other features reminiscent of the existence, culture, and other characteristics of indigenous Gottscheers' life, cooperating with state organs, and with the Catholic church in order to preserve Gottscheer heritage in sacral objects; occasionally, the society also publishes the *Bakh* newspaper in Slovenian and in German.

[14] Audio recording of the interview, in the form of raw data, is available from the author.

[15] Audio recording of the interview, in the form of raw data, is available from the author.

[16] Audio recording of the interview, in the form of raw data, is available from the author.

Today, these means are very limited, forcing societies to seek funding abroad.[17] The society's activities are mostly funded by the Republic of Austria and the provincial government of Carinthia, and partly by the Federal Republic of Germany and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia.

The primary aim of the second society, *Association Peter Kosler*[18], is first and foremost to achieve peaceful coexistence of the Gottscheers and the Slovenians and to ensure the preservation of Gottscheer cultural heritage and Gottscheer cultural identity, which are also Slovenian heritage and identity. According to one of the leaders of the association, the association expects the state to guarantee organized funding for the preservation of the Gottscheer dialect and culture as a unique phenomenon in Europe. This way, it would become a generally known fact in Slovenia that Gottscheer culture is "built into the culture of the entire nation" and that it enriches the latter. INT10 (2012, September 17)[19] believes that the atmosphere in places where the association's activities take place has greatly improved lately. She wishes to distance herself from the topic of minority issues and refrains from using the term minority, preferring to speak about a linguistic group. INT10 believes that opening up the minority problem in relation to German speakers in Slovenia would ignite repulsion against everything linked to the Gottscheers (INT10 2012, September 17).

INT9 (2012, September 18) believes that all of the abovementioned circumstances indicate that it would be sensible for the state to grant the Gottscheers some sort of official recognition, but she also feels that minority status is not a necessary must. The state has to decide on the form and way of recognition. As a Gottscheer, she does, however, expect that the association would at least be granted the right of using its German name (e.g. in formal correspondence, ...) without being accused of "German agitation", and using Gottscheer or German location names when referring to places inhabited by Gottscheer descendants, whereby she does not call for official bilingualism. The state's policy ought to be—publicly—positive about the presence

[17] In 2006, the association published a "Memorandum for the legal resolution of the status of the German-speaking community in the Republic of Slovenia", which underscores the "autochthonous" nature of the German-speaking community in Slovenia, the problematic conclusions reached by the census, and calls for collective protection on the level of the Slovenian Constitution and laws, substantial and legislative reinforcement of the legislative branch of power in Slovenia with clear and unambiguous articles about persecuting discrimination and sanctions against hate speech, for taking into account and implementing international agreements signed by the Republic of Slovenia with other states (such as Austria) and for organized (and not merely project-based) funding of the activities of the association and particular societies.

[18] *Slovenian Gottscheer Association Peter Kosler* was established in 1994 and received its current name at the general assembly on 1 September 2012 in Kočevje, which also confirmed the move of the association's headquarters from Ljubljana to Kočevje. It retained the name of Peter Kosler, a Gottscheer who published a map of Slovenian lands in 1853, and strived for peaceful coexistence of Slovenians and Gottscheers. The aims of the association, apart from the aforementioned ones, are representing and preserving Slovenian and German cultural heritage in Gottschee and abroad, overcoming prejudice, preserving Gottscheers' and their descendants' traditions, such as the Gottscheer dialect, respecting human rights and developing democratic principles of the state. Moreover, the association offers Gottscheer dialect and German lessons (including in kindergartens and schools); carries out publishing activities (e.g. publishing CDs of concert and song recordings in the Gottscheer dialect, books, including a textbook for teaching Gottscheer dialect, a Slovenian-Gottscheer dictionary, etc.); organizes exhibitions and lectures (Gottscheer song nights, ...), etc. It collaborates with local communities as well as state and educational organizations in Slovenia and abroad, Slovenians in Austria and other states, and other minority groups [10].

[19] Audio recording of the interview, in the form of raw data, is available from the author.

and activities of Gottscheers and their societies. Gottscheer descendent INT8 (2012, September 27)[20] who is not a member of any of the two societies has a similar opinion. Anyway one puts it, Gottscheers require some sort of a mechanism of state support: a mechanism allowing to understand historical events linked to Gottschee, a mechanism securing targeted financial support for work in the interests of the Gottscheers, Gottscheer history, and their cultural heritage (museums); Gottscheer dialect lessons—at least in order to keep in touch with the dislocated Gottscheers and their descendants, and Gottscheer societies abroad, as, according to her, these links have been reinforced since 1991; a mechanism for preserving memories (e.g. using announcement boards, monuments, …) of destroyed Gottscheer villages, which were practically wiped out, a fact that had been exploited by the state for over 60 years. "Today, these are abandoned and devastated places, but also places where one can see daffodils, peonies, semi-dried out apple trees" which are the elements that most strongly indicate that there used to be a village there at some point" says INT8. All of this can be used to attract tourists, but this would require collaboration between societies, the local community, and the state, which "should, even from the point of view of responsibility towards its own history" somehow formally acknowledge the existence of indigenous Gottscheers (INT8 2012, September 27).

Institute for preservation of cultural heritage Nesseltal Koprivnik[21] was established in 2008, as a natural and cultural heritage care and preservation institution, as well as an institution dedicated to promoting the village of Koprivnik, Gottschee, and its inhabitants. According to one of its founders, the basic guidelines of the institute's activities are professionalism and working towards a greater visibility and acknowledgement of Gottscheer heritage. The institute actively avoids politicization of both its work and the topics it deals with. At first, they concentrated on the region of the extended Gottscheer linguistic island and acted locally, in the municipalities of Dolenjske Toplice, Kočevje, Semič, Črnomelj, Kostanjevica on the Krka, and Novo mesto; lately, they have expanded their activities towards Ribnica and beyond. Furthermore, they have begun to devote special attention to the Kvarner region in Croatia; according to INT11 (2012, December 14)[22], there are many traces of Gottscheers in the region, particularly around the islands of Rab and Mali Lošinj, as well as Rijeka and Opatija. Their funding comes from three levels: municipal calls of the aforementioned municipalities, state calls (chiefly those issued by the Ministry of Culture), and European calls. INT11, a Gottscheer descendent, who "has only begun to learn Gottscheer as an older man" (INT11 2012, December 14), believes that while Gottscheer topography is well researched and documented, the most important topic related to Gottscheer heritage, requiring further research today, is Gottscheer customs. Preserving and spreading knowledge about Gottscheer cultural heritage is, according to INT11, a task that should primarily be carried out by societies, institutes, and municipalities, as well as by the state, on a secondary level. She believes that collaboration of particular societies is exceptionally precious in this regard; this is why the institute has already connected with *Association Peter Kosler*, as well as some younger individuals that it wishes to collaborate with and perhaps formalize the organization of their collaboration.

[20] Audio recording of the interview, in the form of raw data, is available from the author.

[21] The institute carries out various programs in the spheres of education, culture (especially painting and photography), cultural tourism, and other related activities with an emphasis on Gottscheer heritage.

[22] Audio recording of the interview, in the form of raw data, is available from the author.

3.3 Indigenous Gottscheers' identity perceptions

Having the preserved and non-preserved cultural heritage, organization, and expressed cultural needs as described above in mind, how can one conceive of Gottscheer identity—today, and in an historical perspective? How did they identify themselves, what was their national identification, and how (if at all) were they recognized in a predominantly Slovenian environment? Demographic censuses in the Austrian state, as well as those carried out in the subsequent Yugoslav state, are not of much help when it comes to Gottscheers. All they allow us to find out is the proportion of the German population in Slovenia, the most numerous non-Slovenian community until WWI (7.2% in 1890, 7.3% in 1900, 8.1% in 1910) ([11], 115), but not the actual share of Gottscheers. Their identity was of explicitly regional or local character, and, as such, difficult to "grasp" using ethnic or national definitions, which was also confirmed by our interviewees. Indigenous Gottscheers would identify themselves (or were forced to identify themselves) during censuses either as Slovenes or as Germans, or avoided national identification altogether, preferring local or undefined.

Therefore, discrepancies in naming the indigenous community arise among Gottscheers themselves, as well as on a broader level (in scientific and local history literature). INT3, of Gottscheer descent, disagrees with the term Gottscheer German, convinced that the term was coined in the times of National Socialism, to underscore the German identity of the Gottscheers. "A Gottscheer is a Gottscheer," she says, "Gottscheers never considered themselves as Germans, as they never found national identification to be of any relevance." If anyone identified themselves as Gottscheer Germans, it was Gottscheers in the 1930s and 1940s, who sided with Nazism (INT3 2012, September 10). INT6 (2012, October 4) shares this view: "While Gottscheers are of German descent, they were never Germans". From the point of view of today, INT8 also points out the ambiguity of associating Gottscheers with Styrian Germans. On the one hand, it is perfectly understandable that the small number of Gottscheers makes it difficult for them to voice their demands and make them heard if they do not form ties to the broader German community, leading to a loss of their identity. On the other hand, forming such ties bears the danger of dissolving Gottscheer characteristics and particularities in the interests of the more numerous Styrian Germans. "Personally, this bothers me, because Gottscheers are not a German community; these are two distinct phenomena, which is why Gottscheers should receive special attention" (INT8 2012, September 27). INT11 also insists on preserving and maintaining the difference between Gottscheers and the German-speaking community. In terms of history, the former were isolated from Styrian Germans; this isolation led to the formation of important historical, cultural, and ethnological particularities, as well as a distinct attitude towards the environment they inhabited. Therefore, INT11 believes this specificity, as well as the collective memory of it, should be cherished, and promoted on the local, state, and broader level. A broader recognition of the Gottscheer community, its existence on Slovenian territory, its customs, special dialect, important personas, etc., would be a great contribution to this goal (INT11 2012, December 14).

INT9 defines her identity as composite, defining herself as "Gottscheer, but also Slovene" (2012, September 18). She believes that what really distinguishes Gottscheers from Slovenes is their language or dialect, which is why she is focusing her activities on preserving the Gottscheer dialect as much as possible. In the past, certain individuals and media pressured kindergarten and school (including language schools) principals and teachers that offered courses in Gottscheer dialect, by

encouraging an anti-German attitude, creating a feeling of threat due to alleged "Nazi activities" and prejudice, and even hatred among Slovenes. She believes it would be good if the state publicly expresses recognition and support to such activities that are neither forbidden by law nor bad, and do not threaten, but, on the contrary, connect Slovenes. Furthermore, she feels it should be publicly underscored that due to historical circumstances that resulted in the extremely small population of Gottscheers in Slovenia, this population has remained in touch with its relatives or even mere acquaintances and descendants of Gottscheers that had been moving abroad since the nineteenth century. These connections have allowed them to preserve their dialect, history, and heritage. INT9 even says that even expatriate Gottscheers abroad have lately begun to express an interest in learning the Gottscheer dialect. Furthermore, she believes the general atmosphere in places where such activities take place, especially in Kočevje, Semič, and Dolenjske Toplice, has also changed. Over the past decade, people have begun to accept the fact that "history is not just national /history/", but also history of a certain region, place, or space. People are also willing to learn about these matters, as they no longer feel threatened by the presence of different languages, identities, … Younger generations in particular "are becoming curious", states INT9 (2012, September 18) about Gottscheer culture, their cuisine (e.g. *pobolica*, white potato soup, …), attire, rituals and customs, folk songs and dances, which differ from Slovenian ones when it comes to detail (e.g. ancient Germanic mythology as part of Gottscheer folklore, etc.).

Dialect is certainly an important identification indicator of indigenous Gottscheers. However, when it comes to defining the Gottscheer dialect (*Göttscheabarisch*), a peculiar German dialect with many preserved elements of medieval Alpine languages, and some internalized elements of Slovenian, Gottscheers do not all share the same view. Some define it as archaic German, while others insist it as archaic German with Slovenian and even Croatian, etc., influences. Due to the impact of colonizers that arrived in the region from various areas during the period of colonization (the region of the Lienz basin, the valleys of Mitermöll and of the Drava, and southern regions on the border between South Tyrol and Carinthia), the dialect is also internally differentiated, sharing basic characteristics, but varying in nuances, which differed in various parts of Gottschee (Hornung in Petschauer 1984, 194, cited by [12], 96).

German language certainly played a special role in Slovenian lands. German colonization resulted in the emergence of numerous German linguistic islands in the region, and for a long period of time, German had been the administrative language in Slovenian lands. It started losing this role in the nineteenth century and finally lost it with Slovenians' political independence within the State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs in 1918. Later historical circumstances also dictated a particular attitude towards the dialect, which was forbidden in public after WWII, as emphasized by the interviewees (INT5, INT7, INT8). INT8 (2012, September 27) mentions her personal experience with censuses, when censors "did not give you an opportunity to identify yourself as you wanted to: official instructions are one thing, but the person in charge of the census is something different. He comes up to you, and when you say: "I am Gottscheer," he responds "Why Gottscheer, you are Slovenian"." Of course, older people and rural residents did not resist this type of census, and there are no numbers that would reveal these practices. She believes matters were similar when it came to linguistic affiliation. "Not many censors listened to what they were told […]. People let the censor lead them on […]. And even if people were brave enough to identify as Gottscheers, they were often not heard, and their real identity did not make it to the lists." Gradually, their traces began to disappear from the collective memory of the

nation, which, according to INT3 (2012, September 10), was a loss for the Slovenian identity as well. Some of the interviewees (INT2, INT4, INT5) believe the current state of affairs is still problematic, marked by the gap in history which occurred in 1941–1942, with the emigration of the vast majority of Gottscheers. This period was followed by post-war anti-German (and anti-Gottscheer) politics (including executions, stalking[23], victimization, a ban on the public use of Gottscheer dialect and on any kind of contact with expatriated Gottscheers until 1972), which had been implemented despite the fact that the Gottscheers who stayed had mostly cooperated with the resistance against the occupier.

On the one hand, the resultant problem is related to the small number of people that actually identify as Gottscheers, which is one of the important reasons for the *Society of Native Gottschee Settlers'* decision to form a common association with cultural societies run by the German-speaking community in Slovenia; on the other hand, it reflects the (albeit latently) persistent fear among the people, the split within the cultural battle, and stereotypes, including antagonist associations of Germanism with Nazism. According to one of the interviewees (INT5 2012, September 24), people are still possessed by an old fear that "being German is something negative in Slovenian society and that we should not be heard speaking German aloud." Therefore, if our criterion in assessing Gottscheer identification is knowledge of the Gottscheer dialect, we are left with several tens of people who still speak it; however, the historical circumstances that we have outlined indicate that this is not the most relevant identity indicator. Judging by origin or descent, there are around 250 Gottscheers left in Slovenia today. However, if we choose this criterion, we encounter the problem of classifying children born in mixed marriages (INT7 2012, September 13). Interestingly enough, three interviewees found out they were of Gottscheer origin very late: INT7 was 28 (her father was Gottscheer, and her mother was Slovenian), and INT5 was 14 (her father was German, and her mother Slovenian) when her teacher at trade school told her she was German because her surname was German, exposing her to repeated stigmatization. INT8 mentions a high school encounter in Črnomelj, when her classmate from Krško found both her and her origins disturbing. In 1941–1942, Krško was part of the region populated by Gottscheer settlers and abandoned by Slovenians, and many people retained a negative attitude towards Gottscheers later on.

There had been reciprocal assimilation between Slovenians and Gottscheers in Gottschee, as noted by Marjan Drnovšek ([7], 10); however, it was not strong enough to make the German linguistic island disappear, probably due to the fact that German settlements were very compact. The island emerged as a result of wartime emigration and primarily of mass Gottscheer emigrations to various parts of the world, mainly to the USA, after the war.

The results of the Preserving Gottscheer Identity Study, which surveyed over 100 indigenous Gottscheers from Slovenia, Austria, Germany, Canada, and the USA in 2007–2010, state that most (64,8%) of those who speak the dialect, only know its basics, which means they are only capable of describing themselves and their life circle ([12], 92). The dialect is most widespread in the USA (in New York, Cleveland, and Milwaukee), where Gottscheers had begun to emigrate to in the 1870s, and where they are most widespread today. Nevertheless, most Gottscheer parents in the USA

[23] INT4 and his father, as well as INT6 were all monitored by the UDBA (Yugoslav Secret Police). The UDBA started with the so-called OO Nemčurji action (Nemčurji—a pejorative term used to describe Germans and sympathizers) in 1966 and concluded it in 1986 (INT6 2012, October 4).

and Canada preferred to teach their children, born in these lands, German rather than Gottscheer, because this made it easier for them to communicate and collaborate on an institutional level with members of the wider German national community. Many Gottscheers believed that German would be more useful to their children than a dialect. Another reason for teaching Gottscheer children German was an interest in marrying individuals of Gottscheer or German origin. When the spouse was of German origin, usually, German would be spoken at home. All of this caused a notable decline in dialect speaking skills exhibited by today's younger generations (in the USA, Canada, Germany, and Austria): they are familiar with it on a passive level, i.e. they understand it but do not speak it. Many are familiar with certain expressions, insults, sayings, swearwords, and songs, but are unable to use Gottscheer to communicate in everyday situations. Starting with the third generation, English replaces Gottscheer and German, as these individuals of 25–55 years of age mostly identify English as their mother tongue. But half of the participants in the survey still speak the dialect at home ([12], 93–96).

Younger generations of Gottscheers in Slovenia also speak the dialect much less frequently than older generations. Thirteen years ago, there were only around five persons under 40 years of age, who were still active speakers of the Gottscheer dialect. There are many reasons for this, ranging from the broader historical and socio-ideological ones described above, to more intimate ones, such as ethnically mixed marriages, a wish for non-discrimination and greater social mobility, and the accompanying voluntary assimilation, as well as a lack of interest (Jaklitsch in [12], 103–104).

INT4, one of the former presidents of the *Society of Native Gottschee Settlers* believes (2012, September 18) that the dialect is "leaving", practically wiped out due to historical and politico-ideological reasons; it is impossible to preserve a dialect that is no longer alive among the people. And because younger generations lack knowledge of the dialect, they cannot develop their Gottscheer identity, according to one of the interviewees from the Preserving Gottscheer Identity Survey (in [12], 98). According to some, indigenous Gottscheers should be included into general Slovenian collective memory at least on a declarative level. It would also be very important to secure more detailed thematization of the Gottscheer issue in Slovenian textbooks in order to contribute to a de-tabooization of the topic, which had become taboo particularly after WWII. "This should be everyone's issue, and not just an issue of a bunch of those engaged in it on a more or less expert level" (INT6 (2012, October 4), INT7 (2012, September 13), and INT8 (2012, September 27)). INT8 (2012, September 27) speaks about historical damage, related to Gottscheer expatriation and post-war stigmatization of everything German. Although the Gottscheers that remained sympathized with and actively took part in the National Liberation Struggle, they emerged from the war as scapegoats, black sheep needed by each epoch, especially a post-war one, when "times were completely mad", still drenched in wartime events. In these circumstances, Gottscheers did not teach their children the dialect in those times, nor did they mention their Gottscheer origins. Gottscheer was banned in postwar Yugoslavia, as well as in the German Reich; being a Gottscheer was the worst insult imaginable in those times, explains INT3 (2012, September 10). "In postwar times, when those Gottscheers created their families, being a Gottscheer was something so negative that we never talked about it. We had our surnames written in the Slovenian manner, too," states INT8 (2012, September 27).

Although officially surnames did not undergo slovenianization, the "custom" was widely practiced in those days. Her own surname, for example, had consistently been

slovenianized. Only by leaving for high school, located in a different place, was she able to preserve the original form of her surname. "And no one dared say anything about it, due to the presence of the idea that German was something negative." The story of INT6, born to Gottscheer parents in Srednja vas near Črmošnjice, whose family stayed in Gottschee during the war, is an illustrative example. According to her father's words, wartime and post-war life was "marked by constant fear about our survival, as we were treated as the remainder of the German minority, i.e. Schwabs, who were not wanted in these lands." Partisan violence took the family's mother in 1945. As for her, she was discriminated against ever since she had entered primary school, where her teacher often called her "German gypsy". In year eight, her name was changed from German to Slovenian, against her own will; as she refused to respond to that name, her behavior was evaluated as bad. She was renamed to a Slovenian name in her report card, too, and her surname was slovenianized, so she had to later officially change it back into its original form. In 1957, she entered a professional college in Ptuj, where the teacher insulted her on the very first day, saying: "Who allowed this Schwab into the class?" (INT6 2012, October 4) These circumstances forced Gottscheers into dire self-censorship, so-called parental silence, intended not to pass their identity, especially their dialect, onto their children. This created a breach in historical continuity. With no historical continuity or conscience among Gottscheers and their descendants, today, preserving what can still be preserved, is left to societies and several individuals. Therefore, in spite of all of the facts described above, activities of these societies bear "the noble vocation of preserving the last sparks in the field of Gottscheer history and identity", when they should be encouraging younger generations to take part in their activities in their own ways (INT3 2012, September 10).

4. Conclusion

The identity question of indigenous Gottscheers is an extremely interesting field of research and a challenge to existent ethnic and national identities, as it is a diachronic and synchronic intersection of (micro)local, regional, ethnic and national affiliations. This multi- and intercultural intersection may be at the root of its exceptional "elusiveness", ambiguity, fluidity, which is at the same time a consequence of the unidentifiability of the indigenous Gottscheer population both in the Slovenian and in the global context. In both cases, the difficulties begin with defining the indigenous Gottscheer population in terms of numbers: numbers of members of particular societies are not reliable data, as not all Gottscheers are enrolled in some sort of a society, and some are members of all of them. Furthermore, sympathizers with the Gottscheer issue who are not necessarily of Gottscheer origin themselves are also members of some of the societies. At least in the past, the Gottscheer dialect used to be the most certain identity indicator, but the dialect is disappearing today. According to the UNESCO Atlas of the World's languages in Danger, the Gottscheer language is defined as "critically endangered", which means that the youngest speakers are grandparents and older, who speak the language partially and infrequently. Even society meetings, as noted by Katarina Jaklitsch, mostly use the national tongue of the environment as their language of conversation. Therefore, she feels "the final truth is that once another generation of Gottscheers leaves, the Gottscheer language will have to be added to the list of dead languages" (Jaklitsch in [12], 107).

While indigenous Gottscheers and their descendants have formed autonomous organizations (societies) on the basis of their Gottscheer identity, there are, due to various reasons, notable intersocietal disagreements. The *Society of Native Gottschee Settlers* is explicitly striving to achieve official recognition of Gottscheers/Germans as an ethnic or national minority, believing that this is the only solution that will guarantee the realization of their cultural needs and rights and grant them protection within the majority Slovenian society. Therefore, the society became a member of the *Association of Cultural Societies of the German Speaking Ethnic Communities in Slovenia*. A part of the Gottscheer community perceived this move as an (extreme) politicization of (cultural) societies and distanced itself from this particular society. Another society, *Association Peter Kosler*, has no such explicit demands, although its members agree that the state will have to eventually grant the Gottscheers some sort of recognition if its interest is to preserve Gottscheer tradition, heritage, and history as part of Slovenian general collective memory, which indigenous Gottscheers are an important part of.

The *Institute for preservation of cultural heritage Nesseltal Koprivnik* sympathizes with this view and specifically underscores that in the case of indigenous Gottscheers, which are nearly non-existent in practice, an acknowledgement of minority status is neither a real nor a sensible possibility. However, in the institute they agree with the viewpoint that the indigenous Gottscheer community needs the state's collective recognition of its existence, significance, and the role it played in Slovenian history. The institute, as well as Gottscheer descendants that participated in the study, and are not members of any of the aforementioned societies, agree in principle that the state should grant some sort of recognition to the existence of indigenous Gottscheers and their descendants. While they understand the purpose of connecting with the wider German-speaking community in Slovenia, they warn that these kind of activities may in fact cause the forgetting of the particularity of the Gottscheer identity, which differs historically and culturally from the Styrian community, and eludes national definitions, being much closer to regional or local affiliations, i.e. an affiliation to the Gottschee region.

The second reason for intersocietal disagreements is therefore the issue of indigenous Gottscheers' ethnic or national identity. While the *Society of Native Gottschee Settlers* undoubtedly prefers the explanation based on (old)German identity, *Association Peter Kosler*, as well as the *Institute for preservation of cultural heritage Nesseltal Koprivnik*, and certain societally inactive interviewees insist on the particular indigenous Gottscheer identity. They are not denying its archaic German or archaic Austrian roots, but they do emphasize that these roots have been embedded into an ethnically dominantly Slovenian space, which marked Gottscheer identity in an important way. From this point of view, the Gottscheer community appears as a greater contributor to historical and contemporary multiculturalism and interculturality of this space, at the same time constituting a more comprehensive and more plural cultural and linguistic identity of the Republic of Slovenia, which should be its norm, value, and symbolic capital. This would, among other things, imply including indigenous Gottscheer-related issues into primary and secondary school curricula and textbooks, in order to achieve a more comprehensive presentation of cultural variety in the past, as well as in contemporary Slovenia, as well as an implementation of these topics, i.e. in the educational process. Existent and new common projects should encourage connecting existent and potential new societies within the community, as well as with other communities. Furthermore and most importantly, it would be sensible and necessary to consider spreading knowledge about constitutionally unacknowledged communities for the broader, especially majority population. This would not only reinforce popular knowledge about the existence of these communities in the state,

but also contribute towards a gradual deconstruction of historical fears, ethn(ocentr)ic prejudices and stereotypes, and perhaps towards the creation of a conscience about a heterogeneous, plural, and multi–/intercultural space as a value in itself.

Appendix

Semi-structured interview questionnaire

1. How would you assess the position of the Gottscheer community in a certain time frame: what are the main milestones in the development of your community (WWI, WWII, the breakup of Yugoslavia, the independence of Slovenia, EU membership ...)?

2. How do you perceive your community: in what way is it preserved, how does it function, what is the identification of the younger generations with the so-called "minority identity«, is it manifested and if so in what way in a culturally different environment, what are the relations with the majority population...?

3. What are the main problems facing your community (demographic, political, cultural, economic, legal ...)?

4. What are your expectations/demands/needs from the state and how would you structure them: cultural, political, economic, legal ...?

5. Which institutions in the state (government, government office for national minorities, ombudsman ...) or outside (EU, UN ...) have you already turned to with your problems, demands, expectations)?

6. How would you like to normatively and formally regulate the status of your community?

7. We are mainly interested in the cultural needs/requirements of your community vis-à-vis the state. In your opinion, what are these and should they be entirely the financial burden of the state?

8. How important do you think is the size of a community when setting conditions, such as e.g. topography in the minority language, program in minority language on national radio and television, education about minorities and in the minority language ...?

9. Is there cooperation with other ethnic, national communities (all/constitutionally recognized/constitutionally unrecognized) regarding common problems/demands that you have towards the state? If so, what are these communities and in what form does the cooperation take place?

10. In your opinion, what is the most appropriate name for your community and is there a consensus in your society about its uniform name, or are you even in favor of the idea that Gottscheers being part of this uniformly named community?

11. Who should be the appropriate representative of the Gottscheer or German-speaking community and thus the official interlocutor with state or government institutions in negotiations regarding the regulation of the community status?

12. As applicants of cultural projects, what do you miss in activities of the Ministry of Culture and its institutions, what improvements are needed and what are the specific cultural needs of your association in the future, that the Ministry should take into account when creating public tenders?

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Minorities - New Studies and Perspectives offers important and innovative research on the oppression of minorities by the majority. The treatment of minorities is explored from multiple dimensions in this academic work. Firstly, the book investigates the issue of lack of equal opportunity, including discrimination based on race, gender, sexuality, religion, disability, ethnicity, and other factors. Secondly, the authors analyze institutional and structural barriers that prevent equal opportunity in various settings, such as healthcare, the criminal justice system, education, voting, government and corporate policies, and immigration and migration. Thirdly, the book delves into the concept of racial threats and critical race theory, including topics such as microaggressions, majority oppression, minority identity, and intersectionality. Finally, the authors present strategies for overcoming unfair treatment of minorities, such as affirmative action, civil rights legislation, court decisions, and corporate policies. Overall, this edited volume provides a diverse and contemporary examination of minority issues.

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