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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**THEMATIC ARTICLES – THE CHALLENGES OF MIGRANTS’ SOCIAL INTEGRATION**

- Identity, Over-Commitment, Work Environment, and Health Outcomes among Immigrant Workers, **Per Øystein SAKSVIK, Carla DAHL-JØRGENSEN, Sturle Danielsen TVEDT, Trine Elaine EIKEN**, .......................................................... 2
- Gender Variation in Asylum Experiences in the UK: The Role of Patriarchy and Coping Strategies, **Ruth L. HEALEY** .............................................................. 24
- Educational Development and Detachment Processes of Male Adolescents from Immigrant Families, **Hans-Christoph KOLLER, Javier CARNICER, Vera KING, Elvin SUBOW, Janina ZOELCH** ................................................................. 44
- Conceptualization and Construction of a People: Enacted Macedonianness in Australia, **Irena Colakova VELJANOVA** ......................................................... 61

**ESSAYS** ........................................................................................................ 81
- The Influence of Religion on the Creation of National Identity in Serbia, **Violeta CVETKOVSKA OCOKOLJIC, Tatjana CVETKOVSKI** .............................................. 81

**BOOK REVIEWS** ......................................................................................... 104

**NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS** ........................................................................ 111
THEMATIC ARTICLES – THE CHALLENGES OF MIGRANTS’ SOCIAL INTEGRATION

Identity, Over-Commitment, Work Environment, and Health Outcomes among Immigrant Workers

Per Øystein SAKSVIK, Carla DAHL-JØRGENSEN, Sturle Danielsen TVEDT, Trine Elaine EIKEN

Abstract. In this study, we compared immigrant workers with native workers on several factors related to their perception of their work identity anchored in their psychosocial work environment, and the result of these factors on work stress and subjective health. The data for the study came from 924 employees in the Norwegian food and beverage and among them were 84 immigrant workers. We found significant differences in levels of over-commitment, mental health and stress between native and immigrant workers. Immigrant workers perceived more over-commitment, more mental health problems and higher job stress than native workers did. The personal ambitions of the immigrants, measured as a higher level of over-commitment was seen as a driving force behind the pattern we found. This could have been a possible threat to an increased level of stress leading to mental health problems, but commitment to the firm they worked in was found to have a compensating effect in the final path analysis.

Key words: mental health, over-commitment, stress, immigrant workers, work identity

Introduction

Work migration is a phenomenon which has increased significantly both in intensity and diversity over recent decades (Morawska, 2001; Okólski, in Wallace and Stola, 2002, p. 105). As companies in an era of neoliberalism seek to cut costs, they look for cheap and flexible labor (Sennett, 1998, p. 127). Immigrant workers represent a low-cost labor supply, not just because their salaries are normally lower than those of native workers, but also because social and reproduction costs
are carried by the sending society. Persisting geographical differences in employment opportunities, combined with a global drive towards consumerism, are one of the main economic push–pull factors of migration (Castles, 2002). At the same time, migrating has become easier through facilitated travel and improved communication (Castles, 2002). In the present study, we want to compare immigrant workers with native workers on several factors related to their perception of their work identity anchored in their psychosocial work environment, and the result of these factors on work stress and subjective health. Our main hypothesis is that immigrant workers are in a situation where they have to rely on their own recourses more than the collective recourses, and thus, are at greater risk of experiencing negative stress and bad health if they perceive little support and respect from their employer, boss, or colleagues.

The present pattern of temporary work migration adds dimensions to the field of study, for example, when it comes to ideas of identity, belonging and commitment. Ideas of identity are often used as an approach to understand the individual experience of work migration. Identity is defined as the ideas we have about who we are and what groups we belong to (Jenkins, 2008). Identity and a sense of belonging, then, are fundamental for shaping and mediating immigrant workers’ experiences in the receiving society. Giddens defines identity as the ongoing sense the self has of who it is, as conditioned through its ongoing interaction with others (in Matthews, 2000). While identity conditions the individual experiences of migration, these experiences in turn impact on identity. For example, several studies note that many immigrant workers adopt the norms of the locals during the migration period (see, for example, Breman, 1996). Many immigrants therefore live the experience of having flexible or contradictory roles and statuses in the sending and receiving society. For some, the ambiguity may represent the liberty to express several identities and transcend boundaries, while for others it may pose a threat to the coherency of who they are and where they belong.

According to Zeytinoglu (2002) the uncertainty of flexible work lives commonly causes problems such as low commitment, low autonomy, low opportunities for developing skills, and low chances of a career. It seems that many employees with a short-term job perspective develop a more personal kind of work commitment than the more well known organizational commitment. This more personal commitment seems to be directed towards their own career or
profession, not their present employer and the future of the company ( Hecksher, 1995). Rewards from the present job are to a large degree expected to come in the next job. This is likely to apply to immigrant workers as well, who often may have a limited time perspective towards their present job either because they are on short, seasonal work contracts or they practice a form of circular migration. In our study we therefore expect immigrant employees to show lower organizational commitment than native employees.

Karasek and Theorell (1990) have defined the psychosocial work environment according to the original job demand–decision latitude model of Karasek (1979), often labeled the Demand–Control (DC-) model. According to the DC-model, the quality of the psychosocial work environment is mainly dependent on the individual worker’s perceived levels of psychological job demands (demands) and decision latitude (control). The central component in demands is task requirements (Karasek and Theorell, 1990). Control represents a combination of two theoretically distinct concepts: the breadth of skills usable on the job (skill discretion), and authority over decision-making regarding one’s own work tasks or work situation (decision authority or autonomy) (Karasek and Theorell, 1990). The demand–control model was later expanded by including supervisor and co-worker support – labeled social support and labeled the DCS-model (Karasek and Theorell, 1990). Studies on cardiovascular disease and absenteeism have shown that social support is one of the most important factors in reducing stress and strain, either directly or indirectly, in the workplace (Karasek and Theorell, 1990; Shumaker and Czajkowski, 1994). We believe that workplace control and support from colleagues and supervisors is of minor importance for immigrant workers because they are less integrated in the work environment, and therefore this model has modest relevance for the work identity of immigrant employees and the levels of work-related stress and health problems they experience. For native workers, however, this model has a greater impact and will explain more of the work-related stress they experience.

Siegrist’s Effort–Reward Imbalance model (ERI-Model) (1996) has been one of the most influential models in recent work environment research. The ERI-model seeks to explain variations in work-related stress by focusing on three hypotheses. The first focuses on the experienced (im)balance between the invested amount of extrinsic effort and the amount of received rewards, whereas the second usually concerns the assumption that high levels of intrinsic effort, or over-
commitment, also elevate the levels of stress. The third hypothesis is the interaction hypothesis of the two aforementioned relationships. The ERI-model therefore has a broader focus compared to other work environment models, in that it includes both individual characteristics, such as the concept of intrinsic effort or over-commitment, and more socially-based concepts, such as the overall reward, payment or status implied by the job.

The term over-commitment is most often associated with, and studied within, the theoretical framework of the ERI-model (1996). Originally, however Siegrist (1996) developed this construct from a critical review of the personality theory of Type A-behavior. An individual’s tendency to over-commit to work results from a behavioral pattern, called Type A-behavior, where one exaggerates the intrinsic effort one mobilizes to solve a problem. Over-committed persons often judge their work situations as more demanding than less committed persons, because of the unrealistic intrinsic demands they place upon themselves, which in turn may lead to increased levels of stress (Siegrist, 1996). Over-commitment may, however, also be reinforced by stressors such as work pressure or expectations of performance. The uncertainty of the future puts many immigrant workers under great pressure to maximize the outputs of their work here and now, and it also pushes them to try to achieve perfection in their work in order to be rehired for a new period next time. For an immigrant worker the possibility of a large income for a period also has to be taken into consideration. Thus, immigrant workers tend to accept long and hard work days and unsociable work hours, and in many cases keep silent about unacceptable work conditions. We therefore believe that immigrant workers in general will obtain higher scores on over-commitment than native workers. Their position in the labor market forces them to invest more of themselves to secure their possibilities for the future. We also find it likely that many immigrant workers will experience a greater imbalance between invested efforts and rewards than native workers, seeing that they often need to put in extra effort to overcome barriers related to language and culture.

The current study was conducted to evaluate the following hypotheses:

**H1.** Immigrant workers perceive higher levels of over-commitment and effort-reward imbalance and report more work stress and mental health problems.

**HII.** Immigrant workers perceive lower organizational commitment than native workers.
The two work environment models (DCS & ERI) will have different impacts on work stress, commitment, and mental health reactions for immigrant and native workers.

Mental health will be differently predicted in the two samples:

a) The native sample will show a traditional association from over-commitment through demands and job stress to mental health.

b) The immigrant sample will show an alternative association through commitment.

Methods

Participants and procedures

The data for this study came from 924 employees in the Norwegian food and beverage industry, representing 45 different firms. Among them were 84 immigrant workers distributed across 21 of the firms with one or two immigrant workers employed at most of them. Participation in the study was voluntary. Immigrants were defined based on one question in the questionnaire asking if the respondent had a foreign language background or not. The questionnaires were collected and completed under the auspices of the Norwegian Labour Inspection Authorities. This institution monitors the current working conditions for the total labor force in Norway. This study was a part of a five-year project with the purpose of providing the institution with a picture of the working conditions for employees in this industry. The firms were selected as being representative of the industry’s population, covered all geographical parts of the country, with production areas representative of the industry as a whole. The primary work task of 85.5% of the sample was production, and most immigrant workers were in production (93%). A total of 19% of the whole sample had a responsibility as a leader and 17% of the immigrant workers were leaders. Preliminary analysis showed that the leaders had deviating scores on many of the tests irrespective of which of the two groups of interest they belonged to for this study. We thus decided to take all those with leadership responsibility out of the final analysis. Local inspectors from the Labour Inspection Authorities distributed and collected the questionnaires. After collection, the surveys were sent directly to the researchers.

The 45 firms in our sample varied in size from four to 185 employees, with a mean of 21. The firm response rate ranged from 17.7% to 100% with an average response rate of 59.4%. Of the 924 participants, 389 (42.1%) were women and 533
(57.7%) were men. Two participants did not report gender. The average age of the respondents was 40.6 years (SD = 11.58), the youngest participant being 17 and the oldest 68. Ninety-four percent worked full-time, the rest were employed on a part-time or temporary basis. The participants worked on average 34.5 hours per week (SD = 13.2). Their work consisted mainly of tasks related to production, such as packing food or managing machines. Regarding the level of education, 27% had completed seven to nine years of education, and 63.7% had a high school degree. A small percentage of respondents, 8.7%, had completed one to six years in college.

Measures

The questionnaire used in this study consisted of a mixture of already validated scales and items developed for the purpose of this study. The demand, control and support dimensions of the psychosocial work environment were measured with, or based on, the original Job Content Questionnaire (JCQ) of Karasek et al. (1998). For validity reasons, the items were translated into Norwegian and then translated back into English by two independent researchers.

**Job specific demands**: This index consisted of four items that assessed how often the participants work with short deadlines, work quickly and under time pressure. The four items were: (1) *How often do you perform work that demands constant attention?* (2) *How often do you work with constant time pressure due to heavy workloads?* (3) *How often do you perform work with short deadlines?* and finally (4) *How often do you perform work that requires working very fast?* The response categories were given on a five-point scale ranging from “very seldom” to “very often.” The Cronbach’s alpha for this scale was .73.

**Job specific control**: Job specific control was measured with four items: (1) *How often can you influence decisions about your own work?* (2) *How often can you determine how your work should be executed?* (3) *How often do you have the opportunity to learn new things in your work?* and (4) *How often do you have the opportunity to learn things beyond your own work field?* Scale reliability was .80 and the response alternatives ranged from “very seldom” to “very often”.

**Job specific support**: This index consisted of four items: (1) *How often do you receive help and support from your co-workers?* (2) *How often do you feel accepted in your work group?* (3) *How often do you experience a spirit of cohesion in your work group?* and (4) *How often do your co-workers back you up when it is needed?* Cronbach’s alpha was .80 and the response categories were given on a five-point scale.
ranging from “very seldom” to “very often.”

**Over-commitment:** This index consisted of six items from the intrinsic effort dimension of Siegrist’s (1996) ERI questionnaire. The index consisted of items that assessed the amount of intrinsic effort or commitment being invested at work. Examples of items from this index are: *I only feel successful when I perform better than I expected;* and *I usually take criticism very seriously.* The Cronbach’s alpha of this index was .76. The response categories were given on a four-point scale ranging from “false” to “true.”

**Effort–reward:** This index consisted of 11 items developed by Siegrist (1996) in his ERI questionnaire. The items reflect an Effort–Reward Imbalance, which defines the psychosocial work environment with a base in the two main dimensions, Effort and Reward. Examples of items from this index are: *I receive the respect I deserve from my colleagues;* *I am treated unfairly at work;* and *Considering all my efforts and achievements, my job prospects are adequate.* The Cronbach’s alpha of this scale was .64. The measures had a five-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.”

**Organizational commitment** was measured by the short form of the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire (OCQ) (Mowday, Steers and Porter, 1979). The OCQ is a nine-item scale subsuming (1) a desire to maintain membership in the organization, (2) belief in and acceptance of the values and goals of the organization, and (3) a willingness to exert extra effort on behalf of the organization. Cronbach’s alpha was .88.

**Perceived job stress reactions** were measured with two different scales. One of them is Cooper’s Job Stress Scale (1981). Originally this index consists of 25 questions with six response categories ranging on a scale from “no stress at all” to a “great deal of stress.” The scale was originally divided into four subscales – work, communication, leadership and relocation – where each subscale reflects the amount of stress experienced in association with these aspects of everyday work life. The scale is however often used as a global scale, rather than as four separate subscales. A principal component analysis was conducted on the 25 items, which resulted in an extraction of five factors with eigenvalues above 1. However, closer inspection of the rotated pattern matrix revealed that most of the items showed relatively high loadings (> .50) on the first factor. We therefore chose to use the global scale, but dropped three items from the overall scale due to small loadings on the first factor. The overall scale had a Cronbach’s alpha of .92.
Mental health reactions were the other job stress reaction scale we used. It was measured with five items based on items used by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions in their survey on working conditions and work-related health in the European Union. Using a four-point scale the questions measure if their work has caused: stress, headaches, general fatigue, sleeping problems, and muscular pains in shoulders and neck ($\alpha = .78$). Responses were given on a four-point scale ranging from “seriously afflicted” to “not afflicted”.

Statistical analysis

The analyses were conducted using SPSS (15.0). Hierarchical regression analyses were carried out for each group separately to (1) determine the effects of the different variables on commitment and the two stress variables and (2) examine to what degree the complete model could explain the variation in these dependent variables in each group. Since our model included several interactions and only two subgroups, we chose to do separate regression analyses for each subgroup, rather than to incorporate a long list of product terms in one analysis. The use of separate analyses is the easiest way to compare the effects of the variables in the various groups. However, using this method, it is not possible to see directly if the differences in effects between the groups are statistically significant. Consequently, we needed to calculate this manually in each case using the following formula: $t = D/s_d$. (D being the difference between two given unstandardized coefficients, and $s_d$ being the standard error for that difference, $s_d = \sqrt{(s_1^2 + s_2^2)}$). The predicted interaction effects were included in the regression analysis using the procedure recommended by Aiken and West (1991), which involves calculating the product terms from mean-centered variables to prevent multicolinearity. Using AMOS software (Arbuckle and Wothke, 1999), separate SEM (structural equation modeling) analyses were performed for the Hypotheses IVa and IVb using the native sample for IVa and the immigrant sample for IVb. Prior to the SEM analyses, the samples were screened for missing data. Cases with missing data after index computation were deleted.

Fit indices

As model evaluation continues to be an unsettled issue in SEM analysis (Arbuckle and Wothke, 1999), a mixture of fit indices was used to evaluate the models in the present paper: The traditional $\chi^2$ is perhaps best avoided due to its vulnerability to sample sizes (Hu and Bentler, 1995). The Normed $\chi^2$ ($\chi^2/df$), on the other hand, may,
according to Hanse and Engström (1999) identify both “overidentified” models (values less than 1.0) and poorly fitted models (with values more than 2.0, or more liberally, more than 5.0). AGFI (adjusted-goodness-of-fit index) takes into account the degrees of freedom available for testing the model which should be equal to or greater than .90. TLI (Tucker-Lewis coefficient) and the (CFI) (comparative-fit-index) should also be equal to or greater than .90. RMSEA (root-mean-square error of approximation) compensates for the effect of model complexity, favoring parsimony. According to Browne and Cudeck (1993), values of .05 or less indicate a close fit, and values of about .08 indicate a reasonable error of approximation.

Results

Table 2 shows the mean scores and correlations on the study’s variables for each employment group. The table shows that there exist significant differences in levels of over-commitment, mental health and stress between the groups. Immigrant workers perceived more over-commitment, more mental health problems and higher job stress than native workers. Hypothesis I was partially confirmed, but hypothesis II was not supported. The correlation matrix shows that effort–reward and over-commitment correlate highly with all three dependent variables for both employee groups. In general the correlations were modest and in the predicted direction.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the employment groups and correlation matrix for the study variables

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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE: 3.40 (.51)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.26</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-.25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IE: 3.15 (.64)</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>-.56</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>-.30</td>
<td>-.50</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Stress</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE: 2.11 (.78)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>-.56</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>-.30</td>
<td>-.50</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: NE = Native Employees, IE = Immigrant Employees. Correlations for the immigrant group are shown above the diagonal, for the natives below.
Hierarchical regression analyses were carried out entering the variables and product terms manually in the following order: Block 1: gender, age, seniority; Block 2: demands, control; Block 3: demands X control; Block 4: over-commitment, effort–reward; Block 5: over-commitment X effort–reward. The predicted interactions between demands and control and between over-commitment and effort–reward on mental health, proved to be insignificant for both groups, and were therefore excluded from the analyses. (Removing the insignificant product terms from the analysis makes it easier to interpret the main effects.) In Tables 3, 4, and 5 the results of the regressions are presented.

### Table 3. Hierarchical regression analyses for immigrant and native employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment group</th>
<th>Immigrant employees</th>
<th>Native employees</th>
<th>Mental health</th>
<th>Mental health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>t-value</td>
<td>R² Change</td>
<td>Beta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>-1.257</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>2.117*</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniority</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>-.600</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demands</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-.468</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>-.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>1.296</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.192</td>
<td></td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over-commitment</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>-1.622</td>
<td></td>
<td>-.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort–Reward</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>2.891*</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum R² adj.</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td>.634</td>
<td></td>
<td>.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N = 53</td>
<td>3.01*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent variable is Mental health reactions, p < .05 = *, p < .001 = **

The complete regression model explained 23% ($R^2 = 0.23$) of the total variance in mental health reactions for the immigrant workers, 21% for the native workers. For job stress the model explained 21% of the total for the immigrant workers, 44% for the native workers. For commitment the model explained 29% for
the native workers and 22% for the immigrant workers. Tables 3-5 show how the various variables are associated with the two dependent stress measures and commitment for each of the employment groups. Mental health problems are somewhat more common among women than men in both employment groups. Effort–reward was in general the most influential predictor for all three dependent variables for both groups, with the exception of commitment for the immigrant workers. Over-commitment was associated with increased job stress and mental health problems for the native workers, but was most strongly associated with commitment in the immigrant group. Demands showed the predicted association with stress and health among the native workers, but proved to be unrelated to the stress and health conditions of the immigrant workers. The effects of control and social support on job stress and mental health were generally low for both groups and not in line with the model predictions. However, social support showed a stronger association with commitment. Hypothesis III was partly confirmed.

Table 4. Hierarchical regression analyses for immigrant and native employees.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment group</th>
<th>Immigrant employees</th>
<th>Native employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>t-value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>.630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniority</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>1.737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demands</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 2</td>
<td></td>
<td>.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort–Reward</td>
<td>-.43</td>
<td>-2.942*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Block 3</td>
<td></td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum R^2 adj.</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N =</td>
<td>54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>2.82*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent variable is Job Stress., p <.05 = *, p <.001 = **

Further calculations show that the differences in regression coefficients between the two employment groups seen in Tables 3-5 (and presented in this section)
are insignificant, with the exception of the difference in the association between gender and mental health. However, due to the small size of the immigrant sample, even quite substantial differences may prove to be insignificant. Some of the tendencies shown in Tables 3-5 may therefore reflect true differences between the two groups even if they are insignificant. (The calculations were based on the unstandardized coefficients. See the Methods section for the formula used to compare the regression coefficients).

### Table 5. Hierarchical regression analyses for immigrant and native employees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment group</th>
<th>Immigrant employees</th>
<th>Native employees</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td>t-value</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>-.797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniority</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.780</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Block 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demands</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.727</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>.25</td>
<td>1.657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Block 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over-commitment</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>2.113*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Effort–Reward</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>1.571</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Block 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum R² adj.</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N =</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>3.05*</td>
<td>3.05*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dependent variable is Commitment, p <.05 = *, p <.001 = **

Structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis was performed to test Hypothesis IVa and IVb. One important assumption associated with SEM analysis that is often ignored in the research literature is the assumption of multivariate normal distribution (Byrne, 2001), thus the first step of any SEM analysis should be an assessment of multivariate normality. Accordingly, in the present study, the sample was assessed and found to be fairly normal.
Figure 1. Model 1 for the prediction of mental health in native workers by ERI, DCS, stress and commitment, (HVa)

![Diagram of Model 1]

Figure 2. Model 2 for the prediction of mental health in native workers by ERI, DCS, stress and commitment, (HVa)

![Diagram of Model 2]
The original model specified by Hypothesis IV (model 1), yielded a poor fit ($df = 12, \chi^2 = 77.144, \chi^2/df = 6.429, AGFI = .915, TLI = .862, CFI = .943, RMSEA = .091$). Hence, in the interests of parsimony (Byrne, 2001), paths not significant at a .001 alpha level were deleted from model 2. However, model 2 was also a poor fit ($df = 14, \chi^2 = 85.752, \chi^2/df = 6.125, AGFI = .919, TLI = .875, CFI = .938, RMSEA = .089$).

Thus modification indexes were inspected, as suggested by Byrne (2001). This suggested that a new negative path be specified from Effort–Reward to Demands, and a positive path from Effort–Reward to Control. Both are reasonable in a theoretical sense, according to the DCS and ERI models (see discussion for details). Model 3 was then re-specified to include the estimation of these two regression paths, pictured in Figure 3.

**Figure 3. Standardized coefficients for Model 3, HVa observed variables are shown in rectangles (*p < .001)**
A model with reasonable fit was then achieved \((df = 12, \chi^2 = 41.948, \chi^2/df = 3.496, \text{AGFI} = .955, \text{TLI} = .939, \text{CFI} = .974, \text{RMSEA} = .062)\). As hypothesized in Hypothesis IVa the native sample showed a traditional pathway from over-commitment through demands and job stress to mental health and from over-commitment through stress to mental health. Also as hypothesized, there was an effect of over-commitment on commitment that was not carried through to mental health. However, the hypothesized direct effect of over-commitment on mental health, and indirectly via effort–reward to mental health, was not significant. According to Hypothesis IVa, there was also an indirect effect of over-commitment through effort–reward and control on mental health, however, additional indirect effects of effort–reward on mental health through demands and support that were not hypothesized were also significant at a .001 alpha level.

Structural equation modeling (SEM) analyses were also performed to test the model for Hypothesis IVb. An assessment of the immigrant sample indicated moderate non-normality, and a bootstrapping procedure was employed because this sample was only of medium size. Bootstrapping works by basing inferential procedures on a concrete sampling distribution from the sample at hand rather than the traditional sampling distribution created by a hypothetical infinite number of samples from the population of interest (Efron, 1982). The concrete sampling distribution thus reflects the distribution of the sample, rendering the assumption of normality superfluous. A bootstrap sample of 1000 was drawn (with replacement) and used for the analysis of IVb.

The original model specified by IVb (model 1), yielded a more or less reasonable fit \((df = 14, \chi^2 = 18.823, \chi^2/df = 1.344, \text{AGFI} = .807, \text{TLI} = .894, \text{CFI} = .947, \text{RMSEA} = .075)\). However, several of the hypothesized paths were not significant with 90% confidence intervals using bias corrected bootstrap estimation, and were deleted in the interests of parsimony. The new goodness-of-fit indices show that the re-specified model 2 was better fitting than model 1 \((df = 18, \chi^2 = 21.126, \chi^2/df = 1.174, \text{AGFI} = .833, \text{TLI} = .947, \text{CFI} = .966, \text{RMSEA} = .054)\). Again, following Byrne (2001), modification indexes were inspected but no new paths were suggested. Hence, model 2 was the best fitting model for IVb, and is pictured in Figure 4.

As hypothesized in IVb, the immigrant sample showed an alternative path of over-commitment on mental health through commitment as well as a direct effect on mental health. Also, according to IVb, the effect of over-commitment on demands was not carried through to demands or stress. Still in accordance with
IVb, effort–reward had significant direct effects on both commitment and mental health. However there were no significant mediating effects of effort–reward. Also, the hypothesized effect of support on stress was not significant; however an indirect effect through control was found on mental health and demands.

**Figure 4. Standardized coefficients for Model 3, HVb observed variables are shown in rectangles**

All values are based on bias corrected bootstrap estimation. Latent constructs are shown in ellipses and observed variables are shown in rectangles. * Indicates significant coefficients with 90% confidence intervals using bias-corrected percentile method.

**Discussion**

The results indicate that the ERI model is more relevant than the DCS model for explaining stress, commitment and mental health in immigrant workers. Some of these differences can be attributed to a larger sample of native workers, enabling the generally lower beta values of the DCS model to become significant. However, it seems clear that the native workers’ levels of stress and mental health are substantially more affected by demands than is the case for the immigrants.
Correspondingly, over-commitment is clearly more influential toward the immigrants’ level of commitment, and a similar near significant tendency for immigrants’ level of mental health.

Though corresponding perfectly to the regression analyses, the picture becomes even clearer looking at the SEM analyses, for two reasons: First, more comprehensive understanding can be gleaned from incorporating mediation effects, and second, the use of bootstrapped confidence intervals for the immigrant sample evens out some of the differences in sample sizes. Thus, the SEM analyses demonstrate that apart from the common strong and general effect of effort–reward, the two samples incorporate very different explanatory routes for mental health; The native sample shows a traditional demands–stress route for mental health, whereas the immigrant sample shows an interesting indirect effect of over-commitment via commitment towards mental health, as well as a direct effect of over-commitment reducing mental health problems. The traditional demands–stress route to mental health found in the native sample corresponds to earlier findings and theory and warrants no explanation. However, the over-commitment to commitment route in the immigrant sample sheds new light on the immigrant situation. It points to immigrants’ mental health as being more dependent on internal drive than external performance demands and stress experience. And further, that there is a beneficial indirect effect via increased commitment that balances the direct drawback effect of over-commitment on mental health.

These results are easily understood by viewing immigrants as not wholly integrated in the native culture. Earlier cross cultural comparisons between Norwegian and Indian native worker populations have demonstrated the same difference in the perceptions of demands and stress (Pal and Saksvik, 2008). Hence, it is fair to assume that these results are the product of cultural interpretational frames more strongly determining individual ratings of real working environments than is usually assumed in most studies of predominately homogenous worker samples. Also, not being wholly integrated in the native culture, the affective commitment to the workplace becomes more crucial for the immigrants’ mental health; they are more vulnerable to experiences of lacking inclusion and a sense of belonging. Interestingly, though, the individual immigrant workers’ level of over-commitment plays into this, and this too can be understood in a cultural context. Siegrist’s (1996) concept of over-commitment and subsequent
operationalization builds on an understanding of individual tendencies to over-interpret and even create demands over and above those set by organizations and their managers. This is, however, cast within a cultural frame of what Bauman defines as “solid modernity” with the welfare state providing continuity and stability in the world of work (2000). It constitutes healthy levels of personal commitment, and here, over-commitment in extreme cases become incongruent with integration and commitment. Immigrant workers originating from cultural frames resembling the “liquid modernity” model of Bauman (2000) might have less of this negative connotation to over-commitment, i.e., the over-commitment takes a more collective form. A slightly alternative way of understanding the particular finding concerning over-commitment is that for immigrant workers over-commitment is more an internal drive towards integration in the workplace culture and collective achievement, whereas for native workers it is more of a drive towards individual achievement.

Although it is clear from the present results that the DCS model had the least explanatory power in the immigrant sample, it is equally clear that the ERI model has the most fundamental role in both samples. The importance of over-commitment notwithstanding, the effort–reward balance had the most solid and dominating explanation effects in both samples. Hence, the (im)balance between effort and reward may be of more significance to understand how work can best be organized in a modern work life. This can be seen in connection to findings related to how justice is perceived (Hammer, Bayazit and Wazeter, 2009). Justice is important for how loyalty develops and when the imbalance between what you invest in the form of hard work and what you get back in the form of salary and status is high, the possibility of lower loyalty exists. This seems to be of equal importance for native and immigrant workers, but may be of special importance for immigrants. Accordingly, the SEM-analysis supports the claim that the ERI model can be seen as the more fundamental model enveloping the DCS model with matters both external and internal to the narrow work task domain of the DCS model.

The literature shows that the DCS model has been progressively less apt at explaining populations and types of work diverging from the classic stable, male and homogenous blue-collar work, defined by large worker collectives and big industry and in a context of limited social mobility in societies (see, e.g., Eiken and Saksvik, 2009; Tvedt, Saksvik and Nytrø, 2009). Hence, when the results of the
present study show less support for the DCS model, it is reasonable to look at the existing characteristics of the modern Norwegian food processing industry. Enterprises are typically small to medium sized and must navigate rapidly changing markets. They have increasingly larger shares of female and immigrant workers, together with increasingly lower mean age and seniority, most of which is normally associated with fewer collective worker organizations and adherence to the classic Nordic work model and its tenets of industrial democracy (Emery and Thorsud, 1976; Karasek and Theorell, 1990).

Methodological considerations

The variables in this study were measured using the same method (i.e., self-reports) and the same source (i.e., employees). The dependence on self-reports through questionnaires causes various problems (e.g., Frese, 1985; Frese and Zapf, 1988; Kasl, 1998; Spector, 1992). Mono-method and common-source biases may account for parts of the relationships we found in this study, but we argue that the relative intensity of relationships would still hold although the absolute strength of relationships may have an upward bias.

The relatively small sample size of immigrants created some problems because the observed differences between the groups were seldom large enough to be significant. Further studies with larger samples from more sectors have to be conducted to confirm the findings of this study.

It was not the intention of this study to compare the two work environment models of Karasek and Siegrist. We did not, for example, include the demand items from the Siegrist battery. We saw, however, that there was a great overlap between the demand items of Karasek and Siegrist with almost identical formulations on some occasions. It is, thus, difficult to compare such close scales, with high correlation between them, in a direct comparison. The contribution of the effort–reward scale was interesting and should be taken into consideration in future studies.

A word of caution is necessary here in relation to the limitations of SEM analyses. They cannot test the causality of the modeled structures, so the directions of relationships given in the models cannot be taken for granted. Here the present study suffers from being limited to cross-sectional data. However, the use of longitudinal data should not be regarded as the only blanket solution, both necessary and sufficient, as simply ordering variables in time does not in itself
guarantee conclusions regarding causation to be reached in non-experimental studies (Shrout and Bolger, 2002).

Conclusion

In this study we found that the work identity of immigrant employees deviates from native employees. It is dependent upon the personal ambitions of the immigrants, measured as a higher level of over-commitment. This could have been a possible threat to an increased level of stress leading to mental health problems, but commitment to the firm they work in has a compensating effect. Support from leaders and colleagues, control over work, and demands from immediate work tasks in the work situation is the traditional path for native, north-western employees to understand how their work identity affects their health, and this path was confirmed in this study. For both groups effort–reward was an influential factor and may have something to do with the feeling of (in-)justice in the modern work life for all employees. To fully understand work identity and the association with stress and health, other models may have been considered, but it is important to take into consideration the interesting difference between the two samples shown here when interventions to strengthen the work identity and prevent health problems are discussed.

References


Hanse, Jan J. and Tomas Engström. “Sense of Coherence and Ill Health Among the Unemployed and Reemployed After Closure of an Assembly Plant,” Work and Stress 13 (3), (1999) 204–222.


Gender Variation in Asylum Experiences in the UK: The Role of Patriarchy and Coping Strategies

Ruth L. HEALEY

Abstract. Previous work suggests that female asylum seekers and refugees have more constraints on their actions than their male counterparts, as structural forces from the country of origin are reproduced in the host country. This paper explores the use of structuration theory in interpreting the impact of gender upon asylum seeker and refugee experiences in the UK. The experiences of, and coping strategies used by 8 male and 10 female asylum seekers and refugees from two different cities are analysed. Their experiences are examined in relation to different patriarchal forces. In comparison to the males, differences are apparent in the level and types of agency of the female asylum seekers and refugees. Within this study certain types of patriarchy are reproduced in British society particularly at the household level, whilst individuals are also influenced by institutional patriarchy within the wider society. The variation in experiences found here suggests the need for policy to recognise the heterogeneity of these groups, so as to provide the most appropriate support for individuals.

Keywords: asylum, refugees, gender, coping strategies, structuration theory

In seeking asylum and adjusting to a new country, asylum seekers and refugees often have to come to terms with, and potentially re-negotiate, complex aspects of their identities. Gender is one feature of their identity which may have a significant impact on their experiences on account of the different social structures between the country of origin and the host country. Previous work suggests that female asylum seekers and refugees have more constraints on their actions than their male counterparts (e.g. Bloch et al., 2000; RWRP, 2003; feminist review special issue, 2003). It is important to understand such distinct gendered experiences from several different perspectives to assist in developing support for individuals upon arrival and as they adjust to their new lives. This paper explores the potential use of structuration theory (Gidden 1984) to offer insights into the
gendered experiences of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK. The use of structuration theory within empirical studies has been infrequent (Gregson, 1989); yet it presents an opportunity to analyse the role of patriarchal structures within individual’s experiences in a different way.

**Context: gender and asylum in the UK**

Before exploring the gendered experiences of asylum seekers and refugees, it is important to establish the context of seeking asylum in the UK. The representation of men and women in the UK asylum figures have varied, alongside the ways in which their claims have been dealt with. In 2001¹ women in the UK claiming asylum in their own right represented only a fifth of the asylum seeking population (RWRP, 2003). It is likely, however, that there are many more women who could seek protection, as worldwide, women, children and the elderly constitute 80% of the total refugee population (CPWR, 2004). Women cannot claim asylum specifically on the basis of their gender. Despite work re-examining the definition of ‘refugee’ (e.g. Greatbatch, 1989), persecution as a woman remains absent from the grounds for asylum under the United Nations 1951 definition, although how this is interpreted varies from country to country (Crawley, 2001). Women can be exposed to, and experience, the same, and also different types of persecution as men (RWRP, 2003; Freedman, 2009). Women may experience rape, sexual violence, forced sterilisation, genital mutilation, domestic violence, and forced marriage, from which they are unable to get state protection (Mascini & van Bochove, 2009; Freedman, 2009; Asylum Aid, 2002). However, Bloch et al. (2000: 175) argue that the “practice of granting women humanitarian leave to remain², rather than refugee status³, reinforces the view that women and the issues of

¹ This research was conducted in 2003 consequently it is necessary to situate the research in the asylum context at that time and around the arrival of the research participants at the turn of the Twentieth Century.
² Humanitarian leave to remain is a less secure status than that of ‘refugee’ status. Humanitarian protection is granted to asylum seekers if it is accepted that they face a serious risk in their home country. Humanitarian protection normally allows the asylum seeker leave to stay in the UK for three years, although in some cases it is for a shorter period. After three years, they can apply for an extension or Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR). This is not granted automatically.
³ A refugee is defined by the United Nations (1951) as ‘a person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion is outside the country of his or her nationality and
gender persecution are less deserving of refugee status than the persecution which is experienced by their male counterparts.” Women are often understood as dependent, apolitical, caring, and a part of the family, rather than as asylum seekers or refugees in their own right (Mascini & van Bochove, 2009). Officials also have less awareness of how the gender of applicants “has shaped their experience of persecution” (Asylum Aid, 2002: 1). Therefore some genuine applications from women have a risk of failing due to a lack of understanding. In the UK, the Refugee Women’s Legal Group has worked to politicise this situation and actively lobby for the gendered nature of refugee experiences to be taken into account in policy and practice. The government has failed to engage with this in a meaningful way although it has made further progress than some other EU nations (Freedman, 2009). Some of the experiences of women asylum seekers are accepted in the UK as evidence of persecution of a specific social group (Crawley, 2001). This has led some women to be granted asylum on the basis of the extreme acts of violence they have experienced (for example, female genital mutilation and rape) (Crawley, 2001). These factors underlie the gendered experiences of individuals.

In relation to their experiences of the asylum process, men and women have also been shown to have different experiences in ‘choosing’ to seek asylum and their subsequent resettlement. Women may have less self-determination than men over the choice of their destination country or even, in some cases, the choice to leave their country of origin (Day & White, 2002). In their study of Bosnian and Somali refugees, Day & White (2002: 20) found that few women “displayed evidence of being in charge of their own destinies,” and that it was generally male “family members taking control and dealing with officialdom for them.” Although previous literature has investigated whether individuals had a choice in where they sought asylum (Koser, 2000; Robinson & Segrott, 2002), little reference has been given to the gendered nature of choice. It is important to acknowledge that the nature of ‘choice’ has implications for the experience of individuals in the host country. Bloch et al. (2000: 177) comment how “cultural norms and host society policies influence the resettlement of refugee women.” These experiences are in the context of the wider society’s response towards asylum seekers and refugees, as Vicsek, Keszi & Márikus (2008) have demonstrated in Hungary. Over time, in the UK, it is possible that female asylum seekers and refugees may gain greater agency
than they had upon arrival. However, women may remain more socially isolated than men (Bloch, 1997). Refugees implement coping strategies as attempts to establish a level of comfort in the receiving country. A distinction can be made between external and internal coping strategies. Internalised strategies are accomplished through internal beliefs inherent to the individual; they are ways of thinking about and seeing the world, for example, a positive attitude towards their situation. Whereas externalised strategies are ways of dealing with situations through external actions, for example, seeking further training. External actions such as taking language classes, may involve other people which provide the individual with support to negotiate the patriarchal structures encountered. As a consequence of the reproduction of structures from the country of origin, alongside different patriarchal structures in the host society, the type of strategies people utilise may be influenced by the gender of the person involved.

Methods

This paper draws on a wider project investigating the ‘choice’ and experiences of a group of asylum seekers and refugees in the UK. Healey (2006) provides an in-depth discussion of structuration theory and the way in which it might support an understanding of the variety of choices and experiences of asylum seekers and refugees. The current paper focuses upon variety of experiences of asylum seekers and refugees by gender. The focal point is the specific structure of patriarchy and the differences in the coping strategies adopted by the men and women interviewed. In seeking to investigate an assortment of different individual experiences, contacts were established in two contrasting cities in the UK: Gloucester and Sheffield. The interviews were conducted in the summer of 2003 with eight males and ten females, none of whom were related to one another\(^4\). They consisted of twelve refugees and six asylum seekers. To draw upon a range of behaviours participants were chosen from two refugee support centres: one with clients from a range of countries including Poland, Somalia, Kenya and Eritrea, and one centre which focused on supporting only individuals from the Yemen (see Table I for list of interviewees). Semi-structured interviews were used to enable interviewees to express their own opinions, experiences, aspirations and feelings (Hoggart et al., 2002).

\(^4\) The timing of this research has consequences for who were relevant research participants. Polish asylum seekers and refugees ceased to exist after 2004 when Poland acceded to the European Union allowing free movement to the UK.
Table I: List of interview participants (Names are pseudonyms)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
<th>Asylum Seeker or Refugee</th>
<th>Male or Female</th>
<th>Male or Female</th>
<th>Male or Female</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Interpreter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natalya</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>AS</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student at college</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enya</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
<td>Housewife and mother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meriton</td>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>AS</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
<td>Housewife and mother</td>
<td>Male friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadia</td>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lecturer and mother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kidan</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
<td>Housewife and mother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abdi</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>AS</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
<td>Retraining as a doctor in England</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faisali</td>
<td>Algeria</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
<td>Factory worker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yusuf</td>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>AS</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
<td>Awaiting asylum hearing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adil</td>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
<td>Journalist</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mulgeta</td>
<td>Eritrea</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student at college</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minuet</td>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>AS</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student at refugee centre</td>
<td>Biana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Biana</td>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student and mother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosa</td>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student at refugee centre</td>
<td>Biana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maryon</td>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td>Volunteer and student at refugee centre</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gina</td>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student and mother</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alfi</td>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td>Taxi driver</td>
<td>Bengie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bengie</td>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>AS</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student at college</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pea</td>
<td>Yemen</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td>Student at college</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All but one of the male interviews and seven out of ten of the female interviews were carried out in English; in the remaining, interpreters were used. These were generally friends of the participants, often people who had previously been interviewed. The use of friends to act as interpreters enabled the interviewees to feel more comfortable with the process; however, this may have affected the dialogue either through incorrect or tainted interpretation, or the influence of the interpreter on the participant. The interviews were analysed through a structuration lens looking for the ways in which structure and agency
worked within the lives of individuals. The quotes selected here represent the general and specific experiences of those individuals. Due to limited space, the level of detail given about each interviewee, and to contextualise points, is limited, so that some answers may appear too straightforward. In order to avoid the danger of over interpreting, points have been analysed within the context of the interview as a whole. It is acknowledged that the appearance of simplicity may result from the limited English skills of the participants and an inability to express the complexity of situations. Pseudonyms were used when the interviews were transcribed to preserve the anonymity of the respondents. Table I indicates the interviewee backgrounds.

Gloucester has a population of around 100,000 people, whereas Sheffield has a population of just over 500,000. Both cities have a similar proportion of asylum seekers at around 0.3% of the population. However, a consequence of the difference in the size of the cities is the type of refugee support provided. The Gloucester centre was the only one in the city and therefore catered for all asylum seekers and refugees in the area. The nature of this limited the national specific resources available to clients. In contrast, the centre in Sheffield catered specifically for Yemeni nationals. By working with one national group only, the centre was a more attractive option to individuals who wanted to maintain relationships with other Yemenis, thus consolidating the ethnic community. These individuals illustrate the experiences of refugees going to a centre based around nationality. Table II compares the facilities offered by the centres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table II: Refugee support centre differences in the two cities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approx 100,000 (2001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Asylum seeking population</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Caters for any asylum seekers or refugees</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nation specific centre</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women only group</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women and men used the centre for advice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Women English Lessons</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Men’s formal English Lessons</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Internet access Used by who?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children and men</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Gender variations in asylum experiences: a structuration framework

In analysing the role of patriarchy and coping strategies of individuals, structuration theory potentially offers a way to further comprehend the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees. Structuration theory has enhanced understanding of the migrant experience in several cases (e.g. Goss and Lindquist, 1995; Halfacree, 1995; Wolfel, 2005). However, although structuration theory has been used to analyse migrants who choose to leave their country of origin, the potential for insight into forced migrants, with a few exceptions (see Healey, 2006), is less established. The potential role of structuration theory for understanding patriarchy in the lives of asylum seekers and refugees has not been addressed; this paper goes some way towards filling this void.

Structuration theory supports an analysis of the structural forces of which asylum seekers and refugees are a part, examining the interactions between structures of patriarchy and the agency of individuals of different genders. Structural forces relate to hegemonic discourses within societies which steer individual or community behaviour. They produce or shape human behaviour as they are implicated in each moment of action, for example, patriarchy is the dominant structural force impacting on gender differences. Human agency is “the ability to act” (Valentine, 2001: 349). The balance between agency and structure influences this ‘ability’ whereby the comparative significance of structure and agency varies in strength in each instance of action. Individuals have diverse responses to the possibilities and restrictions available within societal structures. Structuration theory highlights how structures simultaneously constrain and enable experiences: whereby structure is a part of each moment of action, whilst concurrently actions reflect upon structures.

Reflexivity is an aspect of structuration theory. Reflexivity accentuates how change within the structures of society occurs through human agency. For example, in some communities in Britain, the reproduction of patriarchal relations is produced through agency at a household level rather than as a response to a pre-existing patriarchal structural force in the wider society (e.g. Shaw, 2000). Reflexivity consists of three elements: ontological security, discursive consciousness and practical consciousness (Giddens, 1984). Ontological security is a person’s understanding of their place, within their worldview, in which they feel secure. Forced migration to a new country unsettles this. Individuals have to re-establish a level of ontological
security by acquiring knowledge of the structural forces in the host country and the levels of agency they can exert within these structures. Discursive consciousness occurs when a person is able to provide a rational account of their behaviour and the reasons behind it (Giddens, 1984). Discursive consciousness is where an individual has an awareness of their role in producing and reproducing social life. Practical consciousness is a person’s unconscious monitoring of the events taking place around them (Giddens, 1984). This is the unconscious acknowledgment of the social structures and the taken-for-granted nature of the systems of which they are a part. Structural forces such as patriarchy and cultural norms are reproduced through the actions of individuals, influencing the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees in their host country.

The framework of structuration theory provides an interesting insight into the underlying taken-for-granted aspects of peoples’ experiences. However, the theory is not formulaic, each respondent is an individual; hence this research is not representative of wider asylum communities, but rather indicates the gender variation within a heterogenic group. The following sections examine these features through the analysis of empirical data; for clarity the analysis is divided into structure and agency, though it is recognised that this separation is somewhat artificial.

**Structure: patriarchal structures**

Patriarchy, meaning literally ‘rule of the father’, is a structural aspect of many of the origin societies of the interviewees. Patriarchy is also present in the UK, albeit in a different form. Walby (1990: 21) identifies six patriarchal structures: 1) household: whereby women’s household labour is expropriated by their male cohabitees, and her maintenance is received in exchange for her labour; 2) paid work: in which complex forms of patriarchal closure within waged labour, excludes women and segregates them into the worst, least skilled jobs; 3) the state: the state is systematically biased towards patriarchal interests in policies and actions; 4) violence: male violence against women is systematically condoned and legitimated by the state’s refusal to intervene, except in exceptional circumstances; 5) sexuality: where two features are prominent: compulsory heterosexuality and sexual double standards; and 6) cultural institutions: gender differentiated forms of subjectivity whereby institutions create representations of women within a patriarchal gaze e.g. religion, education and the media. For women in different situations the degree of patriarchy and the form it takes varies.
Table III: Private and public patriarchy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form of patriarchy</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Public</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dominant structure</td>
<td>Household production</td>
<td>Employment/state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wider patriarchal structures</td>
<td>Employment, State, Sexuality, Violence, Culture</td>
<td>Household production, Sexuality, Violence, Culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period</td>
<td>C19th</td>
<td>C20th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode of expropriation</td>
<td>Individual</td>
<td>Collective</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patriarchal strategy</td>
<td>Exclusionary</td>
<td>Segregationist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Walby (1990: 24)

Walby (1990) lists distinctions between private and public patriarchy (Table III). This table is based upon Western cultural ideas of patriarchy and how the structure has changed between the 19th and 20th Centuries. The impact of patriarchy for asylum seekers and refugees in the UK is a complex interaction between both private and public structures, whereby women may experience exclusion in specific areas. Yet, even if their household structures enable them to participate more widely, they are likely to still experience other forms of patriarchy, such as segregation, in the UK. A structuration argument illustrates that patriarchy may lead to women having less power than men due to the way in which resources are allocated. Yet these women still have power within these structures, as agents may always act differently.

In the private sphere, patriarchal structures from the country of origin are most prominent within the women’s everyday lives. However in the public realm, patriarchy in the post-migration society is institutionalised within, and reproduced by, the government, such as schools. Patriarchy at a household scale is reproduced by individuals, at the practical conscious level, who are influenced by the patriarchal cultural scripts with which they grew up. As Freedman (2009: 177) points out: “the gendered division of labour and gendered roles adopted within most cultures mean that women’s activities will often be different from those of men.” This is partly because patriarchy can empower some women as they feel protected from outside influences (Mohanty, 1991). As a consequence, women may have less self-determination in decision-making which affects them, yet feel that they have a higher level of ontological security. For example when asked why she had come to the UK Enya, a Polish refugee, explained that it was her husband who had wanted to seek asylum in the UK. During the conversation it became...
Gender Variation in Asylum Experiences in the UK

JIMS - Volume 4, number 2, 2010

apparent that her actions were the result of her husband’s decisions. Her lack of involvement in the decision to come to the UK suggests that the patriarchal relations she experienced in Poland are being reproduced here. Enya expected her husband to make such decisions due to the nature of their relationship, which appeared to be underlain by household patriarchy. Yet, the familiarity of this relationship, and her past experience of patriarchy as part of her everyday life, is significant in how she views the world. In attempting to regain a sense of security in the UK, such familiarity is comforting. This can be seen in other examples of the experience of individuals who have moved to a new country.

Individuals “renegotiate expectations, behaviours and relationships” (Matsuoka & Sorenson, 1999: 218) in the process of settling into a new country. Male asylum seekers and refugees may experience a re-definition of roles in the receiving country, decreasing their comfort level. Upon arrival, they may experience a loss of identity if they become “unable to fulfil their traditional role as family provider” (Bloch et al., 2000: 176). This is a consequence of three main factors: the asylum system preventing them from working, the ‘feminisation of the economy’ whereby the availability of jobs deemed to be appropriate male work is limited, and non-economic influences on personal identity such as cultural differences in the host country. This can lead to individuals feeling powerless. The stress of this experience may lead to marital breakdowns, causing further stress to everybody in the family (Harrell-Bond, 1986). The reproduction, consciously or unconsciously, of patriarchal structures at the household level help to consolidate the patriarch’s position in the family and enable him to maintain some sense of control in a situation in which he typically lacks command.

As an asylum seeker from Somalia, Yusuf demonstrated a clear awareness of the patriarchal relations dominant within his country of origin. However, this awareness contrasted with his lack of recognition of similar structures in the UK. He commented how, “once you have reached here it is ... different because everyone is treated equally.” In this comment, Yusuf suggests that he is aware of patriarchy in Somalia. However, he did not recognise that, despite the difference in the types of patriarchy, the inequality continues to exist in the UK. Adil, a journalist and refugee from Eritrea, believed that female arrivals frequently have a lower level of education than their male counterparts.

“Yes, lots of women I know have got less education background. They have difficulty filling in forms... finding a job and systematically worrying about how they
are going to make the best out of everything.”

Although his assumption that some women are less educated than men, may be true of the women he knows, his understanding of the reasons behind such differences appear to be based on his view of women as having innately different ways of thinking, for example, he describes them as “systematically worrying”. This conjecture relates to the impact of institutional patriarchy upon his views, whereby he suggests that women behave inherently differently from men and therefore achieve less educationally. This structure is part of his practical consciousness: his attitudes contribute to the reproduction of the structure, whilst he is unaware how patriarchal structures have influenced his own perspective.

Patriarchal relations also influence the agency of individuals seeking asylum. In making his arrangements to come to the UK Abdi believed he had self-determination with regard to his destination, considering himself to have greater control than the women he knew.

“You need to be daring. Ladies and men are different. Guys sometimes are normal or aggressive, women are different. Men have to try to support ladies.”

Abdi believed that women needed men to ‘look after’ them. Therefore he appears to consider that women’s sense of security and comfort is brought about through male support. To maintain or increase their ontological security, particularly when applying for asylum, some women may depend on male acquaintances or family members. This may empower the woman through the support that she receives. For example frequently, when seeking asylum, the female application is tied to their husband’s. However, if the marriage subsequently fails, then as the application was in the husband’s name, the female refugee’s status may be in jeopardy (Bloch et al., 2000).

Not all women experience the asylum system in this male dominated way. Sadia was in a position to make her own decision to seek asylum.

“We both wanted to escape because we were both really suffering, and to see my husband in prison, yes, that was really hard, so we both wanted to escape.”

Sadia’s husband was the principle applicant for asylum, but they made the decision to apply together. By being a part of the decision-making process, on arrival in the UK, Sadia had a greater level of agency than some of the other interviewees. She was, however, the only woman interviewed to have such a high level of agency in the decision to seek asylum. Kidan, who came to the UK from Somalia, thought that she was travelling to the USA. She was duped when “the
man who was [paying for her trip] ... disappeared” when they reached Heathrow. Kidan had no control over her destination; she was reliant on the people who trafficked her to the UK. Consequently, Kidan had substantially less self-determination in her experience than Sadia. This could be because Sadia, as a lecturer in Burundi and with a more extensive educational background, may be wiser to potential scams than housewife Kidan.

On arrival, in contrast to men’s potential loss of agency, women may have more economic options in the receiving country, as fewer patriarchal structures prevent access to the public sphere. However, they may also be expected to fulfil domestic tasks such as childcare with little assistance from their husbands, making it difficult to balance two roles. This negotiation between private and public patriarchal structures may affect women’s sense of belonging in the host country. Sadia commented how “childcare is really a nightmare here because you can’t work, you can’t study, because you don’t get childcare.” For Sadia, her husband was relatively supportive of her desire to work, but due to the demands from his own employment, he did not take up the role of caretaker for their son. The absence of extended family to support childcare in asylum emphasises how the responsibility for children lies predominantly with women. Exerting their agency some women may challenge this and employ others to care for their children, yet this may go against strongly ingrained cultural norms.

The comments and actions of the interviewees represent certain understandings of the world. The structure of patriarchy is rarely disputed, and although recognised by some in their country of origin, it is not acknowledged in the same way within the host country. The female experience here is affected by patriarchal structures and expected familial roles. However, the intention is not to suggest that these women are victims of the societal structures, with the potential danger of cultural reductionism, but to illustrate how men and women recognise structures of patriarchy differently and how this subsequently affects their experiences.

Human agents are complex and do not just respond to the stimuli of structural forces (Giddens, 1984). They have “stocks of knowledge” formed through the continuous observation of their activities (Schutz, 1972). The knowledge individuals have relates to their experiences in their country of origin. In countries with strong patriarchal structures these stocks of knowledge are more limited. It is through this knowledge that people rationalise their actions. No
action is taken in isolation from the rest of the person’s life (Gutting, 1996). If the social structure is one of patriarchal relations then the individual’s decisions are based within this understanding of the world. This may maintain a sense of comfort, yet active agency may also increase ontological security through the development of coping strategies.

Agency: coping strategies

Agency is powerful; people always have the potential to act otherwise (Giddens, 1984). Individuals are socialised into placing the systems and structures of society before their agency, as their actions have wider societal consequences. Individuals who grew up with certain patriarchal structures may accept such limitations, to the extent that they do not dispute them. Structure is therefore a significant tool for explaining actions, providing a basis for understanding the social worlds impacting upon individuals. However structures are not autonomous, they are maintained by individuals who reconstruct them through their actions (Sarre, 1986). People who abide by patriarchal structures consequently reproduce these structures by living them. They therefore have agency within dominant structures. Coping strategies are a way of regaining a level of comfort in the host societies (ontological security). The variation in gendered experience leads to the use of different coping strategies.

As a coping method, an asylum seeker might get involved in volunteering in order to utilise their time whilst they are prohibited from seeking paid employment (Volunteering and Asylum Project, 2004). This could help them adjust to differences in social structure and develop a positive attitude by feeling involved in the host society. Another option for many people is to take language classes. However, as Bloch et al. (2000: 179) argue “women’s access to language classes and other forms of training may be severely curtailed due to childcare responsibilities and practices such as female seclusion.” This gender dimension may limit female access to externalised coping strategies. In research in the London borough of Newham, Bloch (1997) found that the gender differentiation in language problems was maintained over time, where women arrived with less proficient English than their male counterparts. Such classes are a way of dealing with situations through external actions to regain agency. Males may have more opportunities to use these strategies than females. Externalised coping strategies are, however, often linked to internalised coping strategies; the attitude of a
person spurs them on to seek a greater comfort level in the host country through active coping methods.

Internalised coping strategies, are particularly connected with ontological security as they contribute to a person’s perception of their position within their world view. There is little research specifically on internal strategies; examples in the literature rarely describe behaviour in such terms. Monzel (1993) discusses the way in which Hmong women, in Syracuse, USA, dealt with their experiences. One of her interviewees, Kue, remarked how she “lived only one day at a time” (Monzel, 1993: 16). This strategy of concentrating on the here and now helped her cope, as the uncertain future was potentially distressing. Another survey found that eight out of ten female asylum seekers locked themselves in their homes by early evening (Casciani, 2002). This reaction appears to be a fear of their new situation; to cope, the women blocked out the external world at times of particular vulnerability. Females may be forced to adopt internal coping strategies that do not progress to external strategies. This creates fewer opportunities for them to be involved in the host society than their male counterparts.

Internalised coping strategies are beliefs intrinsic to the individual which shape how they see and think about the world. Both male and female interviewees utilised internal coping strategies. Faisali, an Algerian refugee, living in Gloucester discussed how he coped with “friends” by remaining detached:

“I have some friends here, they go out sometimes, usually I don’t go because I don’t want to get too attached, I might feel something for them.”

Faisali had experienced rejection since arriving; therefore he was hesitant about becoming close to people. Internally he decided to remain apart from his new friends, so as to limit his chances of being rejected again. However, such a strategy has negative consequences. Through isolating himself, Faisali limits his involvement with the host community, extending the length of time it would take for him to regain the same level of comfort he had in Algeria, if at all.

Maryon, Enya and Meriton all had positive attitudes and intentions. They all talked of how they would like, and intended, to learn English. This plan acted as a coping strategy for these women; the idea that they could do something to improve their experiences in the UK. However, although, they had all been in the UK for at least 6 months, it was only Maryon who had moved from an internal hope of learning English to actually going to classes. Internalised strategies are ways of thinking that can lead to the adoption of externalised strategies. Maryon’s
intention had moved into action whereby she was studying once a week at the refugee centre in Sheffield in a women-only class. This class was put in place specifically for women from the Yemen. With these connections it was perhaps easier for Maryon to move from internal to external strategies, than for Meriton and Enya, living in Gloucester, where there were no women only groups. Despite access to the women’s group some of the Yemeni women still chose to learn English at home.

“In my spare time I like to stay at home, follow the English channel [pause] sometimes I write down words and translate them. Sometimes if I have a party or wedding I go, but I like to stay at home, to do anything to improve my English” (Biana).

Biana wished to emphasise how English was a priority for her, yet although she had contacts with the refugee support centre in Sheffield (this was where she was interviewed), she did not talk directly about the opportunity to learn English there. This was in contrast to many of the males interviewed who had some background in English before arriving, and/or had sought to learn English in formal classes available from local colleges. Fasaili commented how he “couldn’t speak English, back home I had three years college, but I didn’t learn that much.” As a man in Algeria, Fasaili had been given the opportunity to access some English education in his country of origin. This basis of knowledge perhaps gave him some comfort when he first arrived in the UK, and made a college course in English less daunting.

This distinction between the male and female experiences of seeking English education is significant. In this group of people, the women were learning English at home on their own or via women only voluntary classes run out of the refugee support centre, whereas the men were attending formal tuition at the local college. This raises interesting insights into the effect of patriarchal forces in the public realm. The presence of the female space in Sheffield empowered some of the women to action their intentions by taking English lessons. However, as the female courses run in Sheffield, were on a voluntary basis with limited resources, the English skills of the participants were generally lower than the males interviewed. This highlights an interesting complexity to the nature of acceptable ‘public’ space within the patriarchal structures. To learn English effectively requires attending classes which are held in public spaces, rather than in isolation at home. In the Sheffield refugee support centre, the public space was made semi-private by
making it only available to women, hence overcoming some of the patriarchal barriers. Yet in producing this semi-private space, the formality of the lessons decreased, reducing the quality of the education the women were receiving relative to the men who had been taught in a formal college environment. This has two significant effects on the contact women have with wider society: firstly, the women were not mixing with a variety of people via their English classes, and secondly, their level of English was lower due to the poorer standard of education they were receiving, further limiting their opportunity for contact with the wider society in the future.

Religion offers an internal coping strategy for some. In this study the interviewees mentioned the support of their religious beliefs since they had arrived. For some of the Muslim participants, a gender variation was identified in the way religion acted as a coping strategy. Yusuf commented:

“Well I’m not very religious... I didn’t go to get help from them anyway, but yeah – they are ok, they normally just see you on the way and say ‘Hi’.”

In contrast to Yusuf, the female Muslims in Gloucester did not have access to the mosque, as is the norm in Islamic societies, therefore whereas male Muslim beliefs also provided a meeting point and social contact, female Muslims were more likely to worship at home in isolation.

This is another example of the private-public distinctions in the availability of coping strategies for these men and women. Women’s coping revolved around more private spaces, whereas men had access to both private and public opportunities to support their settlement. Although somewhat dismissed by Yusuf, the contact with the mosque provides him with a source of hospitality which the females in the same city lacked. Internally these women may use their religious beliefs or attitudes in order to cope. However, as illustrated here, they have been unable to transform these perspectives into external strategies. This, in itself, is an effect of the dominance of the production and reproduction of the patriarchal structures within the religious institution.

The refugee support centres also provided options for utilising external strategies. For everyone, the use of organisational advice and support meant visiting the centre. In Gloucester the centre was used by both men and women, but it was frequented much more regularly by men and children for social activities, such as sport facilities or Internet access. Natalya commented that the refugee centre “is a special place ... I come when I need help, otherwise I stay at home.” Natalya was
most comfortable in the private realm of her home. Her construction of the refugee support centre as “a special place” blurs the boundaries between the public-private distinctions about the centre. The place was significant on account of her feeling more comfortable there. The support of the centre made it familiar and safe, the only place outside of her home that provided the same level of security. They provided Enya with furniture, and helped Meriton complete immigration papers. However, like Natalya, other than seeking help, and English lessons, most of the female interviewees did not use the centres for social activities, limiting social contact and the opportunity to utilise external strategies. Abdi illustrates the support the refugee centres can provide:

“When you come for the first time they give you the clothes and the bedding... then they tell you where you can get solicitors, they help in getting you to the interviews, they provide transport and such things, and occasionally you find one or two people that you can talk to in these facilities.”

Abdi experienced similar support to the female participants; however, by using the centre as a place for social activity, he also found friends. In Sheffield the more formal female-only sessions of English tuition, and other activities such as needlework, enabled the women to make friends with other women. For both groups the refugee support centres therefore offered spaces which increased the comfort level of the interviewees.

To summarise, and draw the artificial separation between structure and agency together: the coping strategies available to individuals may be constrained by different patriarchal structures. Individuals, who only use internal coping strategies as a consequence of patriarchal constraints, subsequently reproduce these structures. However, if individuals move towards utilising external methods they may be empowered to challenge the patriarchal structures implicated in their daily lives.

Conclusion

The use of the theoretical framework of structuration theory provides some insight into the gendered experiences of the interviewees. However, through using this theoretical framework too much homogeneity can be implied within the research group and therefore the individual voice can be lost. Although limited by space, this has been partly overcome by providing the voice of the interviewees. The theory enables greater analysis of the variation in experiences, but does not
represent the individual. Structuration theory has been used explicitly in empirical studies only infrequently previously (Gregson, 1989); but this research shows that the theory offers insights into the effects of different patriarchal structures in relation to varying levels of agency of a group of asylum seeker and refugees.

Due to the nature of this study, generalisations were not intended because of the high diversity within the group in terms of gender, legal status, country of origin and location in the UK. The findings suggest that there is a distinct difference in the level and types of agency of individuals. The research found that different types and varying levels of patriarchy were significant for these asylum seekers and refugees within the UK. However, this does not reflect the complex re-negotiations of gender relations, both positive and negative, that continuously take place within communities and households. This structural force may be particularly significant for female asylum seekers and refugees due to the societal structures of their countries of origin (Freeman, 2009). This supports previous work illustrating the lack of access women have to language classes due to familial responsibilities (e.g. Franz, 2003) and the maintenance of gender difference in language ability after arrival in Britain (e.g. Bloch, 1997). The female experience here was often one of more limited agency than that of their male counterparts. For example, childcare was shown to remain a female responsibility, due to the patriarchal structures of the countries of origin and institutional patriarchy in the UK.

The coping strategies used in the host country generally varied by gender. Both males and females had some opportunity to use internal and external coping strategies; however in this study the male interview participants made greater use of external strategies than the females. The female participants utilised internal coping strategies due to their limited agency within the host country. Through the utilisation of coping strategies, of either sort, their ontological security increased and therefore so did their level of agency and understanding of their place within the societal structures. This could lead to changes in coping and movement towards external strategies. By living in the UK, it is possible that some of these gender variations may decrease as both women and men adjust to the societal structures. The use of external coping strategies lead to higher levels of ontological security than those adjusting to their new situations using internal methods; as through external actions people engage with the societal structures and the host community. However, the opportunities open to the use of external coping strategies vary by gender.
This research has further highlighted the variety of different experiences of individuals (Korad, 2003). Refugees and asylum seekers should not be considered as homogenous groups, they need to be thought of and talked about as individuals. Understanding how patriarchal structures affect individuals differently, how the use of strategies vary by gender, and how the opportunities for the use of external coping strategies vary by the support available in different places, could enable the development of more focused support for the individual. This suggests that there is a need to recognise the heterogeneity of this marginalised section of society in order to achieve greater support for individuals.

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Educational Development and Detachment Processes of Male Adolescents from Immigrant Families

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Abstract. Social class, gender, and migration status notably influence social inequalities in the German educational system. Empirical studies reveal that especially male students from Turkish immigrant families belong to the most disadvantaged group with regard to educational opportunities. In order to identify causes for this we reconstruct and contrast biographies of successful and less successful educational careers of male adolescents from Turkish immigrant families. Our theoretical framework is based on the assumption that educational careers depend decisively on the way youths master the twofold challenge connected with adolescence and migration. Adolescent detachment processes are conceived as intergenerational occurrences (cf. King 2002), in which the quality of intergenerational family relationships as well as the biographical treatment of a particular migration project on the part of the parents play a significant role.

Keywords: adolescence, male immigrants, education (bildung), intergenerational relations, qualitative research

Introduction

In recent years, empirical studies, partly applied internationally, such as the PISA study, have confirmed the existence of a shockingly high level of social inequality in the German educational system, which becomes apparent mainly in the strong correlation between school achievement, on one hand, and such factors as social class, migration status, and gender, on the other (cf. Baumert et al. 2001). Studies specifically examining the educational progress of children and youth from immigrant families have shown that students from immigrant families have fewer opportunities to complete their education than their native peers and that, moreover, on average male youths in this group perform worse than females. Young males from Turkish immigrant families form a particularly disadvantaged group.

Among immigrant groups in Germany, those with a Turkish background
represent the largest immigrant population, consisting of some three million people. Half of them were born in Germany, a higher percentage than in every other group. Compared to other immigrant groups, however, this group ranks far lower in education participation rates. By way of explanation, the group of immigrants of Turkish origin shows more people remaining without educational attainment (30 % vs. 1,4 % on the part of autochthonous Germans) and fewer people obtaining access to institutions of higher education (14 % vs. 38 % on the part of autochthonous Germans). Moreover, such educational deficits complicate their integration into Germany’s labor market. Particularly alarming is the high youth unemployment rate, which at 28% is twice as high as that of native Germans (cf. Woellert et al. 2009, p. 49).

In order to explore reasons for these findings, which have thus far been the object of little research, qualitative studies are required which trace both successful and less successful educational careers and reconstruct circumstances that give rise to them. This marks the starting point of the research project, which is presented in the following.¹ Our research aim is to gain insight into the factors responsible for the developmental differences by means of comparative reconstruction of the biographical development in formally successful and less successful educational careers of male adolescents from Turkish immigrant families. For the purposes of our research, those educational careers are considered successful in which the young males attained the Abitur² and have recently begun their academic studies, whereas peers not in possession of the Abitur, because they either did not attend schools leading to this educational attainment or dropped out of such schools, are considered less successful.

School and family as key variables for educational success

According to previous discussions on the reproduction of social inequalities in the educational system, the evident disadvantage faced by children from underprivileged and immigrant families is considerably influenced by the following two factors: school and family. These factors act as key variables and social filters

¹ The research project in question is entitled „Educational Careers and Adolescent Detachment Processes in Male Youths from Turkish Immigrant Families“, promoted by the DFG and under scientific guidance of Prof. Dr. Vera King and Prof. Dr. Hans-Christoph Koller, Department of Educational Science 1, General, Intercultural and Comparative Educational Science of Faculty 4, University of Hamburg. Research associates: Javier Carnicer and Janina Zölch, student assistant: Elvin Subow.
² High school degree qualifying for access to institutions of higher education.
impacting the educational participation and educational success of subsequent
generations. Institutional discrimination against children from immigrant families
originating in the school, contributing, in turn, to the disadvantageous educational
progress of children and youths with immigration history, could be pointed out
empirically (cf. e.g. Baumert et al. 2001; Gomolla & Radtke 2002). It remains
unclear, however, how exactly “the process of intergenerational transmission of
educational opportunities” (Becker & Lauterbach 2004, p. 13) takes place. National
as well as international studies on migration and education repeatedly emphasized
that familial relationships play a significant role in the transmission or also
transformation of educational inequalities (cf. e.g. Delcroix 2000; Gans 1992; Sayad
1991; Simon 2003; Soremski 2008; Terren & Carrasco 2007; Zhou 1996). It remains
unclear, however, how “the process of intergenerational transmission of
educational opportunities” takes place in particular with regard to school and
especially the family of origin (Becker & Lauterbach 2004, p. 13).

While we can assume that connections between the lower educational
success of children from immigrant families and their social background exist, this
neither represents a mere consequence of class-specific capital resources (in
Bourdieu’s sense) nor, in a narrower sense, a class- or immigration-specific lack of
educational aspiration (cf. Birnbaum 2007). Statistical surveys clearly indicate that
the educational aspirations of immigrant parents are significantly higher than those
of autochthonous parents with comparable socio-economic status (cf. Kurz &
Paulus 2008, p. 5501). It appears that approaches attempting to provide
explanations focusing on capital resources and the degree of educational
aspirations need to be differentiated by incorporating additional factors. This
includes the quality of intergenerational relationships within a family (cf. Diewald &
Schupp 2004), which affects not only the family’s capital resources in various ways,
but also – and this constitutes the focus of our project – the way in which, in the
process of adolescent detachment, experiences in the family of origin are processed
and handed down, and the way family- or mileu-specific structures of meaning and
practice can be modified.

Adolescent detachment processes in this context describe the potential
transformation of the parent-child relationship towards more emotional and
cognitive space, as well as providing behavioral leeway (in terms of Steinberg
1996), which includes negotiating and remodeling familial experiences. Here, the
detachment process is not to be understood as a one-sided developmental task,
Educational Development and Detachment Processes of Male Adolescents
JIMS - Volume 4, number 2, 2010

but as an intergenerational and intersubjective process. The conditions arising thereby which facilitate detachment processes and self-positioning also vary according to the generative competencies of parents and the quality of parent-child relationships. It is necessary for the adult generations to allow and support the individuation processes of adolescents (cf. Schubert 2005). The opportunities that adolescents are granted “for the exploration of the outer world as well as for exhaustive self-exploration” (King 2002, p. 93) are very important. With regard to adolescent detachment processes, it is crucial that both parents and children mutually acknowledge the differences in their particular patterns of interpretation, behavior, and perception and simultaneously preserve relatedness as well as proximity. Consequently, our study considers both young men and their parents and therefore incorporates perspectives of both parents and sons on the familial relationships.

The doubled transformation challenge of adolescence and migration

Adolescence constitutes a doubled challenge under conditions of immigration (cf. Koller 2009). On the one hand, youths with immigration history are confronted with a shift from child to adult just as all youths in modernized societies. Likewise, they deal with experiences of individuation accompanying this shift which relate to the mode of their parents’ own detachment processes. On the other hand, migration and the associated necessity of separation and reorganization within the immigrated family and its members create specific conditions for the processes of separation and restructuration in the adolescent descendants (cf. Akthar 1999). Moreover, youths with immigration history experience such processes under special conditions insofar as within entities such as peer groups, school, or public life, which are becoming more important in the course of adolescence, they are usually labeled “outsiders” as opposed to the “established” (in the sense of Elias & Scotson 1965; cf. Juhasz & Mey 2003). Thus, youths with immigration history have to deal with the additional experience of otherness. It is worth examining how the educational success of youths with immigration history is influenced by this twofold, interrelated challenge of adolescence under conditions of migration. Similarly, it needs to be clarified in what way the competency of self-positioning within social space is connected with the quality and outcomes of the adolescent detachment process.

Summarizing the viewpoints outlined thus far, we can assume that
socialization at home represents one of the central factors in the reproduction of educational inequality. First of all, however, we need to concretize and shed more light on the specific functional mechanisms operating here. In so doing, it is precisely the transitional areas between familial and extra-familial experiences which become especially important during adolescence, that need to be taken into account.

It is these adolescent developmental and detachment processes which appear to be the missing link, as they are greatly influenced by the family of origin and, at the same time, represent a transitional zone between family and school, as well as other extra-familial social fields.

A detailed qualitative analysis will help to reveal the complexity and subtleness of the connections sketched out above. Our study is therefore based on biographical interviews (cf. Schütze 1977) with twenty young men from Turkish immigrant families and their parents, interviews which will be evaluated by means of narrative analysis (cf. Schütze 1983) and objective hermeneutical methodology (cf. Oevermann 1979). In addition, the work on each case is discussed in detail among the members of staff and processed according to the reflexive loop. The composition of the project’s staff, consisting of scholars with immigration history and without, proved very effective in that it created specific constellations of proximity and distance to the material under examination (cf. Merriam et al. 2001).

**Typology of the link between educational careers and adolescent detachment processes**

After evaluating the first interviews, we summarized the results of the case analyses in the form of a preliminary typology. This was done by means of contrastive case comparison between the families according to the principle of maximum variation (cf. Kelle & Kluge 1999). The main focus of typification lies on the links between (successful and less successful) educational careers and adolescent detachment processes, which were analyzed under the aspect of generational relationships as well as the processing of the familial immigration history. Thus far, four types have been established, consisting of two successful and two less successful educational careers.³

³ Concerning the parents, the quality of the transmission of educational aspirations from parent to child, as well as parental support, serve as differentiation categories for typification. Here, the way in which the educational aspirations and delegations of the parents are conveyed to the adolescent child is closely connected with the sons’ respective personal
It is characteristic for Type 1, termed Appropriation of Parental Educational Objectives and consisting of young men with successful educational achievements, that during the period of adolescence sons manage to view advancement as their own project, even if their educational career is burdened with the heavy weight of parental expectations. This indicates that, despite restrictive educational objectives, the intergenerational relationships within the family allow the sons enough space for independent development. A stable relationship between parent and child is an equally important factor: it ensures support in the execution of decisions, it lessens social distance that may possibly arise between parent and child due to the child’s educational success, and it provides space for adolescent development.

Type 2, termed Adaptation to Parental Objectives, is characterized, in contrast, by the tendency of the young men to take on the high educational aspirations of their parents without internalizing them in a way comparable to Type 1. Parental educational aspirations are mediated through high (psychological) pressure exerted by the parents on the child. Conspicuously for Type 2 subjects, spaces for adolescent development are highly constricted. Potential failure, which would negate the parents’ hopes and efforts, may cause great emotional stress on these adolescents, since they have a very close relationship with their parents and an adolescent detachment process could not take place. Thus the sons take on their parents’ educational objectives and try to achieve them.

Two further types can be differentiated among those young men whose educational careers are less successful: Characteristic for Type 3, termed Failure In Fulfillment of Parental Objectives, is that here, too, the parents entrust their hopes of educational advancement to their sons who, however, do not manage to fulfill this goal or who refuse, in the sense of an act of adolescent rebellion, to do so. In the interviews the parents assigned to this type depict themselves as being highly engaged. Rather than supporting their sons constructively, however, they urge their sons to achieve an aim which they (the parents) have predetermined. But if the sons do not succeed in achieving this aim, these parents react with strong and
pressing disappointment, whilst the sons’ ideas and feelings remain unconsidered. In addition, the space for adolescent development is limited. A central factor for explaining the sons’ failure is, that the sons do not deal constructively with the expectations and pressure of their parents, which makes adolescent detachment impossible and, likewise, blocks possibilities on the way to a successful educational career.

Type 4 is marked by the sons’ ever-increasing lack of direction in the course of adolescence, which results from problematic familial relationships. These young men are on their own, whether in matters of setting goals or the implementation of their education. The lack of direction, which causes failure, is mainly triggered by unresolved problems within familial relationships. These lead to a forced and desperate quest for stability, orientation, and recognition, with the adolescents swaying back and forth in regard to their aims. The adolescents’ persistent quest further weaken their commitment to their own educational projects, which disperse and fade into the background, until finally educational careers are abandoned altogether.

Contrastive case analysis

To provide a more detailed discussion of the significance of these preliminary results in light of our initial question, we would like to identify the contrasts between exemplary cases corresponding to Types 1 and 3 discussed above.

Engin – Appropriation of parental educational objectives

The first case concerns the biography of Engin, a 25-year-old law student describing his uncommonly successful educational career. He grew up as the son of a metal worker and a kindergarten teacher in a so-called “problem quarter” in a German city. Due to his good marks, Engin was the only migrant child in his class to be recommended for gymnasium [the college preparatory secondary school] at the end of primary school. Initially he received good marks at gymnasium, too, but around the seventh grade they began to slide. After finishing secondary school with a relatively low final grade-point average, he completed his law studies much quicker than is usual and passed the first state examination with excellent grades.

In order to shed light on the circumstances of Engin’s successful educational career, we examine the educational aspirations, parental support, and
the parents’ migration experiences, and interpret them in terms of their interrelatedness.

Mr. and Mrs. Güngör’s stated aim as parents is the educational success of both their sons. In this context, Mr. Güngör’s phrase “That is where we want to go!” sounds as if he were talking about a conjoint project. This project is not (merely) about the sons’ wishes and their individual life paths, but rather about a group as a whole (“we” – the family), sharing the aim. Hence, the desired success takes on the character of an order, entrusted to the children by their parents. This influences parental support, especially because the parents view educational advancement as a family project, one to which they commit themselves intensely. So Mrs. Güngör buys her son new books ceaselessly and her husband gets involved with Engin’s school as a member of the parent-teacher association. He has a share in Engin’s recommendation for gymnasium too.

The analysis of the interviews with the parents shows that this strong will to succeed on the part of the parents should also be considered in the context of the parents’ respective handling of the migration experience. Mr. Güngör has not gained what he expected through migration. With regard to his wife, we can observe that her successful career was brought to an end as a result of leaving her native country; in other words, she lost something through migration. In both cases the narratives dealing with migration clearly contrast with the parents’ usual speech style in the other interview sections; these differences are made apparent through difficulties with verbalization and broken speech, which reinforce the impression that migration is a problematic issue for them. When he immigrated to Germany, Engin’s father hoped for the possibility to study at university, but these hopes did not materialize. Instead, he works as a skilled worker to this day, far removed from the academic studies of which he had dreamt. Because he could not attend university, the mission is now passed on to his sons: his ultimate ambitions were “that at least, they have a good education, right?” Mrs. Güngör married her husband in the belief that he would stay in Turkey, but shortly after marriage he returned to Germany. She followed him to Germany with a heavy heart, even though, as she says, her hopes for study at university in Turkey were shattered. In Germany the young woman, whose plan was to start academic studies, was unable to do so, because of various hindrances, e.g. language, accreditation. After working in several simple jobs which, as she puts it, she had to quit due to allergy, she trained as a preschool teacher. She has worked in this profession ever since. In the

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4 Engin’s parents, who also have another son.
interview Mrs. Güngör states that she had had a difficult path with many struggles. Discrimination experiences play a central role in her narration. Robbed of her chance to study at university she became unhappy. Now, at least her sons shall pursue the pathway to higher education in her place.

At this point the dual transformational challenge for subsequent generations, namely “the transformations of adolescence, embedded in the mastering and regeneration of migration” (King 2005, p. 73) becomes especially obvious. As they consider that their migration project did not succeed, the parents convey the following message to their children: “Live my dreams!” (cf. Rottacker & Akdeniz 2002). But this message can be burdening and confining for subsequent generations and, as King (2005) has already demonstrated, may cause problematic developments in educational careers accordingly in various constellations.

Engin, however, manages to become extraordinarily successful in his education and, at the same time, declare it to be a project of his own. When we attempt to grasp the complex conditions surrounding his educational success a particular passage in the beginning of the interview with Engin catches our attention. In this passage he relates the deterioration of his school performance at gymnasium in the following way:

“Well, my parents uh, especially my father was also a member of the parents’ council and so on, he was definitely very committed and uh, he often thinks that my success is his work. At least I have that feeling, but they know nothing about what’s going on in my head, they thought I had lost my way, because I had such bad marks and whatever. But basically I had everything under control. To me school was, from grade eight to thirteen, really just: I want my Abitur, so that I can study and then I’m really going to get started.”

Engin emphasizes that it is not his father but himself who is the father of his success. He asserts that his school career, significantly shaped by his parents’ supportive efforts, meant no more than a pre-stage for his law study at which point he finally “got started.” Relating to this study he explicitly speaks of a plan which he had himself, namely not only to pass but to do it excellently and to stand out from the crowd of other students. Engin tries to make clear that he pursued his own strategies to attain the Abitur already during his school days. But it appears that most of all during his years of study it becomes increasingly possible for Engin not only to fulfill his parents’ expectations but to allow himself more space for his own. His independence is ensured by the fact that he does not only meet his parents’ expectations but even surpasses them.
The emphasis Engin puts on the description of his educational success as an independent and single-minded pursuit can be understood as the appropriation of parental objectives. This means that social advancement is achieved on behalf of the family through education, which remained inaccessible to the parents because of their immigration. Engin's career can also be considered as successful detachment from the parents and as successful individuation to the extent that Engin manages to turn his parents’ mission into a project of his own, accordingly moving outside the sphere of his parents’ influence.

In light of our initial query the prominent question to ask at this point concerns the conditions leading to the success of such individuation processes. In Engin’s case, the parents’ behavior facilitated adolescent detachment on various levels. Upon obtaining his degree [Abitur], Engin received more space for independent development. Both of his parents report that from that time on they interfered less with his life, partly because they began to view him as an adult, and partly because their options to support their son were limited: the university milieu was completely foreign to them. However, the son’s growing independence cannot be ascribed only to the parents’ exclusion from the academic sphere but also to a reflective-generative attitude, chiefly observable in Engin’s mother. Mrs. Güngör argues that parents should not interfere too much in order not to raise “sissies” and allow children to make their own experiences. Beyond that, she makes clear that she does not regard the parent-child relationship as being absolutely hierarchical, by underscoring the importance of the parents’ own further development as well and their ability to recognize their own mistakes. On the subject of “puberty” she relates that it was the task of the generation of adults to accept “new human beings“ even if it is not always easy. By means of a concrete example relating to Engin, she gives the example of smoking. Engin started smoking during puberty. Mrs. Güngör says that even though she disliked it, she finally accepted it. Her attitude can be summarized as follows: she accepts deviations, but still maintains her closeness to her son. This attitude enabled their son to create the space necessary for his adolescent development which – as we have seen – he managed to use productively.

Berk – Failure to fulfill parental objectives

The interview with Berk, 19 years old at the time of the interview, provides a contrast to that with Engin. Berk’s school career is characterized by numerous failures and interruptions. After having to repeat a school year twice, he broke off
Realschule (the intermediate of three possible forms of secondary schools in Germany). He then obtained a Hauptschule diploma (the lowest possible degree to be obtained at one of these three forms). Following that he attended a vocational school, but left before completing his studies. At the time of the interview he was finishing up training as a retailer.

In the interview with his mother (in this case the father was not available for an interview) the explanations of the parents’ high aspirations for their son’s career are essential. Mrs. Dikmen stands out as a very committed mother. But instead of supporting her son unconditionally, she pushes him towards a goal she has chosen for him. The basically well-intentioned wish for her son to be better off than his parents becomes a form of pressure. Berk not only should but must be better off, because for him it is about fulfilling the parents’ “purpose” rather than his own wishes. Thereby the exact aim of these ambitions remains diffuse. Mrs. Dikmen lists multiple professions, which she would prefer for her son, ranging from insurance clerk to doctor. She strongly emphasizes how Berk’s repeated failures at school burdened her not only psychologically but physically as well. It is remarkable that her speech is solely about her own wishes and disappointments, leaving no room for her son’s desires and feelings.

Mrs. Dikmen’s strong desire for Berk’s educational success and social advancement is to be viewed within the context of her own educational background and her immigration history. From her narration we learn that even though she was very eager to learn and particularly fond of books as a child, external circumstances hindered her from gaining access to higher education. Later, after marriage, she followed her husband to Germany, where the young couple initially lived together with Mrs. Dikmen’s parents-in-law, which lead to a dependence on the grandparent generation. Mrs. Dikmen gave birth to her son at the age of eighteen, whereupon she faced strong interference from the grandparents. Kürşat (2007) shows that this family constellation is quite common, because the lower a woman’s age at marriage and at birth of her first child, the lower the scope of influence which the young mother is allowed, that is, both her status and degree of autonomy deteriorate by their young age at marriage and childbirth” (p. 325). Mrs. Dikmen had not yet managed the process of detachment from the previous generation, despite already being a mother herself. Additionally, she tells us, she and her husband had been illiterate, thus Berk “grew up blindly.” She blames her parents-in-law for this situation as well. According to her, these
circumstances were the reason why Berk was “a very naughty child,” crying incessantly, until “he finally got what he wanted, he was that obstinate.”

The inner and outer lack of independence being described clearly contrasts with the way in which Mrs. Dikmen portrays herself now: a competent young woman, who is modern, eager to learn (sports, sauna, shopping), and who is willing to pass on her knowledge to others. She describes moving out of her parents-in-law’s apartment after the birth of her daughter as an event triggering a turning point in her self-awareness. After this, she says, she received helpful tips on education from a well-informed neighbor and “step by step learned quite a few things” owing to her work as a housekeeper.

Mrs. Dikmen’s educational aspirations for Berk should be seen within the context of this process of becoming independent. Inasmuch as she defines her son’s unwanted behavior as a result of his grandparents’ (ill)-raising, it becomes a display of her early lack of independence, her near complete dependency and ignorance, caused by her early marriage and subsequent migration, with became a very negative experience for her. After the move from the parents-in-law’s apartment she declares her children’s educational advancement her own project. This appears to be an attempt to leave the years as a childlike mother behind and demonstrate, in regard to her children’s educational success, that she has grown up and gained competence in educational matters. At the same time, the secure incomes an education would provide are to protect the children from becoming dependent.

Berk’s mission to achieve what his mother was denied and thereby compensate her dependency limits his space for adolescent development considerably. Although Mrs. Dikmen says that her son should detach from his family of origin, she has a clear idea about how Berk should achieve this goal and lead an independent life. Differing life concepts are rejected, differences not admitted, whereby Berk’s space for the development of his own objectives is restricted. Because of her negative view of her son, the component of closeness is only rudimentary.

The interview with the son makes it very clear that the pressure on Berk even increases through the relationship between father and son. The father represents a central figure for Berk, something which manifests itself in the fact that he begins his story not by talking about himself but about his father. The latter came to Germany as a child, finished Hauptschule and then started an
apprenticeship as a barber. At the age of 18 he became engaged, brought his wife to Germany and “when they were 19 uh, and that was in 1989, then I came along.” At that point his father broke off his apprenticeship and “began to work as a machine operator at a company – actually, at first as a, how shall I put it, as a servant. But he got some training later and now he’s a machine operator.” Berk seems to lay the blame for his father’s breaking off of the apprenticeship and the associated acceptance of a subordinate position upon his birth. Later his father was able to move up by force of will. In this context there is a noteworthy passage, in which Berk responds to a question concerning how his parents evaluate his failure in school:

“B: Yes, I thought my father was a bit angry and stuff like that. And he really was. In the beginning. [...] I: But then it was ok okay for him later?

B: Yes, once I found the training program. Otherwise he would, I don’t know, he wouldn’t speak to me anymore and whatever and would be angry with me, and that would be disappointing for him, because uh I was born here in Germany and so on and because I went to school and he didn’t even go to school, I mean he did go to school but uh, not much, and he couldn’t speak German so well and whatever and all the same uh he’s become a machine operator and actually has a good position. And he didn’t want his son, although I was born here and whatever, to be worse than him. Although I actually am now.”

Berk compares his own school career with his father’s development and recognizes that his father has managed to become a machine operator, despite starting under inferior conditions, while he himself has failed twice despite having had better chances. The argumentation “I was better off than my father and therefore have to attain a higher position” explains the high expectations of the parents, as well as the pressure weighing on the son due to the father’s withholding of recognition. In general, too, the interviews with the son and mother point to a range of unspoken conflicts in the familial relations. Consequently, Berk’s educational career and detachment processes merge, while his parents limit his space for developmental possibilities by the pressure of their “determining” educational objectives. In addition to Mrs. Dikmen’s negative view of Berk, there

5 Printed in bold: strong emphasis
6 Printed in italics: fast
also clearly exists a considerable potential for conflict in Berk’s relationship with his younger sister, on whom now the family’s hopes for a better education are pinned.

Furthermore, the career objectives Berk has developed under the influence of paternal expectations appear to be rather vague. Consequently, by choosing a traineeship, he followed the advice of a teacher and, acting against his own interests, decided to seek training as a retail trade salesman in order to fulfill his parents’ wishes “that I get some training.” Since he has no desire to become a retail trade salesman, he plans on “seeing what (...) happens” after completing training; he thinks he really has to “get started” then. The very same words, which express individualization on the part of Engin, signal the continuing pressure of parental expectations, combined with the son’s own vague hopes in this case. Since Berk makes future plans according to parental expectations for the most part, and is neither informed about the options available to him after his training program nor articulates any interests of his own, his future prospects remain precarious. Whether or not he will actually finish his training at all appears uncertain, since he reports that he does not enjoy practical activities and at the same time studies little for the classroom component of the training. Apparently Berk avoids confronting his own aspirations and the pressure of his parents; instead, he emphasizes that his parents have always supported him and would even now still “do everything for [him].” This can be understood as an attempt to avoid dealing with the parental expectations and the parents’ negative opinion about their son directly. This avoidance along with Berk’s hesitation to cope with his parent’s objectives actively and to dissociate himself from them, prevents Berk’s detachment from his parents; individuation in the sense of the creation and pursuance of life concepts of one’s own is not taking place. As a result possibilities of gaining successful educational careers of one’s own are reduced.

Conclusions

Inquiring into the conditions underlying the process of Berk’s educational career, we can point out that, in this case, the quality of the relationships between the generations in the family differs significantly from those described in Engin’s family. The two families, initially, share high educational aspirations: both parental couples wish their sons to obtain the Abitur before leaving school. Yet, while Engin’s parents allowed him opportunities for independent development at various levels, in Berk’s case the generational relationship is characterized by the
combination of high expectations with a lack of space for autonomous development.

Doubtlessly the difference between these two families also arises from the way they deal with their immigration experience and how they integrate it into their life histories. Although the project to move up the social ladder is passed down to the next generation in both families, the outcome of the immigration experience differs considerably, to the extent that this can be reconstructed from the interviews with the parents. While Engin’s parents’ immigration is connected with a denial of their own educational aspirations, it also represents an attempt to assert their independence from their own families of origin; in the case of Berk’s parents’ the immigration led to dependence on the grandparental generation.

Our preliminary conclusions, to be analyzed and extended through further case study comparisons, indicate that the educational careers in both cases presented here are closely related to adolescent detachment processes, which can be understood as successful or unsuccessful attempts at individuation. According to our findings, a key factor in successful individuation consists in the quality of generational relationships within the family, reflected above all in the space provided to sons for the development of their own goals and influenced strongly by the history of the family’s immigration project and the parents’ processing of it within their own biographies.

References


Conceptualization and Construction of a People: Enacted Macedonianness in Australia

Irena Colakova VELJANOVA

Abstract. Contemporary literature widely agrees that the emic quality of distinctness of a people, in the form of a nation and/or ethnicity, is socially constructed as oppose to the descent essentialist approach rendering belonging to a people as an “immovable fact”. Nevertheless, despite the said agreement, there is paucity in literature exploring the ways in which the emic quality of distinctness of a people is constructed. The proponents of the performance/practice theory of ethnicity/nationalism (Bentley 1987, 1991, Eriksen 1991, 1992, Dunn 2005, 2009) find that performance/practice is at the core of ethno-distinctive collective formation. Inquiring into the dynamics of feeling and identifying as Macedonian in Australia, this paper presents the findings from the Australia-wide study conducted on ethno-Macedonians during 2006-2008. During this period five focus groups were conducted with a total number of 38 (N=38) participants and 817 (N=817) ethno-Macedonians were surveyed. The findings provided support and a further empirical ground for the proponents of the performance/practice theory of ethnicity/nationalism by identifying six performance ethno-identity attributes (communal activity, Macedonian cuisine, Macedonian music, Macedonian Orthodoxy, Macedonian language, and respect and following of Macedonian traditions) and three non-performance (history, place of birth, and ancestry) of core relevance to Macedonianness in Australia. The findings also indicated that the affective and symbolic differentiation of material culture and performance as Macedonian has its roots in the shared habitus by ethno-Macedonians in Australia.

Keywords: A people, constructivism, ethnicity, habitus, Macedonians, nation, performance

The term “people” is a part of academic, polity and state administrative rhetoric, as well is the popular vocabulary. While there is a dispositional assumption of full conceptual knowledge in using the term “people”, it is often the case that there is a little conceptual knowledge of it. Despite the conceptual ambiguity, a lot is vested in it: the prominent democratic principle rests upon the notion of people directly or indirectly governing themselves; polities and states are governed in the interest of a body of people; the principle of self-determination of a people rest with the people as well. De Seade (1979, p. 369) states that “in ordinary usage" the term “people” is used with political connotations as the people, for example the people’s will, and as ‘a people invoking ethno-cultural
unity. In this paper, the focus is upon the concept of a people as a distinct ethno and/or civic collective subject to the collective right of self-determination. With particular focus on the Macedonian people in Australia, this paper will address the following questions: (1) What is the conceptual reference for a people?, and (2) How is the *emic* quality of a distinct people constructed?

**Conceptualizing a People: Nation and/or Ethnicity**

A people may be understood as a group particular. The concept of group particular can be understood against the re-emergent theoretical paradigm in political theory towards group particularism, i.e., towards the understanding that “the group is morally and sociologically prior to the individual” (Vincent, 2002, p. 3). According to Vincent (2002, p. 3) a group particular is “envisaged as a morally complete entity in its own right”. Numerous terms in academia, polity and state administrative rhetoric as well as at the popular level are used to refer to a category of a people, e.g. tribe, race, nation, and ethnicity. A “specific group particular that has had most publicity” in the last few decades “has been the nation, although it also clearly overlaps with cultures, communities and ethnicities” (Vincent, 2002, p. 4). Hence, the following question gains in importance: What is the conceptual reference when a reference is made to a specific people, for example the Macedonian people? In his article *Are Ethnicity and Nationality Twin Concepts?*, Banton (2004) argues that at the popular level ethnicity and nationality might be able to be used side by side implying mutual descent. However, the conceptual substance of ethnicity and nationality suggests a difference between the two. I will now discuss the conceptualization of a people as a nation and as an ethnicity.

As opposed to the understanding that a *nation* is and needs to be self-realized, this paper adopts an approach that *collective humanity* is, and that humans - by virtue of self-realization - construct collectives by means of agency. National conciseness is not there: it is resting and needs to be “awakened”, rather, it is to be constructed into being. When defining the concept of nation, students of nationalism are challenged by realities of a seemingly paradoxical existence. According to Anderson (1983, 2001), these challenges are visible in the following three paradoxes:

The objective modernity of nations to the historian’s eye vs. their subjective antiquity in the eyes of the nationalists; (...) The formal universality of nationality as a socio-cultural concept – in the modern world everyone can, should, will ‘have’
a nationality (...) vs. the irremediable particularity of its concrete manifestations (...); [and] The ‘political’ power of nationalisms vs. their philosophical poverty and even incoherence (Anderson, 2001, p. 44).

The existence of these paradoxes is an indication that the concept of nation can only exist as an imagined construct. The nation can be imagined as ancient, as modern, as civic, ethnically “pure” and/or ethnically mixed. As an imagined construct, the concept of nation offers a remedy for irremediable paradoxes. Taking up the challenge to define nation amidst the aforementioned paradoxes, Anderson (1983, p. 44) provided the following definition: “... [a nation] is an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign”. Adopting Anderson’s definition, Hawkins (2006, p. 9) writes:

...[T]he nation is an ‘imagined community’, the members of which view themselves as connected to each other through the shared rights and responsibilities inherent in citizenship of the state, as well as through shared language, culture and history.

These definitions of nation emphasize several conceptual properties. Firstly, a nation is a community, an imagined community: secondly, the community has a political character; thirdly, it is imagined as limited and sovereign; and fourthly, it can be either a civic or an ethnic community.

The Macedonian nation is, as is every other nation by definition, an imagined community. This implies that despite the fact that it is impossible to meet and know all “fellow- [Macedonian] members”, in their minds they have the image of “their communion” (Anderson 2001, p. 44). This is evident in everyday Macedonian rhetoric, in the usage of the term nashi,1 which literary translates as ‘ours’. Although this is a contemporary practice among Macedonian diasporic2 communities, Anastasovski (2008, p. 93) explains that this popular term was used as early as the second half of the 18th century among Macedonians resident in the territory of Macedonia, as a term “of identification indicating separateness from others, and acknowledging an individual or a group as being Macedonian”. This kind of rhetoric is also supportive of the defining element of the nation as limited. If nashi are ours (Macedonians) then the operative assumption is that there are

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1 This is plural of nash (another variation is nashio). This is a widely used nickname for fellow Macedonians, usually used to depict men rather than women). When Macedonians use the term ‘nash’, they refer to a person who is ‘one of us’. When they use the term nashi, they refer to a group of people as ‘ours’.

2 In this particular case, the term ‘diasporic’ is used to refer to communities formed by people outside their homeland of Macedonia.
others who are not ours. So, the Macedonian nation is imagined as “finite”: beyond its boundaries there are other nations (Anderson 2001, p. 45). Nashi implies inclusiveness based on Macedonianness: and its usage does not seem to discriminate on any other basis such as class, regional, urban or village belonging. Thus, it is supportive of the claim that the nation is imagined as “horizontal comradeship” (Anderson 2001, p. 45), i.e., in a non-discriminatory way.

As a political community, the nation is imagined as inherently sovereign. This implies by extension that the Macedonian nation, as a political community, is inherently sovereign. Broadly, this would imply monopolization of power for the benefit of the members of the Macedonian national community by the Macedonian collective. The sovereignty discourse “focused on individual and [group] particular identity [...] provides the driving energy for the nation”. Without the assumed property of sovereignty, “the nations would have little interest and significance” (Vincent 2002, p. 34). Hence the positioning of a people as a distinct ethnicity and not as a distinct nation will deem the particular people unable to access and utilize the political right of sovereignty. This calls for a discussion on the relations ethnicity and nationality.

As suggested earlier in this paper, the terms “ethnicity” and “nationality” are often used interchangeably and are experienced as the same at the popular level. Their distinct conceptualization does, however, imply difference. This is explored in detail by Thomas Eriksen in his work Ethnicity and Nationalism (2002). In the section titled Nationalism and Ethnicity Reconsidered, Eriksen (2002, p. 146) states: “The distinction between nationalism and ethnicity as analytical concepts is a simple one, if we stick to the formal level of definition. A nationalist ideology is an ethnic ideology which demands a state on behalf of the ethnic group. However in practice the distinction can be highly problematic”. The practical existence of civic-nationalism expressive of a “polyethnric or supra-ethnic ideology which stresses shared civil rights rather than shared cultural roots” (Eriksen 2002, p. 147), presents the first practical challenge to the “simple distinction” between ethnicity and nationalism. For Walker Connor, there is only one kind of nationalism: ethnonalism. In his article The Timelessness of Nations (2004, p. 45), Connor writes: “identity does not draw its sustenance from facts but from perceptions; not from chronological/factual history but from sentient/felt history. [...] The sense of constituting a distinct and ancestrally related people, [...] is central to the sense of nationhood...”. Hence, nationhood is incomprehensible in the face of ignorance of.
the psychological component of the national identities. As this component is experienced as a sense of belonging to a distinct group with shared ancestry no other kinds of nations are conceivable. Other authors sit quite comfortably with other forms of nationalism. Two such authors are Bald and Couton (2009), who argue that the structural power shift in the contemporary international political scene signifies a need for a new “conditionally specific concept” of intercultural nationalism (Bald and Couton, 2009, p. 651). This concept is discussed and developed in relation to the Quebec national policy framework known as Interculturalism. The core substantive value of intercultural nationalism, according to Bald and Couton (2009, p. 652) is detailed as “…[I]ntercultural nationalism respects the value of ethno-cultural diversity (…); however it does so with the explicit understanding that a singular cultural tradition will serve as the official discursive medium”. This quote can be interpreted in the same way as Erikson’s (2002) duality of nationalism argument, i.e., that while promoting inclusion and civic justice there are mechanisms in place to reproduce the hegemony of the dominant ethnic group. This is also a challenge derived from practice in respect to the “simple” distinction between ethnicity and nationalism. The other two practical challenges, according to Erikson (2002, p. 147), are presented through non-consistent usage of the terminology by the mass media and through some collectives that find themselves in a “grey zone”.

What might be perceived as a prospective development in the field of ethnicity and nationalism and consequently as a more concise distinction between ethnicity and nationalism is depicted in Riggs’ (2002) argument. Riggs (2002) maintains that state nationalism, which is closely related to civic nationalism, historically precedes ethnic nationalism. The latter challenges and transcends the state. In line with this argument, ethnonationalisms, i.e., specific ethno-national collectives, will abandon their “intimate” relationship with the state and claim their sovereignty in respect to the individual and cultural rights of the collective. They will exist as polities with no attachment to particular territory or state. In this way the Romani nation, for example, will be able to claim nationhood, that is, sovereignty in matters relating to the individual and the cultural rights of the Romani people. A nation does not need to claim statehood to exercise its

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3 According to Bald and Couton (2009, pp. 651-652), interculturalism differs from multiculturalism as a national policy in a way that multiculturalism requires few ‘fewer official socio-cultural requisites’.
sovereignty; rather it can claim a status of polity. Following Walby’s (2003, p. 7) notion of nation as a polity, I draw the reader’s attention to the following argument:

Nations can be a type of polity under certain circumstances. A nation is a social and political group which is perceived to have a common history and destiny and which has a set of governing institutions which root such beliefs in the social and political structure. It can be a polity when its institutions are well developed and it is able to demand some external difference.

Theoretically, it is plausible to argue that ethnonations can potentially develop as polities and assume position as players in the international political scene, alongside some religions (Walby, 2003).

It becomes clear from the above that what seems a simple distinction between ethnicity and nationalism at the abstract analytical level becomes rather problematic in practice. At the popular level the terms “ethnicity” and “nationality” are used interchangeably: they are often experienced as the same; a collective belonging to a people, a collective identity.

Following my discussion of the conceptualization of a people provided thus far, this section provides a theoretical discussion of the genetic structuring of a people. It has been established that the most prominent conceptualization of a people is in terms of nations and ethnic communities. It has further been established that at the popular level, those two concepts at least overlap and at most equate, that is, they are experienced as the same. Hence, the collective identity of a people can be most usefully referred in reference to an ethno-cultural construct, be it a nation or ethnicity. For the Macedonians this socio-cultural construct is Macedonianness. Knowing that this is how Macedonians experienced/experience their existence, the following questions gain in importance: How does Macedonianness come into being? What drives Macedonians’ collective feeling of being Macedonian?

Almost a quarter of a century ago, G. Carter Bentley posed the same questions in recognition of the fact that none of the discussions on ethno-identity to date had explained “how people come to recognise their commonalities in the first place” (Bentley, 1987, p. 27), that is, how does the emic quality of a people develop? With reference to ethno collective claims he observed:

[Irrespective of] whether an impetus to such [claims] lies in an innate tendency to favour kin (even fictive kin), ecological adaptation, shared positions in structures of production and distribution, or emotional sustenance, ethnic-identity claims
involve symbolic construal of sensations of likeness and difference, and these sensations must somehow be accounted for (Bentley, 1987, p. 27).

Sharing the same inclination when accounting for the “symbolic construal of sensations of likeness and difference”, Bentley turned to Pierre Bourdieu’s *Theory of Practice* formulated in the latter’s *Outline of a Theory of Practice* (1977). This approach which came to be known as *Practice Theory of Ethnicity* (Jones, 1997), was strongly advocated by Bentley (1987, 1991) and Eriksen (1991, 1992, 1993b). Drawing on Judith Batler’s performance theory of gender identities, Kevin M. Dunn (2005, 2009) argues that national identities could be conceived as an ongoing discursive practice, as “an amalgam of acts, statements and representations that are constantly reiterated [...] [where] the stability of dominant constructions depends upon such consistent reiterations” (Dunn, 2005, pp. 31-32). What these authors have in common is performance (practice) at the core of the construction of collective identities. Pursuing the same line of argument, i.e., that Macedonianness is constructed through practice, this paper presents the results from an Australia-wide study of the resident ethno-Macedonian population exploring, *inter alia*, their experiences of being Macedonians in the said country. During 2006, five focus groups were conducted, one in each of the following sites: Sydney, Port Kembla, Canberra/Queanbeyan, Melbourne and Perth. The number of focus group participants totaled N=38. Between December 2007 and July 2008, 817 (N=817) ethno-Macedonians in Australia were surveyed. The findings of this study regarding their feeling and indentifying as Macedonians is presented below.

**Enacted Macedonianness in Australia**

In this research, the question of “What makes you feel and identify as Macedonian in Australia?” was twice explored: first, as a question for open discussion by the focus groups, and second, as a multiple choice question in the

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5 Australian state of New South Wales (NSW)  
6 Australian Capital Territory (ACT)  
7 Australian state of New South Wales (NSW)  
8 Australian state of Victoria (Vic)  
9 Australian state of Western Australia (WA)  
10 In the survey questionnaire, this question was formulated as follows ‘What defines your ethnicity as Macedonian?’. 
survey questionnaire. The answers that this question attracted during the focus group sessions were later analyzed and a list of ethno-identity attributes devised for the survey questionnaire. A Perth focus group participant stated:

*Participant M1:* First of all... many of us have come to Australia as migrants; we came here with a fully developed national identity. Of course some of us in more advanced years, at the age of 25 or 30; it’s obvious that the feeling of being Macedonian cannot be cut off just like that immediately, just by entering the Australian territory. .... [T]hat feeling stays on. In my opinion, it is only normal that we would carry with us the mentality of lifestyles from Macedonia. Our way of expression [the language], our cultural element, our way of personal and communal socializing, the traditional values that come along with the Macedonian identity and all those things. ... [D]espite the fact that we live in Australia, a new environment, I still think that almost all of us still keep and carry on with our own traditions of eating, behaving...

In this statement alone, several ethno-identity attributes are identifiable: “our way of expression”, that is, the Macedonian language; “the traditional values that come along with the Macedonian identity”, enacted through respect and the following of Macedonian customs; “personal and communal socializing” which are often enacted through communal activities; and, “our own traditions of eating”, that is, Macedonian cuisine. A Sydney focus group participant commented: “The churches are of great importance for the Macedonians. It is within churches where our newborn children are being christened, it is where the old traditions are upheld”. This is a reference to the Macedonian Orthodox Churches. In this way, all nine ethno-identity attributes were developed and included in the survey questionnaire: communal activities, Macedonian cuisine, ancestry, Macedonian music, language, place of birth, respect for and the following of the Macedonian customs, Macedonian Orthodoxy and Macedonian history.\(^ {11}\) Survey participants were asked to rank their answers and to choose as many answers as they felt necessary. In addition, several other markers were identified after analysing the survey result. In no particular order, these were: the Macedonian state, partner’s descent, Macedonian athletes, Macedonian dignity, Macedonian humanitarianism, the family, the Macedonian name and the Macedonian bloodline. In addition, a few references were made to the Macedonian cultural way of life, to singing and

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\(^ {11}\)These are developed in conjunction with the relevant literature, the qualitative data collected during the qualitative stage of the research, and the reference group of November 2007.
dancing, i.e., “pesnata i oroto”, and to the good life. Others pointed to all of the ethno-attributes; “all which is Macedonian”. Some respondents took the opportunity to explain their views more elaborately; one responded stated “The history and the love towards safeguarding it; the name; Macedonian language and tradition and our beautiful religion” (case 354), while other stated as follows: “Without ancestry, without religion, without history there is no truth in being” (case 591).

**Figure 1. Ethno-identity Attributes**

All ethno-identity attributes developed from the relevant literature and the focus groups data were categorized as either performance, passive or symbolic attributes. Synchronous with the practice theory of ethnicity (Bentley, 1987) ethnic group formation and continuity have practice at their core. The everyday practices such as communal activity and engagement, cooking, enjoying music, conversations, traditional customary behaviours and church attendances, which are symbolically and affectively differentiated as Macedonian, are considered as performance ethno-identity attributes. Macedonian history has a symbolic value, and in light of Connors’ (2004) argument, is a “felt history”, hence, acquires an affective value as well. The same may be extended to the Macedonia Orthodoxy as

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12 Macedonian contextual translation of ‘singing and dancing’. Macedonian Cyrillic spelling.
an ethno-identity attribute. When it comes to ancestry and place of birth, although symbolic value is attached to these attributes, they are, in the main, passive attributes symbolically differentiated vis-a-vis a single event - birth of an individual – that may or may not have relevance to the individual’s socialization and self-identification. Given their “factual nature”, the latter are over-used, and over-depended upon, as measure for belonging to a people.

In the main, ethno-identity attributes data indicate that (1) all attributes are reported to be relevant to their Macedonian identity by a qualified majority (+50%); and, (2) the most critical are the performance attributes (see *Figures 1* and 2). Bentley (1987, p. 36) alludes to the recognition of commonalities among a people by means of “shared habitus and symbolic differentiations both cognitively and affectively generated”. The recognition of commonalities amongst Macedonians can also be explained by means of “shared habitus” and cognitive and affective, symbolic differentiations.

It may be argued that the Macedonian ethno-collective’s persistence and cultural sustainability in Australia is mainly due to practice. Macedonians engage in communal activities, practice Macedonian cuisine, enjoy Macedonian music, communicate in the Macedonian language, respect and follow the Macedonian customs, and practice Macedonian Orthodoxy. All of these are recognized, that is, they are cognitively differentiated as Macedonian practices. This is strongly supported by the research data presented below.

**Symbolically and Affectively Differentiated Performance Ethno-identity Attributes**

Out of the overall surveyed population *N*=817, 459 respondents (56.2%) indicated that communal activity is a relevant ethno-identity attribute. The ranking of each ethno-identity attribute, showed how the level of relevance of communal activity varied amongst the respondents. In 31 cases, while this attribute was selected as important, it was not ranked. It was ranked in the top three attributes of ethno-identity by 13.2% of the valid number of responses, 25.8% ranked it in the middle three (4-6), and the majority (53.1%) ranked it in the last three (7-9) attributes relevant to their Macedonian identity. Only 19 respondents ranked this attribute first, that is, most important to their Macedonian identity. In its own right, communal activity was most frequently ranked the ninth ethno-identity attribute.

According to the Sydney focus group participant, in Australia, “it’s very easy for every willing Macedonian to feel like a Macedonian”. One can participate in
communal activities at many levels evident in the quote below:

**Participant M3:** ... The Macedonian community throughout Australia has organised schools; for NSW specifically there is the Macedonian School Council of NSW (Makedonski Prosvetno U~ili[jen Odbor na Nov Ju`en Vels\(^{13}\)) (...) There is a similar committee in existence in Melbourne as well. (...) This is a ... good thing for the younger generations of Macedonians so they can carry on with the Macedonian tradition, they can learn the Macedonian language. Also there are literary associations in existence such as: Grigor Prlichev, Braka Miladinovci in Melbourne, (...) Then we have the sporting associations, youth organisations, folklore dance groups and the church councils... All of those constitute a well established circle of the community and it’s very easy for every willing Macedonian to feel like a Macedonian.

From the above, it may be concluded that the communal activity, as a Macedonian ethno-identity attribute, is considered important. But, considering that it was most frequently ranked the ninth ethno-identity attribute, it may be concluded that it is not a core ethno-identity attribute for the Macedonians in Australia.

Out of the overall surveyed population \( N = 817 \), 511 respondents (62.5%) considered the Macedonian cuisine a relevant ethno-identity attribute. In 47 cases, while this attribute was selected as important, it was not ranked. It was ranked in the top three attributes of ethno-identity by 21.8% of the valid number of responses, 32.3% ranked it in the middle three (4-6), and the majority (37.2%) ranked it in the last three (7-9) attributes of ethno-identity. Thirty-three respondents ranked this attribute as first, that is, of most importance when it came to their Macedonian identity. In its own right, Macedonian cuisine was most frequently ranked as an eight defining element.

A particular cuisine is recognized by the ethno-Macedonians as a Macedonian cuisine. This is evident in the following:

**Participant F3:** ...there are Macedonian specific foods in existence. The Macedonian cuisine is different from all the other ones. It contains dishes that are specific to the Macedonians and they are not cooked by Australians, for example. That makes us feel as Macedonians ... the Macedonian restaurants where we can dine, for example. There are numerous Macedonian restaurants here that cook various Macedonian foods. We can also cook the foods at home, the Macedonian way.

\(^{13}\) The title of the organisation in Macedonian language. Macedonian Cyrillic spelling.
A Port Kembla focus group participant commented:

**Participant PKF3:** You know we [the Macedonians] are used to the sound of a dipping spoon in a mandja dish. This is something that is traditional to the Macedonian cuisine and it stayed with us. It is the best thing for us.

It is evident from these statements that the aforementioned foods which are cognitively differentiated as “Macedonian specific foods”, have sentimental value: “that makes us feel as Macedonians”. There is also evidence for some “branding” and commercialization of Macedonian foods: “Macedonian restaurants where we can dine”. Macedonian foods are “[home] cooked foods, cooked traditionally [in the diaspora] just the way it was cooked in our old country, in Macedonia”. In Australia, “different nationalities have their [food] outlets. I still think that the Macedonians, I wouldn’t say a great lot, but they do keep reasonably away from [fast] foods. I still think that they do most of the cooking at home”14, [e.g.] “banana chillies, [and] Macedonian baked beans (Makedonsko tavˇe- gravˇe15)”16 Explaining the sentimental value of the symbolic differentiation of foods as Macedonian, a Queanbeyan focus group participant stated:

**Participant F5:** I migrated to [Australia] when I was young. I had my children here ... now I have grandchildren. My sons-in-law are Australians. When they ask ‘What’s for dinner?’ – I reply ‘Mandja’. They know that that will involve a pot. In the pot, there can be a lot of things. And all of that is Mandja. The difference is that we don’t use steamed vegetables, rather the vegetables are contained in our mandja. In the very beginning they might have not been as keen on eating stuffed capsicum, the stuffing... the stuffed cabbage leaf, but now they are a keen. ... I think the [Macedonian] cuisine is very important for us.

It may be concluded from the above that the Macedonian cuisine is another important ethno-identity attribute for Macedonians in Australia. In comparison to the communal activity as an ethno-identity attribute, Macedonian cuisine is considered more relevant to their Macedonianness. Ethno-cuisines, foods, as an embodied form of transnational identity, are “one of the novel dimensions of work on embodied transnationalism” (Dunn, 2010, p. 6). The findings in this research, regarding Macedonian cuisine as an ethno-identity attribute, contribute to the “emergent research emphasis ... on the embodied practices around food” (Dunn, 2010, p. 6) evident in the works of Caplan, (1997, p. 13)

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14 Perth focus group participant
15 The name of the dish in Macedonian language. Macedonian Cyrillic language.
16 Port Kembla focus group participant
(ethnicity as an area of difference symbolized by foods), Thompson (2005), and Longhurst et al. (2009).

The Macedonian music as a performance ethno-attribute is, according to 60.1% of the overall surveyed population, relevant to Macedonian ethnic identity. In 44 cases, this attribute was selected as important; but, it was not ranked. It was ranked in the top three attributes of ethno-identity by 14% of the valid number of responses. The majority 39.3% ranked it in the middle three (4-6), and 37.5% ranked it in the last three (7-9) attributes relevant to their Macedonian identity. Only 7 respondents ranked it first. Macedonian music was most frequently ranked as sixth ethno-identity attribute in its own right.

Macedonian language, as a performance attribute of ethnic identity, was most frequently ranked first, n=158, across all ethno-identity attributes. In its own right, it was most frequently ranked the second attribute. Out of the overall surveyed population N=817, the vast majority (81.4% representing 665 respondents) rated the Macedonian language a relevant identity attribute. In 65 cases, this attribute was selected as important; but, it was not ranked. It was ranked in the top three attributes of ethno-identity by a majority of 72% of the valid number of responses, 16.5% ranked it in the middle three (4-6) attributes, and 1.7% ranked it in the last three (7-9) attributes relevant to their Macedonian identity.

Out of the overall surveyed population N=817, 551 respondents (67.4%) indicated that respecting and following Macedonian customs is a relevant identity attribute. As stated by a Sydney focus group participant, the tradition is “practically the way of how people behave”. In 45 cases, while it was selected as important, it was not ranked. This attribute was ranked in the top three attributes of ethno-identity by 32% of the valid number of responses. The majority (43.4%) ranked it in the middle three (4-6) attributes and 16.3% ranked it in the last three (7-9). Thirty one respondents ranked this factor first and the most important when it came to their Macedonian identity. Respecting and following Macedonian customs was most frequently ranked as third ethno-identity attribute. It may be concluded that respecting and following Macedonian customs is a very important ethno-identity attribute for the Macedonians in Australia.

Macedonian Orthodoxy which can be considered both a performance and a symbolic attribute corresponds with a practicing orthodoxy and a nominal orthodoxy: it was most frequently ranked as a first identity attribute in its own right.
by 114 respondents. Out of the overall surveyed population \( N=817 \), 620 respondents (75.9%) indicated that Macedonian Orthodoxy is a relevant ethno-identity attribute. In 66 cases, this attribute was selected as important; but, it was not ranked: it was ranked in the top three attributes of identity by a majority of 51.5% of the valid number of responses. Furthermore, 26.1% ranked it in the middle three (4-6), and 11.2% ranked it in the last three (7-9) attributes of their Macedonian identity. Considering the above, it may be concluded that Macedonian Orthodoxy is a core ethno-identity attribute.

Symbolically and Affectively Differentiated Symbolic Ethno-identity Attributes

Out of the overall surveyed population \( N=817 \), 549 respondents (67.2%) considered Macedonian History a relevant identity factor. In 55 cases, this attribute was selected as important; but, it was not ranked. It was ranked in the top three attributes of ethno-identity by the majority (37.8%) of the valid number of responses: 34.7% ranked it in the middle three (4-6) attributes and 17.3% ranked it in the last three (7-9). Forty seven respondents ranked this factor the most important when it came to their Macedonian identity. Macedonian History was most frequently ranked as a third attribute. It may be concluded that for a majority of ethno-Macedonians in Australia this ethno-identity attribute is the most important vis-a-vis their Macedonianness.

‘Factual’, Passive Ethno-identity Attributes

Out of the overall surveyed population \( N=817 \), 549 respondents (67.2%) indicated that ancestry is a relevant ethno-identity attribute. In 51 cases, this attribute was selected as important; but, it was not ranked. It was ranked in the top three attributes of ethno-identity by a majority of 47.7% of the valid number of responses: 29.4% ranked it in the middle three (4-6) and 13.5% ranked it in the last three (7-9) defining attributes of their Macedonian identity. This attribute was ranked first by 144 respondents, making it the most frequently ranked first in its own right.

The final ethno-identity attribute considered in this study is place of birth. Out of the overall surveyed population, 588 respondents (72%) indicated that place of birth is important in their perception of their Macedonianness. In 61 cases, while this attribute was selected as important, it was not ranked. It was ranked in the top three ethno-identity attributes by a majority of 55% of the valid number of
responses: 23.9% ranked it in the middle three (4-6) and 9.8% ranked it in the last three (7-9). It was ranked first identity attribute by 146 respondents. In its own right, place of birth was most frequently ranked as a first defining element.

As discussed earlier, symbolic value is attached to these attributes, ancestry and place of birth. But, in the main, they are passive attributes, “social facts”, symbolically differentiated vis-a-vis a single event - birth of an individual – that may or may not have relevance to the individual’s socialization and self-identification. Based on the findings in this study, these ethno-identity attributes, in their symbolic strength, are very important when it comes to the respondents’ Macedonianness.

As stated earlier in this paper, all of these attributes have been proven to be important to ethno-Macedonian identity. In addition, the percentage of respondents allocating relevance to the relevant ethnoidentity attribute reveals that the following two performance attributes are the top two attributes of ethno-identity: Macedonian language and Macedonian orthodoxy (performance and symbolic). Following the passive attribute of place of birth, the fourth top attribute

![Figure 2. Ethno-identity Attributes. Relevance vis-a-vis non-relevance](image-url)
is also performance attribute of respecting and following Macedonian customs. It, in turn, is followed by the passive attribute ancestry, Macedonian cuisine (performance), Macedonian history (symbolic), Macedonian music (performance) and Macedonian communal activity (performance). Some respondents raised additional features they considered relevant to their Macedonian-ness, such as, Macedonian blood[line] \((n=1)\) as a passive attribute, and the symbolic attributes of Macedonian state \((n=3)\), Partner’s descent \((n=2)\), being “the oldest nation” \((n=2)\), Macedonian name \((n=1)\) and their very “Macedonianness”, and “all which is Macedonian” \((n=8)\).

The data indicate that whereas performance attributes are critical to one’s ethno-identity, passive attributes are second to performance attributes. And, although symbolic attributes are third to performance attributes, the data indicate that they are far from being irrelevant to one’s ethno-collective identity.

Sharing a Habitus: Macedonian Habitual Settings in Australia

So far, it is established that practice is at the core of the Macedonianness in Australia – it is an enacted Macedonianness. I will now explore the correlations between the above ethno-identity attributes, in a bid to identify the habitual settings of the ethno-Macedonians in Australia. The ethno-identity attributes correlational data is presented in Figure 3.

The performance attribute communal activity was found to be moderately correlated at \(\alpha=.01\) level with the Macedonian cuisine, Macedonian music and Macedonian customs attributes \((\text{Spearman Rho of } +0.443, +0.339 \text{ and } +0.352 \text{ respectively})\) and weakly correlated with ancestry and the Macedonian language \((\text{Spearman Rho of } +0.187 \text{ and } +0.243)\). At \(\alpha=.05\) level, this attribute was found to be weakly correlated with place of birth and Orthodoxy \((\text{Spearman Rho of } +0.115 \text{ and } +0.121)\). In other words, respondents who identified community activity as relevant were more likely, in moderation, to identify place of birth, Orthodoxy, Macedonian cuisine, Macedonian music and Macedonian customs as relevant as well. These positive correlations are found mainly between performance ethno-identity attributes. This is a set of durable dispositions in regard to ethno-collective identity that, at the relevant strengths of \(\alpha=.01\) and \(\alpha=.05\), are shared between ethno-Macedonians.

Apart from a moderate correlation with community mentioned in the previous paragraph, the Macedonian cuisine attribute is strongly correlated with
Macedonian music at the \( \alpha=.05 \) level of significance (Spearman Rho of +0.563). In addition, a weak correlation at the same level of relevance is noted with the following identity attributes: Macedonian language, place of birth, Macedonian customs and Orthodoxy (Spearman Rho of +0.216, +0.194, +0.252 and +0.197 respectively). Again, a strong and moderate correlation is found between performance attributes.

The ancestry attribute is only weakly related to Macedonian customs at \( \alpha=.05 \) level (Spearman Rho of +0.093): the identifiable correlations at \( \alpha=.01 \) level are also weak: that is, Macedonian music (Spearman Rho of +0.168), place of birth (Spearman Rho of +0.187) and Macedonian history (Spearman Rho of +0.165). When it comes to the Macedonian music attribute, apart from the aforementioned moderate and strong correlation with communal activity and Macedonian cuisine, the rest of the identifiable correlations are weak and only relevant at \( \alpha=.01 \) level. These include: Macedonian language (Spearman Rho of +0.162), place of birth (Spearman Rho of +0.226), Macedonian customs (Spearman Rho of +0.155), Orthodoxy (Spearman Rho of +0.163) and Macedonian history (Spearman Rho of +0.133). The Macedonian language attribute, in addition to the aforementioned correlations, is found to be weakly correlated at \( \alpha=.01 \) level with place of birth, Macedonian customs, and Orthodoxy (Spearman Rho of +0.143, +0.246 and +0.179 respectively) and at \( \alpha=.05 \) level with Macedonian history, i.e., Spearmen Rho of +0.109. When it comes to the passive attribute of place of birth, in addition to the aforementioned correlations, this attribute is weakly correlated at \( \alpha=.01 \) level with the Macedonian customs attribute and Macedonian history (Spearman Rho +0.161 and +0.130 respectively). The following additional weak correlations are identifiable at \( \alpha=.01 \) level relevant to the Macedonian customs attribute: Orthodoxy (Spearman Rho of +0.228) and Macedonian History (Spearman Rho of +0.213). The ethno-collective identity attribute Orthodoxy is also moderately related to Macedonian history at the same level of significance (Spearman Rho of +0.493). Finally, the remainder of the identified correlations for the symbolic attribute Macedonian history are weak at both relevance levels. At \( \alpha=.05 \) level, this attribute is weakly correlated with Macedonian language (Spearmen Rho of +0.109) and at \( \alpha=.01 \) level it is correlated with ancestry (+0.165), Macedonian music (+0.133), place of birth (+0.130) and Macedonian customs (+0.213) (see Figure 3).
The above correlations, in their own strength, point to a shared set of dispositions among ethno-Macedonians through which they understand, interpret and act in the social world. The strongest positive correlation was identified between Macedonian cuisine and Macedonian music. This means that for the ethno-Macedonians in Australia, enjoying Macedonian food and Macedonian music is a shared practice. The data also indicate that performance ethno-attributes are more likely to be positively correlated overall. Hence, it may be concluded that shared habitus can explain the ethno-Macedonians’ feeling and indentifying as Macedonians.

As evident in the findings presented in this paper, practice is considered at the core of Macedonians in Australia; in other words, it is an enacted Macedonians. This is evident in the ethno-identity attributes identified by the Macedonian participants in the five focus groups. Performance ethno-identity attributes were most commonly emphasised as relevant to the Macedonian collective identity evident in the depiction of six performance ethno-identity attributes (communal activity, Macedonian cuisine, Macedonian music, Macedonian Orthodoxy, Macedonian language, and respect and following of Macedonian traditions) vis-a-vis three non-performance (history, place of birth, 17 * stands for $\alpha=0.01$.
18 ** stands for $\alpha=0.05$.
19 Nil stands for no significant correlation identified.
and ancestry) attributes of core relevance to Macedonianness in Australia. The
findings also indicated that the affective and symbolic differentiation of material
culture and performance as Macedonian has its roots in the shared \textit{habitus}
by ethno-Macedonians in Australia. These findings provide support and an additional
empirical ground for the relevance of the performance/practice theory of ethnicity/
nation[alism].

\textbf{Bibliography}


ESSAYS

The Influence of Religion on the Creation of National Identity in Serbia

Violeta CVETKOVSKA OCOKOLJIC, Tatjana CVETKOVSKI

Abstract. This paper analyzes new religious values on the territory of Serbia and the creation of cultural-national model. During the nineties in Serbia the return to religion had been most popular. National homogenization due to the dissolution of the old state and creation of individual states with specific national characteristics was awakening. This phenomenon was caused by the need to establish some new and revive old values in the domain of culture, tradition and religion. Serbian Orthodox Church intimacy retreats before the rush of false believers who shift the stage of public squares into church and monasteries. Radical nationalism created a specific form of symbols and behavior. The identity of the entire nation is reduced to the dimension which equals national and religious affiliations. In this way, a desire to keep cultural, national and religious specificity turns into the fear of the deadly disease of Western culture. The paper analyzes the data of the research conducted on: the public expression of citizens’ religious affiliation, the influence of religion on the creation of national identity, the instrumentalization of religion by politicians and the use and misuse of religious symbols. In addition thanks to the research we can determine the effect of creating resistance or acceptance new values that are a necessary condition for positive change and joining the European Union. In addition, the impact of politics on the creation of national identity through the Orthodox religion, which creates a new form of ideology, can be determined.

Keywords: national identity, religion, post-communism, Serbia, Europe.

Introduction

Serbia’s modern society resembles a big pot seasoned with various cultures, religions and social values. Deep inner conflicts noticed in the inability of a Serb to define himself in relation to a community and a wider environment, result from casting aside old communist regime and the need for new values and restoring religion and tradition.
The dissolution of Yugoslavia entailed numerous changes in the society, which had various effects on Serbian nation. Separation of the republics and their transformation into states was accomplished in very belligerent and bloody circumstances. In that quite aggressive period, everybody forgot the slogan – Brotherhood and unity – which, indeed, reflected the fact that ex-Yugoslavia had represented multicultural and multilingual environment where individuals and groups had lived and functioned together respecting the rights of others.

The disintegration of the old state into six new states which used to be six ex-republics within ex-Yugoslavia and hostility aroused by politicians among different cultures of once-the-same nation were the reason why every nation needed to establish its own origin, religion and culture. Hence a need to fortify and testify to the tradition of every separated nation. Former cultural pluralism retreated from the newly independent, strengthened republics which wanted their own ethnic-national identity and their own values and symbols. However, the new states, created as a product of the breakup of the multinational communist federations, in the midst of separation and war conflicts, were creating their own cultural identities by negating or discarding the identities of the others. Opposite to Christianity and the second God’s commandment – Love your neighbor as yourself (Mc. 12.31) – new ideological movements headed most often in different directions. In addition, negating and underestimating somebody else’s cultural identity was at the same time the main driving power behind political conflicts. Thus originated an attitude about cultural exclusivity of one’s own group, often at the expense of other groups from the neighborhood. So an individual within a newly created state, now in transition, with regions of ethnically mixed population, is trying to find his own identification code. As in all the ex-republics, after the period of communism, in Serbia as well the same models of establishing national, religious and cultural identity are emerging. In today’s Serbia that identification code is based on religion as the essence of a national being, and it has been extremely encouraged and expressed through public communication. Thus, Orthodox religion mixed with a strong feeling of nationalism appears in Serbia as a response to the crisis of identity caused by the dissolution of Yugoslavia.

This paper focuses on the research of public expression of citizens’ religious affiliations from the 1980’s till today, the influence of religion on the creation of

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1 This fear is felt today among minorities that are trying to protect and preserve their own culture.
national identity, the increase of religiosity and ritual activities, instrumentalization of religion by politicians, use and misuse of religious symbols. Also, the paper analyzes several significant social and cultural trends in building the national identity in Serbia, critically analyzing positive and negative aspects, as well as the possibilities for establishing the old and developing new values in the interface with new cultures. Post-communism as a specific state of a nation is rooted in former times, still it can be interpreted as a transitional state, transition. Yet, in order to foresee to a certain extent its denouement, it is necessary to identify some elements of the old regime, its misuses and impacts on the territory of Serbia in the last twenty years.

1. The process of establishing religious nationalism and a social change

Religious nationalism is not a new and rare occurrence, nor can it be connected only with the states of post-communism. It appears in all nations which go through one phase of its existence into another, experiencing an enormous change. “Therefore, democratic constitution of people in a form of a nation has inevitably resulted in the systems of exclusion: it is a division into “minorities” and, even more profoundly, into populations that are considered indigenous and those that are considered foreign, heterogeneous, racially and culturally stigmatized”.

The political crisis in Serbia, which began in the 1980s and culminated in the 1990s into a bloody conflict and breaking away of the republics to form independent states, has caused the dissolution of the old state. At that time (the end of the ‘80s and beginning of the ‘90s) still on the territory of Yugoslavia, changes in the religiosity of people were gradually getting bigger. Serbia and Montenegro, which used to be extremely secular, were slowly transforming, and sociologists noticed the same influence within Serbian minorities in dominantly Catholic and Islamic environments.

Suddenly expression of religiosity which was growing during years was not only merely a form, but deeply tied with the awakening of national consciousness

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2 Etienne, Balibar. We, the People of Europe. ed. Mimica Aljosha (Belgrade: Cigoja, 2003), 36.
3 This observation is based on the results of the research conducted in 1989 by Institute of Social Sciences and Center for Political Research in Belgrade as well as the results of the research from 1989-1990 conducted by the Consortium of Yugoslav Institutes of Social Sciences on the sample of seven ex-Yugoslav republics and provinces in Mirko, Blagojevic’ “The Religious Situation in Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from the late ‘80s to the Beginning”. Theme III. (Nis: University of Nis, 2003), 412-414.
in the period of the dissolution of the old state. Increasing religiosity did not remain only in the intellectual sphere, but it also introduced ritual domain to individuals and the whole society. Although there used to be certain ritual elements in communism, regarding public demonstration (carrying Tito’s photo, relay youth, Tito’s photo in public buildings) the new form of ritual activity is entirely connected with religion and nationalism, paradoxically supported by the state itself in order to accomplish its political needs. This has led to the situation where religiosity within newly built national identity is closely related to broader social, typically unreligious, ideological processes.

At the time of territorial disintegration of the old state and collapse of the socialistic social system, the individual national states were created, characterized by national homogenization which was based on religious affiliation. These tendencies to create ones’ own national states on the territory of until-then united state found the pillar in religion, and they were established through the instrumentalization of religion, in the form of radical nationalism. Thus, religion has been transformed into ideology and has remained being misused by politicians for several decades. In those social turmoils, now already belonging to the near historical past, the year of 1990 is considered to be a breaking point. During the war, religiosity was getting stronger and it dominated as a set and continuum of features which define a certain group, community or society in relation to everything else. Newly formed groups with awaken patriarchal feeling behave according to the principle of tribal defense of the territory. In accordance with the general rules within the group, an individual is expected to homogenize into the group unity, as well as to be aware of common national, cultural and historical being. In addition, a new idea of conciliarity appears, and in its distorted form it refers to united Serbs, with awaken core values, fighting for the same goal.

However, these changes did not occur from villages towards towns, but towns as big centers of political and media power in Serbia contributed to the awakening of the tradition and religion. According to Pantic’ research at the beginning of the ’90s desecularization occurred in two ways: 1. unreligious people were resocialized or once religious people (especially older people) returned to the same position, and 2. the young were socialized by adopting religious values, not going through the process of atheistic upbringing conducted by the state. Yet, the

4 Mirko, Blagojevic. “The Religious Situation in Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from the late ‘80s to the Beginning”. Theme III. (Nis: University of Nis, 2003), 417.
sociologists’ insight is just partial, because a complete research demands content analysis of different documents containing the phenomenon of religion (books, pictures, magazines, applications), interviews with the clergy as well as the analyses of secular literature about religious phenomenon. Therefore, from all the mentioned viewpoints just parts of different statements are deduced, as well as sectional views which take critical (positive or negative) stand towards religious phenomenon in Serbia in the last twenty years.

2. Continuum of ritualistic elements, their impact and feedback reaction

Almost for four decades the Serbian Orthodox Church had existed on the margins of social events. This position of the Church was imposed by the former, communist government which, in Serbia, worshipped the cult of the president, raised to the level of a deity. Like in ancient cultures where a ruler was a half-god and intermediary in front of the supreme being on behalf of the whole people, not that long ago, on the territory of Serbia (ex-Yugoslavia) there was the same phenomenon. Quick and easy acceptance of Orthodox Christianity by former communists is the result of the previous regime. Although religion had been strictly prohibited and undesirable, numerous ritual religious features had been applied even in the time of communism. Communist regime introduced a new cult which had identical religious features. Also, affiliation elements, most often in red color, were quite obvious on the members of the group (pioneer red scarf, red book party, red five-pointed star on caps). These elements of belonging were replaced with less snazzy symbols (cross, icon and bead).

Processions with the portrait of the president on the streets of postwar Belgrade in 1948 clearly show similarities with religious rituals. The photos of the president Josip Broz Tito had a propaganda influence on people. Icons, which used to be in Serbian homes until the arrival of communists in power, were strictly banned, while a new order was to keep the president’s photo. Its basic function was supported by symbolism and allegory which depersonalized a real person and set a desirable model of conduct. St. Sava’s icon, the biggest Serbian educator, which used to be in every school, was also replaced with the photo of the

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5 Comprehensive research named “Changes in everyday life in Serbia during the nineties” conducted in 1999 at Institute for Social Research of Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade. The sample included 1201 respondents, and a segment of the research related to religious-church complex was analyzed and published by Dragana, Radosavljevic Ciparizanovic. Religion and daily life (Belgrade: Institute for Social Research, Faculty of Philosophy, 2001).
president. The cult of the president was very pronounced and supported by the ideology of the ruling regime, and it also enabled authorities to control individuals.

Although religion was strictly prohibited in that period and considered to be an expression of primitive mind, some fundamental external features of religion were still practiced in the same way. There were also snapshots from the president’s life (bearing likeness to a menology of saints’ icons) printed as calendars etc. Having rid itself of the old communist regime, Serbia has never had again as powerful leader as the president Josip Broz Tito.

Conflicts on the territory of ex-Yugoslavia and its breakup have added to the feeling of disorientation among people. During the period of the deepest moral, financial and ideological inner conflict, a need for religion and restoring tradition was emerging. The president’s photo is not an integral part of the environment (either public or private) anymore and an individual is driven by his spiritual and traditional urges. “With a strong media support, in Serbia, that wave soon turned into total fascination of the society with the pursuit of its roots, forgotten customs and the real symbols of identity”.

Thus, a new phenomenon emerges and it could be called epic nationalism. Consciousness about national origin, state and church unity and spiritual strength of Serbian people was awakened patterned on the Serbia in the Middle Ages. A personality cult was transferred into the sphere of a cult place – Kosovo as the center of the spirituality of Serbian people. A personality cult as a wide accepted role model of behavior retrieved before the power of the ingle cult. So the result was bonding to the geographical area as a traditional and religious center and the need to protect it from any enemy. An imaginary enemy, embodied in a person at the time of communism, hidden enemy of the regime was now an enemy of ingle (in accordance with the need to defend the home country).

During the ‘90s some elements of public presentation were mixed in the process of uniting religious and national: cross and sajkaca (national hat), church and kingdom (state). That metonymic element promoted in public media was strengthening the national consciousness of the people but it was also used by numerous foreign media to represent Serbs as barbarians and bloodthirsty animals. While Serbia was swept by a wave of epic nationalism and the pursuit of spiritual

roots, which were mixed and took the most weird forms, the world was in “anti-Serbian hysteria which had been exploited since 1992 by the demands for bombing Belgrade and military intervention with humanistic and moral justification”\textsuperscript{7}. Ironically, perhaps, in accord with religious needs of the Serbs, NATO bombing in 1999 responded with an ironic name Merciful Angel.

According to Brdar, propaganda discourse, in this case anti-Serbian, works on two levels: propositive level of the discourse describes the world, while its pragmatic or performance level prescribes how to see the world, totally opposite to the way it has been presented. So for example, propositively Serbs are described as Nazis and pragmatically they are made “new Jews” prepared for exodus and extermination; it describes them as tyrants, and on the other hand it makes them victims of power technology. It presents them as a threat to the civilization and keeps them under the threat of genocide. Therefore, it is clear why the bombing in the spring of 1999 could have been done without any serious protests.\textsuperscript{8} Serbs’ greatest fear, attack on their territory, actually happened with the bombing of Serbia in 1999.

However, simultaneously, there was within Serbia, ready to defend itself from a real and imaginary enemy, anti-European and anti-American propaganda discourse. This discourse was based for many years on ethnocentrism and fear of external enemy, of neighbors, in narrow and wide territorial sense, until recently when Serbia with more and more powerful intellectual elite in public sphere has started to open itself towards the European Union. However, in spite of the efforts of contemporary Serbian politicians to change Serbian picture in the world and show interest for cooperation, the attitude of Orthodox clergy to external influence is quite wobbly.\textsuperscript{9}

\textsuperscript{7} Milan. Brdar. “Logics of Western Media as Logics of Power: From Case Study of Serbian Guilt to the Paradigm of Constant Enemy”. \textit{Annual of Faculty of Culture and Media, I} (Belgrade: Faculty of Culture and Media, 2009), 157.

\textsuperscript{8} Milan. Brdar. “Logics of Western Media as Logics of Power: From Case Study of Serbian Guilt to the Paradigm of Constant Enemy”. \textit{Annual of Faculty of Culture and Media 1} (Belgrade: Faculty of Culture and Media, 2009), 166.

\textsuperscript{9} In the text “Orthodoxy and Contemporary Challenges”, bishop Artemije calls contemporary challenges such as indifferentism, ecumenism and globalism fruitless dialogues and a social disease of contemporary era.

3. Expressing religiosity

Trying to explain growth of religiosity among Serbs Blagojevic\textsuperscript{10} gives three main points which have impact on broader changes in society: restoration of religious identification, behavior and belief. Confessional (recognized) identification is the most often used indicator of religiosity in the research of religiosity and connection with religion and the Church. Also, it is one of the most important indicators of traditional bondage to religion and the Church, but of a wider social-historical context as well where traditional religion and the Church had a significant place and influence on individuals, groups and society as a whole. Thus a process of social life desecularization encompasses both the sphere of everyday life of people and public sphere, i.e. political life and state. So deprivatization of religious life in all social spheres becomes the most important factor of religious changes in the post-socialism in Serbia. In people’s behavior this religious deprivatization is reflected as a readiness of an individual to express publicly his relation with religion and church.

With a comparative analysis from three important time periods, Blagojevic determines the relations of public expression of religiosity in the period between 1982 and 1999 and obtains some data that according to the research of Djordjevic (1982) 23,8% of the population declared as religious, according to Blagojevic (1993) 71,3%, and according to Radosavljevic-Ciparizanovic (1999) 59,3%. However, measuring religiosity after 1999 and under the influence of new problems in the state (especially after the bombing of Serbia) confirms that the percentage did not fall but stabilized on a very high level, even 60%\textsuperscript{11} of the population, including not just less educated people like before, but also a better educated stratum. Religious expression did not have a direction and deeper cognitive dimension in the first decade of its growth, but as time passed it became purified and shaped in religious sense.

The events in Serbia, especially in the period since 1999, have led to the fact that Orthodox affiliation has become a key determinant of Serbian identity. Yet, no research done can precisely determine the degree of religiosity of the society because individuals have different views on religiosity, regarding the fulfillment of religious duties (for instance going to church on Sundays or once a

\textsuperscript{10} Mirko, Blagojevic. “The Religious Situation in Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from the late ‘80s to the Beginning”. \textit{Theme III}, (Nis: University of Nis, 2003), 419-422.

\textsuperscript{11} Dragana, Radosavljevic Ciparizanovic, \textit{Religion and daily life} (Belgrade: Institute for Social Research, Faculty of Philosophy, 2001), 102.
However, within this newly formed religious/national identity, three different directions of expressing religiosity can be roughly identified: 1. postmodernism religiosity, 2. fanatic religiosity and 3. believers/atheists.

1. Postmodernism religiosity appears as a private matter of people, as a kind of belief which does not have to be in accordance with institutionalized comprehension of religion. With this type of religiosity conventional religious behavior lags behind public expression of religiosity, so quite a small percentage, especially the young, goes to church, except on important church holidays, and many do not go even then. Thus an idea of religiosity in Orthodox sense expands outside institutionalized boundaries and turns into a kind of blend of different religions and personal understanding of God. Still, this kind of religiosity can easily turn into indifferentism which basically reflects and shows lack of will to distinguish some notions in terms of religion and moral. Postmodernism religiosity is mostly evident with educated, young people from cities.

2. Fanatic religiosity is directly connected with radical nationalism. This kind of religiosity has very little to do with the essence of Orthodox Christianity and it is expressed through excessive conventional forms (women wear scarves, men wear very big crosses as personal adornment) and aggressive behavior (verbal or physical). It can be described as exaggerating one element (an unimportant thing) at the expense of the whole. So within Serbian society several organizations were formed expressing radical nationalism and religious fanaticism which essentially have nothing in common with Orthodox religion. On the pretext of false Orthodoxy the representatives of this group in the most aggressive way show animosity toward national minorities, religious differences and all kinds of social differences in general. The most famous movements of the type in Serbia are the organizations Obraz (Face), Rasionalist (Rational racist) and Dveri srpske (Serbian doors), which publicly declare themselves to be political but not party.12

Religious fanaticism enables potentially unsatisfied and lonely people to satisfy their instincts for group-belonging, expressing aggression and animosity toward the external. In addition, a number of stereotypes occur which shape

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12 On the official site of Obraz there is the following text as a part of the proclamation Who are We: “We are political organization because we think politically and act publicly, as we think and believe that only with joint, national efforts we can overcome all the problems and difficulties befallen on us as a nation. Therefore, we see our role models in pious and honest Serbian men and women, our ancestors and contemporaries, who knew that politics was holy and horrible service to people and state and treated it like that.” [http://www.obraz.org.rs](http://www.obraz.org.rs), (accessed June 15, 2009).
instinctive behavior and are demonstrated as ethnocentrism and sociocentrism. Serbian ethnocentrism has appeared through a strong feeling of belonging to the ethnic group and territory with profoundly hostile attitude to everything outside the group and fear of changes. On the other hand, Serbian sociocentrism is manifested through excessive (fanatic) attachment to the group and the feeling of addiction which are so strong that they are repressing personal wishes and needs. On the idea of sociocentrism collective ideologies were built which treat a society or collective as a superior category to individuality. So in Serbia the myth about Kosovo battle and Serbs as heavenly people was developed. It is also a paradoxical situation because Serbs lost in Kosovo battle to Turks in 1389. According to the legend, this loss was justified by the fact that Tsar Lazar swapped material kingdom for heavenly kingdom that is for Heavenly Jerusalem.

While the old country was breaking up, the state administration, especially via media, kindled religious fanatism and radical nationalism. Ex-president of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic started his political campaign on Kosovo, entering the myth zone and collecting political points. Soon other Serbian politicians were following in his footsteps, and the same model was used by the politicians of most other ex-Yugoslav republics. So called folk, showbiz musicians had an important role in the promotion of radical nationalism and religious fanatism, because they composed patriotic songs and rock musicians who tried to make remake and contemporary versions of Byzantine chanting.

3. As a third direction there are two, though quite smaller groups, which are two extremes. They include individuals who are either atheists or profound Orthodox believers. Members of these two groups rarely publicly declare their religious affiliations. Although it seems paradoxical these two extreme groups, that have distinctive individuality and build their personal inner worlds, are quite often oriented toward spiritual and intellectual improvement and act in the interest of society. Orthodox believers in accordance with Christian doctrine do not judge other people and are ready to accept changes and everything that comes from people, and atheists mind their own business. Anyhow, in this third group there are people with strong, personal opinions and they are often lonely. There are often artists, writers and philosophers/theologians.

Sudden, public religiosity is expressed in most different ways. Priests, who for decades had been undervalued, have become the most desirable company of many eminent public persons, but also of ordinary people. Thus, an important
concession and positive change toward the Serbian Orthodox Church was the decree from 2001 which returned religious education in state schools in Serbia. Many books were published with an aim to explain and make more understandable Orthodox Christian religion to Serbian people. The contents of these books are targeted to various social strata. So, besides philosophical, theological and scientific texts there were numerous books for mass market with an aim to educate but also with very strange purposes. Something like high and popular culture was formed within the religion. In Trebnik (a book by the Serbian Orthodox Church) from 1998, apart from many instructions for performing rituals there is *Ritual for Vehicles Consecration* saying: “Our Lord God who seat on Seraphim; you have given your wisdom to man and with your good thought you direct everything toward good; send your blessing to this vehicle and appoint your angel to protect and lead all those who travel by it...”\(^{13}\). This ritual would not be so unusual if it did not mention an angel as a vehicle protector, i.e. an angel who should protect an object. Also, the same book includes *Ritual for Consecration of Every Thing* which indicates that it is absolutely possible to consecrate everything that surrounds a man, and thus to clean an object, used for some evil deed, of sin. It can be concluded that new Serbian religiosity is mostly conditional and not a true expression of religiosity and Christianity.

3.1. Icons – holly pictures

In the search of its identifying, national code, an individual wished to have something personal inside the group. Thus, it resulted in the restoration of old Serbian “forbidden” customs, including Serbian creation of celebrating a certain family patron saint, known as celebration of feast (slava). However, the main problem of Serbs came from not knowing original customs and ritual elements. Thus in order to satisfy people and their original customs, the response was semi-true, semi-invented versions of the customs, which came to villages from towns. This reversed process did not trouble anybody, because people through media learned about their partly real and partly invented and adopted national history.

The custom of celebrating the family patron saint considerably increased the demand for icons - saint pictures. In that way the identity of an individual is profoundly connected with personal religious origin and tradition. Among ordinary

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people, the restoration of religion can be most clearly seen in the demand for religious pictures. Even Vasa Pelagic in the 19th century tried to calculate the annual costs imposed by the state and Church. He says: “The intention of this script and writer is to alert people to be more careful and aware and at least from now on to know decently and respect his majesty of human brain and rights, instead of the previous and current respect of their majesties God and Lord (...). People do not still realize how difficult, how sad and deadly is the pressure of these idols”14. To these objections, that used to appear before as well, the Church responded that a believer did not worship an object, but the prototype of Christ’s face.15

Yet, an icon becomes a national symbol with a decorative purpose and function. The centuries of the battle of the Church against Iconoclasm and the final victory of Orthodoxy in the 9th century seem erased by the invasion of contemporary Serbian consumers. An icon has been devaluated and turned into home craft. An icon has become a decorative element for all sorts of occasions, from icon of Patron Saint feast to key pendants and tags for alcoholic drinks. As a piece of consumer goods for showing off, an icon has become a prestigious object and status symbol of financial power. In addition, popularity of an icon among ordinary people has degraded it into copyistic art and contemporary artists look at it contemptuously. As a response to the overall state of church art, the Serbian Orthodox Church opened Academy for Conservation and Restoration in 1993. Numerous icon-painting colonies were organized and studies about icon painting were published with an aim to educate in the field of icon painting and preserve icon’s holy nature and its essence.

If we agree with the fact that cultural heritage of one nation is the best testimony of its cultural, religious and social development, then art, especially religious art is a quite fragile and valuable discipline which demands cherishing, supervision and directing. In order to avert a possibility to have an icon turned into fetish or consumer goods it is necessary to stimulate religiosity among artists and respect and understanding of all other official religions that are fundamentals of every nation and its moral values. In that way the boundaries of cultural space

15 As the day of victory over Iconoclasm in the 9th century Orthodox Christian Church chose a feast called Sunday of Orthodoxy which is still celebrated today. More detailed in Vladimir Lossky, Leonid Ouspensky. The Meaning of Icons. ed. Violeta Cvetkovska Ocokoljic, Yugoslav Ocokoljic (Belgrade: Jasen, 2008), 31.
would not be limited on Serbian spiritual space, ethical-territory-bound, but they would expand and interweave with all the other religions and cultures.

Some contemporary theoreticians do not criticize a lot the expression of religiosity through icons in public places (town halls, offices) as much as the lack of religious features of other religions in Serbia.

3.2. Patrons of churches

In the Middle-Ages Serbia it was customary for rulers to build endowments. Every ruler built at least one church or monastery and some rulers built a lot of monasteries (like King Milutin, son of Uros the First). Although in the 12th and 13th centuries only the members of the Court were allowed to build endowments, from the end of the 13th century this custom was applied to enriched noblemen, and bishops, monks and priests. Monasteries which contributed to spreading and consolidating religion among people were also important political centers. Built on significant roads, they provided the only shelter for many passengers who exchanged opinions and news from the world when they were there. Thus, monks got informed about religious and political events in the country and outside. The teaching of giving as well as the faith in the redemption for sins added to the development of numerous endowments on the territory of the Middle-Ages Serbia. The saint whom the temple was devoted became the patron’s representative in front of Christ on the Judgment day. 16

This idea is even today the main driving power of contemporary Serbian patrons. Due to the financial crisis in the state and wars some individuals who gained wealth rapidly felt a need to present themselves in the public as the patrons of the Church and its humble subjects. Church building which is steeply growing is in direct connection with the increase of the number of believers who go to church. Churches become places where some come to be noticed and providing financial support for church building becomes a matter of prestige. “That sudden rush of people in churches was usually interpreted as spiritual awakening after the time of communist repression and persecution of the Church and believers“ 17.

16 For a long time a wrong opinion was prevailing that the Middle-Ages monasteries were built in reclusive and lonely places. Vojislav, Djuric. Sopocani. (Belgrade: Republic College for Protection of Cultural Monument 1990), 54.
3.3. Politicians and public-coded expression of religiosity

Since the coup which took place in October 2000, the new secular government in Serbia has become extremely fond of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Still, politicians exploit religion for achieving personal goals, while they should contribute to establishing religious and moral values. More and more often politicians are seen in the company of high church dignitaries and in church for some holidays, as well as in various religious congregations. These events are covered by media as well. However, some members of the clergy do not think favorably about increased usage of television as desirable media. Archbishop Vitalije in the article *Television as a problem of contemporary pastoring* states that there is a good side of television because it has contributed to the return to domestic ingle, he says that the devil itself has cunningly clouded our mind so that we for our own money, hard earned, buy television sets and we bring perversity, vice, crimes and madness into our homes, by ourselves.

In favor of negative propaganda which kindles aggression and fears of everything coming form the outside, is the article “Defeatists consistency”, of Milorad Vucelic, ex-director of Serbian Public Television Service (during the NATO bombing of the television building where several employees were killed): “Serbia, today, does not simply defend its state territory, tradition, the Church and religion, history, it does not defend its holy places, memory of Obilic, Karadjordje and anti-fascist battle, honor, manliness and heroism, its lifestyle. It does not defend its springs, waters, agriculture, production, its script and culture, and any national characteristic. Serbia does not defend health of its nation either. Serbia does not defend itself from a crisis, it just implements the recipes for its destruction coming from paramilitary organizations such as IMF”. This paranoid statement certainly does not go in favor of strengthening the self-consciousness of Serbs as a nation and their friendly relationships with neighbors and their cultures. If such a statement once served for consolidating the militancy of Serbian spirit and resisting “enemy”, today it carries just a sour taste of hatred and deeper separation of people. In spite of the obvious efforts of Serbian democratic government to

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“Ethnology and Anthropology: Contemporary Standings and Perspectives” (Belgrade: Ethnographic Institute of the SASA, 2005), 104.
improve economic and other living conditions, he asserts that “today’s potentate Serbia confirms and proves its iron consistency to give up everything that is its own, to surrender without resistance and in advance in front of everybody without a sign of combat – to capitulate disgracefully. And quietly fall”\textsuperscript{20}.

The Church is not just a place where individuals prey for themselves, for the living and the dead, but it is becoming a place of public gatherings where individuals come to be seen and noticed. That trend was supported by high political representatives. “Such conduct of public officials (burning candles, crossing themselves, kissing icons) which has not been seen here for the last fifty years, was a message to the public that the new government was breaking up with the communist, atheist and national past for good at last”\textsuperscript{21}. Since the Middle Ages identifying state officials with saints, even the Holy Virgin and Jesus Christ was not seldom in both literature and paintings. Domentian says in \textit{Praise to Simeon and Sava} that “both (were) the sources of God’s grace, which quenched the thirst of their sons with God’s teaching”\textsuperscript{22}. Repeating the same historical model, epic nationalism of Serbian politicians was identified with the educational mission of Saint Sava. In addition, more often usage cleric terminology was noticeable in political speeches as well as linking events to the Church Orthodox Calendar. Presidential candidates more and more often start their campaigns on a big Orthodox holiday (most frequently Djurdjevdan – St. George Day). So something like this can be heard quite often: “Two leading democratic parties, Democratic Party and Democratic Party of Serbia celebrate the party’s slava (Saint’s day of Saint George) Djurdjevdan”\textsuperscript{23} or “Instead of becoming hajduk (Serbian fighters for freedom), Djurdjevdan has become autonomist meeting”\textsuperscript{24}.

Trying to determine clearly cultural space many theoreticians endeavored to lay foundation in language (speech) as the basic unit of symbolic culture. Cultural

\textsuperscript{20} Ibid.
unit (cultunit)\textsuperscript{25} as a group of people who colloquially use common language, distinctive from other languages and belong to the same state or contact group is the substantive basis of cultural integration. The idea is not a new one and creating Old Slavic language in the 9\textsuperscript{th} century can be taken as a parallel. That need was based on the conviction that the language used as a means for Christian service to God became sacred and the people who can speak that language are raised to the status of the people dedicated to serve God.\textsuperscript{26}

The Serbian Orthodox Church intimacy retreats before the rush of false believers who shift the stage of public squares into church and monasteries. So, more often politicians take the role of priests, giving sermons similar to priests'. „Such models of self-presentation which members of the political and social elite – as role-models – promote through their behavior, are spread via media on all the levels of the society and become a rule, custom, indispensable determinant of personal and collective identity“\textsuperscript{27}. However, Bishop Ilarion Alfejev says that God should inspired theology and that it should not be a man's word but the word of the Holy Spirit spoken by human lips: „A real Christian is the one who can keep silent until the Holy Spirit touches the strings of his soul. Real theology occurs only when a human word falls silent and the word of the Holy Spirit bursts from the soul. From that moment, „a word admirer“ turns into „wisdom admirer“, rhetorician – into theologian“\textsuperscript{28}.

Still, deeper instrumentalization of religion and culture can be observed in the language and speech. Thus, it can be determined what a viewpoint a speaker takes when he evaluates and perceives the world he describes. In the article 	extit{Dog-Whistle Politics, Coded Communication and Religious Appeals}, Bethany Albertson talks about coded communication based on religion and especially racism in the USA. Since racism is not publicly acceptable he analyzes racist appeals in coded expressions which remain within the boundaries of politically acceptable discourse.

\textsuperscript{25} Antonjina, Klosovskas, 	extit{Sociology of Culture}. (Belgrade: Cigoja, 2001), 55.
\textsuperscript{26} Dimitrie, Obolenski, 	extit{The Six Byzantine Portraits}. (Belgrade: Prosveta, 1991), 24.
He defines coded communication as a language with special meanings for a demographic subgroup, from the viewpoint of listeners and not speakers. Stating a number of examples of using religious terms in politicians’ speeches (Bush, Clinton) he says that in the USA there is no law against the usage of religious language in politics. Also, he says that religious language does not have to be always misused or persuasive. However, due to the fact that in the USA there is religious variety, coded religious (or some other kind of) language enables politicians to communicate directly to the like-minded. Also it meets all sorts of needs: a need for belonging and a need for differentiation.  

In that way a coded racist speech is conducted, within the boundaries of general acceptability, it communicates to the target group. As a religious speech always has a certain extent of epic and lyric, when it is not recognized, it will always stronger affect all its listeners subconsciously.

4. The meaning of Orthodox Religion and contemporary society

New cultural-national phenomenon, established on the ideological matrix, was in the service of the state in its first stages. Reviving past, cherishing Serbian Orthodox tradition, language and cultural heritage, which in the beginning, was strongly supported by media, triggered desirable (aggressive/protective) demeanor, as the time was passing it turned into scientific battlefield. Today this battlefield is still a place where Serbian sociologists, anthropologists, political scientists and theologians wage a war for and against religion and its instrumentalization. Although the influence of Orthodox religion on creating national identity cannot be denied, there are numerous discussions about whether its effects are positive or not, at the moment and in the long run. In the context of the turbulent and unstable state of the whole society turning to religion has a much deeper meaning. This process has a wider social-historical context where traditional religion and the Church used to have powerful impact on an individual and society as the whole. This direct connection between religion and the awakening of national consciousness tells about establishing the forgotten relations with tradition, cultural origin and religious features of the ancestors.

Church role in human society finds its justification in the texts of *the Bible*. It refers to the unity between the celestial and terrestrial church in the body of Christ. Believers in church, where they grow learning about God (Col. 1.10), become in communion with Christ, in the community of the Church, which is composed of angels, saints. Also, the Church has a more profound meaning than just one of a pedagogic Christian role. Through the Church as a community where religious ritual practice is performed, religious believes are spread as essential points of the dogmatic core of institutionalized religion.

In the text *Orthodoxy and contemporary challenges*, bishop Artemije\(^\text{30}\) says that all the problems oppressing and torturing Serbian people are at the same time the problems of Serbian Orthodox Church. He has noticed that the consequences of the long reign of communism and wars are reflected in the segments of people’s lives, that is, on biological, economic, mental and spiritual level. Thus a fall in birthrate, with the economic crisis and poverty, estrangement from God and atheism and psychological weakness and neurosis have completely debilitated Serbian nation. However, according to him, a much bigger danger lies in the Church. He mentions a fad among certain clergymen from the bottom to the top of Church hierarchy to follow secular trends in all the issues. He criticizes them for forgetting often canon principles and rules, left by Holy Fathers as a measure of life and behavior.

Bishop Artemije says that the evil of indifferentism appears as a disease which first infects the highest classes of a society and like an epidemics and craze it spreads on the masses, today more easily thanks to mass media. Blaming the evil of ecumenism, that “unites plenty of heresy under the common Christian roof” for hatching the idea of globalism, he talks about the new Western ideology, trying to impose itself on the whole world. “Regardless of the nation they come from, the faith and religion they belong to, supporters of globalism have a task to relativize, and then satanize their past: their ancestors, national and religious affiliation, grandees, ideals, theirs, and not foreign\(^\text{31}\).

However, there are numerous concessions which in a strange way try to


\(^{31}\) Ibid.
follow “positive” changes in the world. So Alfejev mentions one (out of many examples of) adjustment of liturgical texts according to the contemporary norms: “Relatively recently the Roman Catholic Church has decided to remove all the so-called ‘anti-Semitic’ texts from the service on Good Friday. Several members of the Orthodox Church have initiated talks about the revision of Orthodox services in order to make them more adjusted to the contemporary standards of political correctness (...) Modern rules of ‘political correctness’ require different interpretation in order to adjust not only church services, but Christian faith to modern trends”^32.

If in the first years the Church did not pay much attention to the instrumentalization by the state for political purposes, today the Church more and more criticizes those kinds of behavior and values that are opposite to Christian doctrine. Still, it can be seen from many theological texts that there are debates within the Church itself and development of different movements which inhibit unification of the Church and forming one common attitude to the external environment.

On the other hand, the Church attitudes to religious nationalism are also wobbly and divided. Alexander Shmeman (2007) in the text Greek religious nationalism^33 talks about nationalization occurring inside every individual Orthodox Church and the existence of “Russianism”, “Hellenism” and “Serbism”. Taking Greece as an example he states that one of the targets of the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople to stop individual churches to identify with nationalism is paradoxical because he is for the Greeks a representative and symbol of their nationalism. “Ecumenical precedence becomes Greek precedence (...) For the Greeks, who have gradually become victims of identifying “Byzantine” with “Greek”, with national and even ethnic role of Byzantineism, every endeavor at establishing political and ecclesiastical independence outside the Empire by Slavs, or Arabs, Romanians – meant almost automatic danger for “Hellenism”, an attempt to destroy the Greeks and their precedence within Orthodoxy”^34.

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34 Ibid.
Conclusion: the state and Church today

Today in Serbia, the Serbian Orthodox Church has an important place in public but also in political life. The Church as one of the most influential national institutions has a huge support of the current state authorities and broad media promotion. “At the same time, Serbia (and the state community SOC) is a secular state, where the separation of church and state is regulated by the current Constitution”\(^\text{35}\).

As atheism trend has weakened, political parties tend to include religious contents in their programs and political offers. As every party has a certain number of religious supporters, there is always a risk of not inconsiderable consequences for the electoral success of a party.

However, religion as a political fact in post-communist society is not only connected with negative omens and occurrences. There is also a need for unifying people and stabilizing social soul. On the other hand, sociocentrism strengthened by the misuse of religious symbols and values creates cultural space which becomes seismographically sensitive to any kind of external influence. A concealed enemy appears outside the group and becomes a target of certain animosity. The ideology of radical cultural pluralism stimulates cultural-ethnic minorities to see themselves as separate, independent entities within one state.

Salvation might be in forming ethnical multicultural society through the existence of different cultures which are identified by ethnicity/nationality of its representatives. If cultural pluralism is defined as recognized cultural diversity in multicultural environments associated with the values of tolerance, understanding other cultures and intercultural communication, then in Serbia ethnicity can be derived from the common social-cultural model. That would also be the most successful and objective social fact and model that would make it possible to achieve the conditions in the state for respecting cultural, national and religious differences. Cultural democracy stirs cultural diversity, but above all it stimulates individuals to take active part in cultural life. Once, in old Yugoslavia, many families of different religious affiliations visited each other for religious holidays. After many wars, that is being noticed again in Serbia, though with weak echoes it gradually bodes the return.

Today, Serbia as a multiethnic and multiconfessional community officially declares its firm orientation towards European integrations. State leaders have been contributing to the constitution of modern, democratic, civil society and its values that are in fact in accordance with the essence of Orthodox Christianity. Although some theoreticians in Serbia are wondering how it is possible that these two, seemingly totally opposite principles exist at the same time, the answer is perhaps in the very core of Christian respect for different beings and their cultures. Today the ideology of ethnic nationalism is retreating before the term of conciliarity which encompasses all nations and national minorities in one state. In support of this statement on 27th April, 2006 National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia passed the Law on churches and religious communities. The main provisions of this law are freedom of religious denomination, prohibition of religious discrimination and limiting the expression of religious freedom.

However, cultural identity developed under the influence of religion and nationality can also be developed through critical reflection of culture. Thus, identity becomes a dynamic category which achieves its stability through the constant review of the state. It is an individualistic category of belonging to a group, which involves a certain feeling of belonging but also freedom of choice and shifts of identity. If the separation and formation of the state of Serbia in turbulent years was determined by national radicalism and the instrumentalization of religion, today these tendencies debilitate under the influence of other factors which are primarily connected with the strengthening of the awareness that we need cooperation with other European countries.

However, inside the European Union there are numerous unsolved issues like formation of individual national identities. Malesevic says that “the increase in the number of groups within the (European) Union which build their identity on religion and ethnicity, resistance to European integrations expressed in some parts of expectations, tell that the idea of “Europe without boundaries” and a new identity construct which is supposed to arise from that idea, still remain an open question. The function of contemporary Serbian culture can be defined as an

37 Miroslava, Malesevic. “Christian Orthodox Religion Affiliation as a Core of National Being in Post-Communist Serbia”. Collection of Papers of the Ethnographic Institute,
attempt to homogenize national society, but also as self-fulfillment and functioning interwoven with other existing and imaginary communities. Defense of national interests is not focused on strengthening sociocentrism anymore and fear of enemy, but it strengthens the awareness that national interest can be defended only if there are good relations with neighbors and cooperation with other states and respect of the rights of all the forms of social and religious affiliation and expression.

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BOOK REVIEWS


Review by Cristina MATIUTA

An analysis of migration trends in the last 50 years indicates that migration has become a truly global phenomenon, which affects, in a greater or a lesser extent, all parts of the world. In the lack of accurately data, the most common measure of the international migration flows is the UN concept of “migration stock” (understood as the number of foreign-born residents in the population at the time of the most recent census). According to this, the global migrant stock increased from 75,9 million in 1960 to 190,6 million in 2005. Africa is ranging among the regions profoundly shaped by migration, enduring the positive and negative effects of this complex phenomenon.

The book reviewed here, *Surviving on the Move: Migration, Poverty and Development in Southern Africa*, edited by Jonathan Crush and Bruce Frayne, is very useful for understanding the various facets of migration and its relationship with development in southern Africa. As the editors argue in the first chapter, migration was generally seen in the research literature and contemporary policy debates in southern Africa as essentially a bad thing, having negative impact on development, especially by the exodus of skilled citizens, and increasing poverty. This book adopts a different perspective, viewing migration as a reality and as an inevitability and taking into account the development potential of migration:”...The
people of southern Africa are becoming more and more mobile, both within and between countries. The real policy challenge is not to devise means to stop the unstoppable; it is to devise managed migration systems that encourage legal migration and do not push migrants into the shadows -and the sweatshops.” (pp. 16).

The book is organized in 13 chapters, which address several significant subjects for the migration-development nexus in southern Africa.

The first one is the “brain drain”, discussed in two chapters, one treating the emigration of South African students and another the migration of healthcare professionals from Zimbabwe. Both articles suggest that governments could slow down the brain drain of skilled citizens rather by positive approaches (offering economic and other benefits and opportunities), than by negative ones (setting up barriers to leaving).

The second theme treats the problem of migration and poverty reduction, particularly the urban migrant livelihoods and food security strategies. Four chapters of the book underline the complexity of migration to cities and the necessity that governments understand and support the livelihoods of urban migrants; otherwise, the social, economic and political welfare of society as a whole may be undermined.

The third subject, discussed in two chapters, is that of remittances and their role for development in the sending communities in Zimbabwe and Mozambique. Remittances improve the living standards and the access to education and healthcare and, in a lesser extent, are invested in productive activities. In order to realise the fully potential of remittances, the authors stress the necessity to foster the collaboration between governments, migrant groups, local communities, NGOs, to find the ways of encouraging the flow and to create an environment for more sustainable investment of remittances.

The four theme debates the migration phenomenon from the gender perspective. Two chapters show how the historically dominant role of rural males in the labour migrant system in southern Africa is changing and how women are increasingly on the move.

Finally, the last theme deals with the relationship between mobility and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS, two chapters arguing that migrants are significantly higher exposed to the risk of disease than non-migrants and that programmatic interventions, with a thorough understanding of the context of migrant
One of the strong points of this book is that all chapters are based on primary research. The book combines the results of large-scale representative surveys with in-depth local case studies and provides an accurate picture of the relationship between migration and development in southern African context. The authors emphasize the migrants’ contribution both to countries of origin and countries of destination, their positive role in the process of poverty reduction and genuine development and stress the necessity that migrant lives and livelihoods to be in the centre of international and African debates about migration, poverty and development.

*Review by Marius I. TĂTAR*

In a globalized world, the increased intensity and speed of national and transnational migration affects equally families and individuals of all ages. Migrant children and adolescents are part of this complex phenomenon and, like their adult counterparts, they are facing the new, and often challenging, circumstances of the mobility processes. Despite of the high variety of migration contexts in which children are involved in different parts of the world, research and policy decisions on this issue are usually one-sided. Narratives of child migration are commonly focusing on minors who have been coerced into national or transnational movement to work in situations which are either abusive or exploitative in themselves, or are abusive or exploitative because of the young age of the children. While these humanitarian narratives are valuable as far as they are concerned with the protection of and resource provision for the child migrants, they also have their downsides. For instance, they are mainstreaming a research and policy approach, which portrays child migrants only as helpless and passive victims of adult abuse, ignoring other migratory situations. Moreover, humanitarian discourses usually assume no capabilities for children to cope with and play an active role in the migratory circumstances they are involved in.

Contrary to the approaches outlined above, there is a growing body of research which emphasizes migrant children as active agents, which express their

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own voice and meaningfully participate in policy-making concerning the migratory situations in which they are involved. *Children and Migration: At the Crossroads of Resiliency and Vulnerability* edited by Marisa O. Ensor and Elżbieta M. Goździak is a plea to researchers and practitioners alike “to recognize children as active, politically and socially aware individuals, not objectified, passive victims” (p. 277). The book advocates for a significant paradigm shift from top-down to bottom-up approaches of the increasingly common phenomenon of child migration, emerging from including both in research and practice the perspective of the children themselves.

*Children and Migration* brings together the essays of an international group of experts - researchers, policy-makers, and advocates- in the study and practice of cultural and applied anthropology, human rights, international development, humanitarian assistance, international development, public health, social work, education, and law. Drawing on ethnographic data as well quantitative surveys, the essays included in this volume examine the experiences of children in a wide variety of migratory circumstances such as economic child migrants, transnational students, and trafficked minors, stateless, unaccompanied, and undocumented children. The book addresses theoretical, methodological, and ethical consideration of research concerning health, education, work, kinship, gender issues and the special situations presented by forced migration in which minors are involved.

The book is divided into four parts, each part dealing with a specific theme: research, policies, practices and new opportunities for migrant children. In their turn, each of the four parts of the volume includes three essays examining different aspects of the main themes mentioned above.

The first part of the book addresses the issues of research, representation and voice of migrant children. *Understanding migrant children* is an essay that opens the volume with an analysis of different conceptualizations and discourses on child migration, and childhood in general, that frame the way migrant children are viewed in research, policy and practice. The following chapter in this section examines child migration and labor in Haiti, pointing out the challenges of representing children’s perspective in research. This task is becoming increasingly difficult in the context of a growing tension between the tendency of seeing children as active agents involved in specific life situations, on the one hand, and the views of children as vulnerable and in need of assistance, on the other hand. The last essay in this part of the volume sheds light on the role of the media in
migrant children’s life focusing both on the influence of the media in the establishment of local connections and also on the maintenance and development of global and transnational identities.

The second part of the volume reviews the policies and highlights the importance of taking responsibility for the rights of migrant children. More specifically, the chapters included in this section discuss how different policies and legal provisions (national and international) shape various aspects of the life of migrant children. The influence of legal frameworks on migrant children is considered from several points of view. The first chapter in this part of the book analyzes the reinforcement of border control, proliferation of detention regimes and the criminalization of unaccompanied and undocumented adolescents who arrive in France. Then, another chapter, examines the adoption and implementation of the legal provisions concerning internally displaced children concluding that, while in the case of refugee children the international community has made significant progress, less has been done in the case of internally displaced minors. The last chapter of this section investigates the problems and possible policy recommendation for upholding the right of the stateless migrant children coming from different regions of the world (Africa, Asia, the Baltics, the Caribbean, and the Middle East).

The third part of the volume examines the practices concerning child migration, advocating for the creation of new spaces for agency. The focus is on the potential tension between the diversity of migrant children’s circumstances, reasons and understandings of their situation, on the one hand, and the global legal frameworks, offering standardized responses to the survivors of child trafficking, on the other hand. The authors of the essays in this section of the volume argue that certain programs aimed to socially reintegrate unaccompanied minors somehow restrict the agency of the children involved in trafficking circumstances and thus limit the understanding of their potential fate. In addition, the last case study presented in this part, demonstrates the ability of children to assess their own well-being and to understand the challenges posed by specific migration situations.

Searching for new and better opportunities as a strategy driving child migrations is the theme of the last section of the book. The first chapter in this section counters the mainstream view that child labor is necessarily exploitative. Using ethnographic data from Bangladesh the author of this chapter points out a
long established tradition (in the cultural and economic context of this study) according to which children play an active and dynamic role in the collective agency of households. The second essay in this section points out the variations in the perspectives regarding school in the case of young people which have transnational student experience. The section concludes with an essay on the enduring philosophy of equality and the space occupied by children in France’s social fabric, particularly in educational opportunity.

Children and Migration contributes to the ongoing academic and policy debates on migration offering a comprehensive study of child migration which incorporates in the analysis the perspective of children themselves. The editors of the book acknowledge that migrant children do not speak with a single voice, since they are involved in a high variety of migration situations each of which posing special problems and implying different coping strategies. Moreover, the volume enhances our understanding of the multifaceted character of child migration phenomenon, by challenging some of the most commonly held assumptions in this field. In this way, Children and Migration provides a useful and inspiring collection of essays, which will interest child migration experts, researchers, decision-makers and practitioners alike.
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