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Rolf Lindner

To see oneself in the other fellow's place*

Urban Reportage, the Chicago School and the New York Photo League[1]

Abstract: "To get news so completely and to report it so humanly that the reader will see himself in the other fellow's place" – this aim was how the American publicist Lincoln Steffens saw the true ideal of journalism. What urban reportage around 1900, the early ethnographic studies of the Chicago School of Urban Sociology and the camera work of the New York Photo league had in common was the idea of providing insight into other lifeworlds so that the audience can feel empathy with others. In this way the aesthetic function of the media, as formulated by the social philosopher George Herbert Mead, could be fulfilled: To stimulate communitarization by conveying the experiences of others.

Keywords: urban reportage, aesthetic experience, urban ethnography, street photography, humanity of method

The aim that literary reportage around 1900, Chicago urban ethnography in the 1920s and the street photography of the New York Photo League in the 1930s and 1940s all had in common was to convey an aesthetic, i.e. sensual experience of urban life in all its variety. By showing life as lived, reporters, sociologists and photographers each tried to convey to their audiences, insights into other lifeworlds as a basis for understanding them, so they could put themselves in another person's place. Of these three movements, the work of the Photo League, which oriented itself according to the agenda of the Chicago School, has, so far, been largely ignored in the discourse concerning urban anthropology. This is surprising because the members of the Photo League did not only produce a socially involved photographic ethnography of New York, analogous to the example of the Chicago School; they went even further than the Chicago sociologists by reflecting the urban situation by means of street photography and making the interactivity of the urban perspective the subject of their photographic work.

* German version in *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 2018, 114 (2): 171–186. Translated by George Low.

1 This essay is a greatly revised and expanded version of a talk I gave in the Forum Stadtpark, Graz, on 11 May 2017 at the invitation of the Institute for Cultural Anthropology and European Ethnology (voku Network) and the Center for Methods Competence (*Methodenkompetenzzentrum*) of the Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz. I am very grateful to the organizers for this opportunity.

Urban reportage

The "world of strangers," as Lyn Lofland (1973) defined the metropolis, positively invited research. It produced a new vocational type, as Robert Park (1967 [1925]), the founder of the Chicago School termed it, in the shape of the reporter who acted as a kind of urban scout in the metropolitan context for his readers. In the eyes of the great naturalistic author Theodore Dreiser (1922), who, like many of his literary contemporaries, began his career as a newspaper reporter, the great thing about the metropolis was its diversity. With their descriptions of the city, portrayals of urban institutions and occupations, and stories of ethnic districts and their inhabitants, the reports inspired by this variety offered their readers a substitute for the lack of their own experience. In this way, they provided what the social philosopher George Herbert Mead (1926) called the "aesthetic experience"; in other words, the reports helped to bring people together in such a way that it became possible for them "to put themselves in each other's places" and "to participate in each other's minds" (Mead 1926: 389). It was the reporters who told their readers about the glamour and misery of the metropolis. It was they who reported from inside the world of the sweatshops, the slaughterhouses and the factories; they introduced their readers to the world of the grand hotels, the department stores and the vaudeville theaters; they scouted out tenement blocks and wandered through red-light districts; and it was they who went on trips "Around the World in New York" – the title of a series of articles by Konrad Bercovici (1924) that appeared in *Century Magazine* in 1924. He guided his readers through Little Italy, Chinatown, the Syrian quarter, Harlem, the Balkan areas and into the German quarter, among others. As scouts, the reporters developed research techniques that corresponded to the image of the explorer as well as the altered conditions in the metropolitan world: Observation and interview, onsite investigation and undercover research. The metropolis released the art of observation; it made it both possible and necessary. Only in this art did the role of the observer become possible 'as' a role; only here did the opportunity exist to slip into various roles and to temporarily assume different identities. Just like ethnologists exploring foreign cultures, the urban reporters had their sources – the janitor, the hotel porter, the bartender – and their 'native' informers in the ethnic quarters. Just like covered participant observers, they assumed roles as unemployed people and apartment hunters, as workers and sales assistants, as beggars and lunatics, to provide their readers with insights into strange work and lifeworlds and into the working methods of modern institutions. A surprising number of such role-playing reports were produced by women in the 1880s. The best-known of them was Elizabeth Cochrane, who became the uncrowned queen of the genre under the pseudonym "Nelly Bly." Cochrane developed the investigative report based on undercover observation to a supreme degree. She feigned madness, had it officially certified and had herself admitted to the notorious lunatic asylum on Blackwell's Island ("Ten Days in

a Madhouse" was the title of the report); she had herself arrested in order to get into a women's prison and report about the conditions there; she claimed to be sick and went to the hospital for the poor to examine the medical treatment provided there; and she worked, among other jobs, as a housemaid and in department stores to describe the working conditions. The latter was a topic that Frances Donovan ("The Saleslady") returned to about forty years later within the framework of Chicago Ethnography (Lindner 1990). However fragmentarily, the reporters conveyed to their readers the inside views of strange lifeworlds. They provided them with knowledge and encouraged tolerance by showing them unknown phenomena (a service in a synagogue, a patronal festival in Little Italy, high mass in the basilica in Polish Town). The detailed descriptions of locations were not merely ornamentation, not merely evidence that the author had really 'been there,' but also an opening up of the metropolitan area that the readers could follow. In this way, the authors acted as tourist guides. The series of articles "Around the World in New York" contains, for example, the sentence: "Take the Sixth Avenue Elevated at Forty-Second Street, and in a few minutes you are in Rector Street; walk a block westward to Washington Street, and you are in Syria" (Bercovici 1924: 348). In this way, the reporters helped make the metropolis a "structure of diverse lifeworlds and forms of culture" (Korff 1987: 645). Many of the studies published in the golden age of urban reportage around 1900 also appeared in book form, beginning with Jacob Riis' *How the Other Half Lives* (1889; still reprinted today), through Lincoln Steffens' muckraking article *The Shame of the Cities*, to Konrad Bercovici's *Around the World in New York* – clearly a strategy on the part of the publishers involved to double their earnings, but also evidence that these reports were not only of ephemeral interest. One particularly striking example is a series of articles by Hutchins Hapgood (1967 [1902]), which appeared, among other places, in the *Commercial Advertiser* and was published in book form in 1902 under the title *The Spirit of the Ghetto*. For the eminent historian Moses Rischin (1967), who edited a new edition of this series of articles for Harvard University Press, this book was the first authentic study of the inner life of an American immigrant community from the pen of an outsider: "More especially, it is a superb portrait of the emergent golden age of the Lower East Side, when a new region of heart and mind was introduced into the American consciousness" (Rischin 1967: viif.). Hapgood was one of the young generation of Harvard graduates who, at the end of the 19th century, entered the world of newspapers searching for a new form of literary journalism that fulfilled an aesthetic function – as George Herbert Mead (1926) expressed it. The literary journalism that Lincoln Steffens propagated as editor of the *Commercial Advertiser* corresponds perfectly to Mead's model: "… [I]t is scientifically and artistically the true ideal for an artist and for a newspaper: To get the news so completely and to report it so humanly that the reader will see himself in the other fellow's place" (Steffens 1931: 317). Hapgood, who was a

reporter for the *Commercial Advertiser*, followed the ideal sketched by Steffens in all his (Hapgood's) writings. Hapgood made his position clear in a preface to the book edition of his articles about Jewish New York:

> I was led to spend much time in certain poor resorts of Yiddish New York not through motives either philanthropic or sociological, but simply by virtue of the charm I felt in men and things there. East Canal Street and the Bowery have interested me more than Broadway and Fifth Avenue. Why, the reader may learn from the present volume – which is an attempt made by a "Gentile" to report sympathetically on the character, lives and pursuits of certain east-side Jews whom he has been in relations of considerable intimacy. (Hapgood 1967: 5)

If we can believe his source, Abraham Cahan[2], the publisher of the most famous Jewish daily newspaper the *Jewish Daily Forward*, he succeeded admirably in this, since for Cahan, Hapgood was the only gentile who understood the spirit of the ghetto. What Hapgood expresses in his preface is a perspective of comprehension based on understanding and empathy – a perspective that the Chicago School of Urban Sociology was the first to attempt to utilize scientifically. The first chapter ("The Old and the New") is particularly impressive, containing his descriptions of the Orthodox Jewish way of life in Russia and Galicia and its gradual disintegration in America. His comments about the second generation are especially remarkable: He presents the special situation of the young people, who alternated between love of their parents and embarrassment about their appearance, linguistic deficits, ignorance and awkwardness. Hapgood attempted to identify the influences that affected the second generation and shaped them in a specific way. On the one hand, there was the Orthodox Jewish environment of their parents' home, which insisted on strict adherence to the traditional way of life; on the other hand, there was the American school they had to go to, which not only taught the youngsters a language that their parents could only speak poorly or not at all, but also exposed them to influences that were unknown or irrelevant to their parents' generation. "He (the young) achieves a growing comprehension and sympathy with the independent, free, rather sceptical spirit of the American boy; he rapidly imbibes ideas about social equality and contempt for authority, and tends to prefer Sherlock Holmes to Abraham as hero" (Hapgood 1967: 24). Rischin, in his introduction, compares Hapgood's study to Jakob Riis' *How the Other Half Lives*. This study is a comprehensive portrayal, based on reportage material, of the living conditions in the slum districts of New York, in which Riis concentrates, among other places, on the Lower East Side, inhabited by Jewish immigrants mainly from Galicia and Russia. He calls this area "Jewtown." In Rischin's opinion, there is a world of difference between Riis' "Jewtown" and

2 In his travel diary, Robert Park said of Cahan that he "probably produced the best newspaper that was ever published" (REPA 4:7). Park comments in detail on Cahan and the *Jewish Daily Forward* in his study about the immigrant press (Park 1970).

Hapgood's "Ghetto," although they both describe the same location. The difference derives from the contrasting perspectives from which the two authors perceive the lifeworld of the eastern Jewish immigrants. Rischin sees the moralizing tone in Riis, who sympathized with the reforming tendencies of the Charity Organization Society, as an echo of the endeavors to proselytize the immigrants, an aspect that Hapgood also refers to indirectly when he emphasizes in his preface that he was not guided by philanthropic motives. As Rischin put it: "Where Riis sought to cleanse the ghettos if not to level them entire, Hapgood saw the East Side as a source for counter reform in the greater America" (Rischin 1967: xxiii). This alternative view of society stood in opposition to a way of thinking and acting shaped purely by the profit motive, which did not allow for individual character and contained no organ for the variety of human existence. In this way, Hapgood proved himself to be one of the cultural dissidents who, towards the end of the 19th century, turned to journalism as a realm of experience. Journalism became a *technique de dépaysement* for these dissidents. Their preference for people on the fringes of society or outside it is directly related to their alienation from their original Anglo-Saxon Protestant culture. As Skotheim wrote in his introduction to Hapgood's autobiography: "Bored by what they perceived as the artificiality of the life of the middle classes, the young intellectuals were attracted by what their families and society were not" (Skotheim 1971: xix). Those who turned to the metropolitan press as a realm of experience were protesting, in the first place, against what the philosopher George Santayana (1967) termed the "genteel tradition," a tradition of nice pretense and social complacency, which stood in exemplary fashion for the divide between intellectual life and all authentic standards of reality. This protest explains what Rischin in his eulogy for Hapgood called the "humanity of his method" (Rischin 1967: xxx), his capacity for empathy, which summoned up the 'spirit' of the ghetto before the eyes of his readers.

Urban ethnography

I have made it clear elsewhere that urban reportage was a role model for the urban research carried out by the Department of Sociology at Chicago University in the 1920s and 1930s (Lindner 1990). This is not surprising when we recall that the *spiritus rector* of urban sociology, Robert Ezra Park, worked as a reporter and city editor in Chicago, Detroit, New York and other major American cities for almost twelve years before opting for an academic career. Contemporary colleagues in his field, who favored quantitative social research as the scientific ideal, viewed this relationship critically; they dismissed Chicago sociology as a "journalistic school of sociology" and as "journalism in disguise." In an attempt to conceal this relationship for reasons of prestige, Park, at first, argued in favor of cultural anthropology as model; he emphasized in his key article "The City" that the same method that anthropologists, such as Boas and Lowie, used when exploring the ways of life of

the Native Americans could be fruitfully applied to investigations of the customs, religious beliefs and social practices of the inhabitants of Little Italy and the "more sophisticated folkways" of the inhabitants of Greenwich Village (Park 1967 [1925]: 3). There is no doubt that such a methodological proximity exists. However, the fundamental influence of contemporary journalism still remains. Only in his old age did Park make it clear to what extent he had drawn from his experiences as a reporter and city editor when formulating his program:

> In the article about the city I leaned rather heavily on the information I had acquired as a reporter regarding the city. Later on, as it fell to my lot to direct the research work of an increasing number of graduate students, I found my experience as a city editor in directing a reportorial staff had stood me in good stead. (Kurtz 1982: 338)

Park imagined that students should become "reporters in depth to enter as fully as possible into the social worlds they studied, participating in them sufficiently to understand the attitudes and values of these worlds" (Matthews 1977: 108). This seems to me to be nothing other than the "humanity of method" of which Moses Rischin spoke. However, for this to be successful, the students first had to discard their "college notions of virtue and charity" (Dreiser 1922), because they hindered real empathy with the subjects of their research and, therefore, understanding of their behavior and way of life. When Park emphasized that his experiences as a city editor had been helpful when instructing his students, he meant, above all, the adoption of the journalistic assignment system, i.e. the allocation of specific topics or beats, which was common practice in contemporary journalism when working with cub reporters. Particular topics were handed out for the term papers in Chicago; exemplarily "Describe the typical day of a department store salesgirl," or "What happens in the lobby of a grand hotel?" or "The occupation of a bartender." These term papers were then presented in class and discussed. What does the instructor think of them? "Remarkable stuff" or "It's no news," which, according to former students, was the worst verdict that Park could deliver. Just as the cub reporters in Park's day learned their trade 'on the job,' so did the fledgling Chicago sociologists 'by doing.' That was also true of a remarkable school of photography: The New York Photo League.

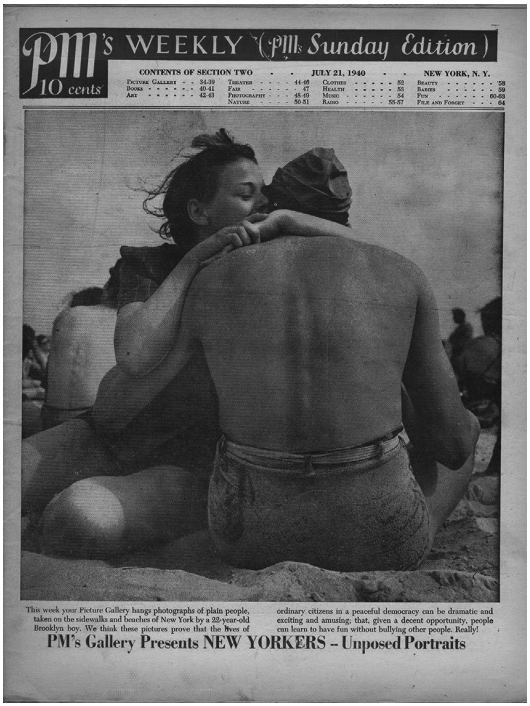
Street photography

The Photo League developed in 1936 out of the Workers Film and Photo League, a part of Workers International Relief, and was dissolved in 1951 after being blacklisted as an allegedly subversive organization by the House Un-American Activities Committee. Some of its members – including Sid Grossman, one of the founders of the League – were members of the Communist Party for a time. The Photo League consisted of a group of young photographers, predominantly from the Jewish quarter of New York, who had made it their mission to explore life in the neighborhoods

by means of photography, adopting the Chicago ethnographers' phrase: "life as it is lived." "In insisting that 'the student learns by doing'" (Klein 2011: 13), the progressive method of training that, in the view of one of its members, Hal Greenwald, was the distinguishing feature of the League, the students of the photo school attached to the League were sent out on trips of exploration, just as Park had done. According to students, Park told them to "go into the district," "get the feeling" and "become acquainted with people" (Lindner 1990: 118), instructions which seem to me to apply, *mutatis mutandis*, to the training at the New York Photo School as well, since both its head, Sid Grossman, and Park were concerned with teaching the art of seeing, without blinkers (Park) and without conventions (Grossman). The students seem to have succeeded in carrying out these (implicit) instructions if we look at work like *Elks Parade* by 19-year-old Jack Manning or *Coney Island Embrace* by 20-year-old Morris Engel, the latter, an early masterpiece definitely comparable to Doisneau's *Le baiser de l'hôtel de ville*. "They are not looking at some distant foreign culture and its people. Instead they turn their lens on their own streets they walk and the familiar strangers they have come to know in their own city. They are doing a kind of ethnography at home" (Levitt 2008: 119). There is no better way of expressing the proximity to the Chicago ethnographers.

As Deborah Dash Moore (2014) states in her essay about the New York Photo League, its agenda oriented itself according to the sociological investigations deriving from Chicago, with Louis Wirth's study *The Ghetto* (1956) playing a special role because of its Jewish background. However, the League itself had an interest in being sociologically relevant because it hoped that it could contribute with its works to communal self-awareness, a form of community organizing as conceived by the Chicago sociologist Saul Alinsky around 1940. This included presenting the works locally as feedback to the community, affording the opportunity to modify the forthcoming official exhibition. Organizing exhibitions and lectures was generally part not only of the photography students' training, but also of the educational work of the League. The sites that attracted the New York photographers resembled those of the Chicago urban sociologists: Lower East Side as a Jewish district, Little Italy with its patronal festivals and Coney Island as the leisure and amusement destination of the metropolis. In the first few years, the work was divided up into so-called "Feature Groups" around particular projects. There was, for example, a project *Portrait of a Tenement*, which was to provide a picture of life in a New York tenement, a project about the Bowery (*The Dead End*), at that time the street of social outcasts, a Chelsea project, and the biggest project, stretching over four years: The *Harlem Document*.

With its eight focal points – work, health, accommodation, religion, leisure, society, youth and crime – the Harlem project was a genuine social survey, a research construct that was not typical of the classic ethnographically oriented Chicago stud-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This week your Picture Gallery hangs photographs of plain people, taken on the sidewalks and beaches of New York by a 22-year-old Brooklyn boy. We think these pictures prove that the lives of ordinary citizens in a peaceful democracy can be dramatic and exciting and amusing, that, given a decent opportunity, people can learn to have fun without bullying other people. Really!

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Figure:
Morris Engel,
Coney Island Embrace, 1938

ies. It is likely that when they conceived it, the project group were guided by Robert and Helen Lynd's *Middletown* study, whose restudy (*Middletown in Transition*) was published in 1937, around the time of the Harlem project, and whose areas of investigation (Getting a Living, Making a Home, Training the Young, Spending Leisure, Religion and Keeping Healthy) were identical to those of the *Harlem Document*. However, following the social survey, problem-oriented and focusing on social policies, involved the danger of concentrating exclusively on the deficits of the area under investigation, so that the inhabitants appear one-sided as the victims of external circumstances. And this is how a large number of the visitors to a preview exhibition in the YMCA in Harlem saw it. Entries in the comments book regretted that only the shabby sides of Harlem were depicted. "What about the intellectual and cultural side?" one of the visitors asked (Berger 2013: 31). This question was more than justified in view of the significance of the so-called Harlem Renaissance in the 1920s, a movement of Afro-American writers and artists who made Harlem the mecca of the New Negro.[3] The picture painted by the feature group was not at all that of a mecca,

3 *Harlem, Mecca of the New Negro* (Locke 1925a) was the title of a special issue of the magazine *Survey Graphic* in March 1925 about the Harlem Renaissance with contributions from protagonists of the movement, such as Alain Locke and the anthropologist Melville J. Herskowits. Locke was also the publisher of the anthology *The New Negro* (1925b), in which, among others, Zora Neale

a place of pilgrimage, but of a dystopia, a community in peril (Berger 2011). This can be seen most strikingly in the only contemporary publication by the Harlem project, a six-page essay in the magazine *Look*[4] in May 1940, whose title *244,000 Native Sons* clearly echoed Richard Wright's (1940) novel *Native Son*, published in the same year. It was, above all, the text by the young Afro-American sociologist Michael Carter (1940) in which the photos were embedded that dictated an interpretation of the photos that dramatized the conditions in Harlem. The captions, for example, turned typical Harlem boys into "delinquents in the making" (modeled on Bigger Thomas, a figure in Wright's novel) and the inhabitants of a tenement who had congregated on the fire escapes and were clearly following the Elks Parade with enthusiasm into evidence of the catastrophic housing conditions in the tenements. We can see here in a striking, almost bizarre way what happens when photographs are adduced to illustrate sociological theses, since – as far as we know – the group's photos covered a wide range of cultural and social activities in the community, but, as the principle of selection was primarily to document the precarious living conditions, they were not included in the photographic essay. The book project was subsequently abandoned. More than forty years later, Aaron Siskind, the head of the project, published a revised version entitled *Harlem Document Photographs 1932–1940; Aaron Siskind* (Banks 1981). The book is far removed from the original concept, with impressionistic photographic essays and without sociological statistics and sober chapter headings. Instead there are interviews and street verses collected in the 1930s by the Afro-American writer Ralph Ellison. In his consideration of the project, Maurice Berger writes:

> This artful remake of the *Document* positions Harlem as a place of hope and possibility – a neighborhood, to quote the venerated African American photographer Gordon Parks in the book's foreword, "where loftier dreams were fostered; where now and then some of those dreams were realized." (Berger 2011: 33f.)

Siskind's remake consisted, above all, of no longer using photographs to illustrate reports, a constriction of the photographic work that had already led to the breaking away of the Photo League from the Workers Film and Photo League. Instead, he allowed the photos to speak for themselves and to confer on them an aesthetic quality which made the city of New York and its inhabitants their protagonists.

Hurston and Langston Hughes were also involved. The term "new negro" was used to describe a new urban type, metropolitan and sophisticated, and as the pattern for a new black identity designed to replace the regressive model of the servile 'old negro' from the Jim Crow south.

4 It is a remarkable coincidence that the League was founded at the time when illustrated magazines such as *Life* and *Look* sprang up. Thus, publication organs were available for the young photographers, although the most important publication for the members of the League was the short-lived magazine *PM* (an abbreviation for *Photo Magazine*), a socially committed tabloid that printed full-page photos. Engel's *Coney Island Embrace* appeared on the cover of the weekend supplement of the issue of July 21, 1940 (cf. Lesy 2011).

We could also speak of a transition from a sociological photographic practice to an ethnographic one. The League focused in the 1940s on what Mason Klein (2011) described so neatly as the "promise of the street": As a multi-faceted action space for children and young people, as a place for the meeting and recreation of adults, with a view of what Moore describes as "gendered street geometries": "Men own the streets; women share the stoops" (Moore 2008: 95). "The Photo League students take their camera anywhere; they often push the process to technical limits," wrote the art historian Beaumont Newhall, the first curator of the photographic department of MOMA, in a 1948 review of a double exhibition of works by students of the League and of the Department of Photography at the California School of Fine Arts. "All of them feel people more strongly than nature [the latter was the favorite photographic motif of the Californian students, R.L.]; they want to tell us about New York and some of the people who live there" (Klein 2011: 12). William Klein, a late arrival at the Photo League, 'essentialized' this difference when he distinguished between two types of photography: "Jewish" and "goyish," saying that Jewish photographers were attracted more to people as motifs, whereas non-Jewish photographers focused on photos of nature (Klein 2011:12). Mason Klein, the co-publisher of *The Radical Camera*, a documentation about the Photo League, also saw New York Jews as privileged observers of urban life:

> Moreover, in 1940 – when two million of the seven million New York residents were Jewish, according to later estimates – the ability to study the insular life of neighborhoods and to observe urban spaces was what Jews, perhaps better than any other segment of the population at that time, were equipped to do. (Klein 2011: 12)

"To tell us about New York and its people" can, with justification, describe the ethnographic dimension of the work of the Photo League, which immediately made it the first/principal representative of the New York School of Photography, whose subject was the city itself.[5] Among the stories which the members of the League told with their cameras were children playing on the streets (often taken in high-angle shots), the patronal festivals in the Italian quarter (including, for example, the *Mulberry Street* series by Sid Grossman) and, above all, the amusements on Coney Island, photos which make the people in them visible as self-assured actors in front of the camera (brilliantly captured in Grossman's photo on the dust jacket of the documentation about the Photo League).

Here, as in other photos by members of the league, the city is clearly seen as a stage for self-presentation, thus, simultaneously, displaying the interactive

5 The informal name "New York School of Photography" describes photographers such as Bruce Davidson, Robert Frank, William Klein, Helen Levitt and Gary Winogrand. Of the members of the League, Sid Grossman, Sy Kattleson and Lisette Model are also included in this 'school.' For Deborah Dash Moore, the League was, as it were, the preparatory school of the New York School of Photography.

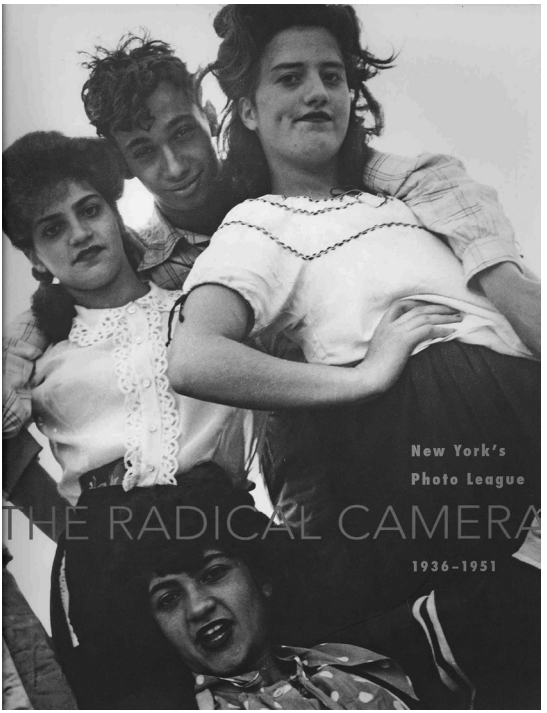

Figure:
Sid Grossman, Coney Island, 1947

character of the photographic situation. The attempts by the members of League to reflect the urban situation itself by means of street photography are of particular urban anthropological interest. Among them are, above all, works by the Austrian photographer Lisette Model, who fled to New York in 1938. She processed her experiences with life in the metropolis in her early photo series *Reflections* (from 1939 onwards) and *Running Legs* (from 1940 onwards) and, from our point of view, in this way, contributes to a visual anthropology of the city in which the city is not only the locus, but also the focus of research (Hannerz 1980: 3). We can see an iconic translation of the simultaneity of the metropolitan mode of perception in the reflections of the shop windows. "The inclusion of the reflected images on the glass panes of the shop windows gave the photographs a multi-layered structure, which rather seemed to reflect the overwhelming and confusing impressions in the streets of New York," is how Monika Faber interpreted the picture. "We see the exterior and interior of the shops at the same time and permeating each other; what we can only experience consecutively is in this way expressed simultaneously" (Faber 2000: 20). In the same way, the photos of the series *Running Legs* are evidence of how the newcomer experienced the metropolis: As a city in motion, characterized by passers-by hastening towards their destinations, evidently without paying attention to their surroundings. The photos show us, quite literally, the dynamic and transient quality

of the metropolis and have – as Faber emphasizes – a quasi-cinematographic quality. Works whose subject is the interactive nature of urban looking[6] penetrate to the core of photographic practice (and, simultaneously, to a theory of interaction inspired by Chicago), because seeing and being seen represents the essence of the metropolitan mode of perception. Perhaps the Photo League's greatest achievement is that the photographers did not operate secretly but saw themselves from the first as part of the interactions they presented: "They themselves are players in the urban scenes they create in their work" (Levitt 2008: 118). In his "*Exkurs über die Soziologie der Sinne*," Georg Simmel had seen a crucial aspect of metropolitan sociology in the "boundless domination of sight over the hearing of other people" and, at the same time, emphasized that people looking at each other is "the most direct and purest interrelationship" (Simmel 1983: 484). Representatives of the Photo League made the mutual relationship of seeing and being seen the subject of their photos and, in this way, literally made visible what the ethnopsychoanalyst Georges Devereux claimed was the basic characteristic of all behavioral science: The "actual or potential reciprocity of observation between observer and observed" (Devereux 1976: 42). While Sol Libsohn, for example, was carrying out his assignment to capture typical urban situations photographically, he observed people who were observing something and was himself observed in the process. Deborah Dash Moore made this reciprocity of looking the subject of her in-depth interpretation of Sol Libsohn's photo *Hester Street*.

In Libsohn's photo the kinetics of looking turn on multiple pivots. The eccentric orbits of his characters, ours as well, are anchored by the only figure wholly in focus, an older woman with arms folded protectively across her flower print homedress. She alone looks upstream to our right. Of three women only she has planted herself at the edge of the flow of the street. Street activity draws parallel looks from the gallery; but one guy has had enough. Libsohn records the effect of his intrusion on our behalf. The price of admission: we get nailed by converging stares. That boy up close: maybe he's got a word for Libsohn. The man to our right glances sharply at us from under his hat, giving as good as he gets. A couple of steps down from the sidewalk on the left, someone looks dead at us; and in turn the intensity of his glare draws a glance from a passer-by. Eventually we notice the eyes on the optometrist's sign staring unblinkingly, promoting vision itself. And beneath one eye, the Hebrew letters advertising to Jewish customers remind us that this is a Jewish neighbourhood. If we look hard enough, behind the sign, in shadow, a child, pressing face and hand against a window, peers out toward the street and the photographer. The subject of Libsohn's photo is the interactivity of urban looking itself. (Moore 2008: 92–93)

6 In this way, Erving Goffman's sociological reflections on face-to-face interaction (Goffman 2009: 31f.) are anticipated photo-'graphically' by works of the Photo League.

Figure: Sol Libsohn, Hester Street, 1945. From: The Radical Camera. New York's Photo League 1936–1951. Edited by Mason Klein and Catherine Evans, New York 2012, p. 162

Hester Street[7] can be seen as an excellent example of the representatives of the Photo League combining the depiction of mundane life in the big city with reflection about its 'rules': "[L]ooking as part of the fabric of urban life" (Moore 2014). Seeing and being seen – the interactivity of looks is the ineluctable precondition for every act of observation, whether in ethnographic fieldwork or in photographic research. Only when the observer realizes "that he is caught up in the very web of social interaction which he observes, analyzes and reports" (Hughes 1971: 505), is it possible to transcend mere documentation and achieve mutual understanding between researcher and researched. George Herbert Mead had picked up John Dewey's term "shared experience" in his reflections on aesthetic experience and stressed that "(e)very invention that brings men closer together, so that they realize their interde-

7 The title of the photo evidently refers to a long photographic tradition of depicting the Lower East Side. But whereas practically all other photos of Hester Street show an apparently chaotic collection of people with their handcarts, Libsohn's motif is an urban situation *par excellence*. In this way, he unintentionally provides us with an example of the view of the city as the focus, not the locus, of research.

pendence, and increase their shared experience, which makes it more possible for them to put themselves in each other's place, every form of communication which enables them to participate in each other's minds" contributes to understanding oneself as a part of the community. (Mead 1926: 389). "To see himself in the other fellow's place" – this ideal of successful research ought to apply not only to the recipient of the report, but also to its transmitter. For Lisette Model, a prominent member of the Photo League, the act of taking a photograph was an opportunity to become involved with the lives of other people and, at the same time, to increase self-awareness. This is surely what is meant by humanity of method.

Source

REPA Robert E. Park – Addenda. Joseph Regenstein Library. Special Collections Department, University of Chicago. The first figure behind the source abbreviation refers to the box, the second to the folder.

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The countryside and rurality*

Perspectives drawn from cultural analysis of the rural[1]

Abstract: There is currently a remarkable boom in all things rural. As a perceptual category used in politics, the media and the leisure industry, the hype surrounding the countryside and rurality can be correlated with growing economic, social and cultural inequalities in cities and rural areas. Uncertainties concerning the significance of and future options for rural areas amidst the structural changes of the 20th and 21st centuries are manifesting today as symptoms of society's search for orientation. The crises facing rural areas as they attempt to adjust to these changes have to do primarily with the transformation of modern agriculture. The developments occurring in rural areas are interpreted in this article as part of a process of reflexive modernization. Drawing on the disciplinary history of European Ethnology, it becomes possible to open up a research perspective focusing on the side effects of technical-industrial modernization, i.e. its impacts on everyday culture in rural areas and, associated with this, broader cultural negotiations of rurality. Drawing also on recent spatial theories, the present article frames the discourse-forming categories of the rural landscape (meaning the physical landscape) and of rurality as a cultural dispositive or, in praxeological terms, as "doing rural". A three-pronged research program on "Regimes of the Rural," "Cultures in Rural Areas" and "Rural Imaginaries" is planned to exemplify possible approaches and perspectives of a cultural analysis of the rural.

Keywords: rural areas, rurality as a cultural dispositive, structural change, agriculture

A cursory glance at various press publications reveals the considerable extent to which the rural currently shapes public discourse. The New York Times, for example, interpreted the result of the 2016 US presidential election as a symptom of rural America's alienation from the cities (Badger 2016). Media comment in Britain on Brexit followed a similar narrative: The Brexit vote, wrote one Guardian writer, showed that power has shifted from the cities to the countryside (Beckett 2016). Germany's Chancellor Merkel spoke in her 2018 New Year's speech of the shrinking

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1 I would like to thank Silke Göttsch-Elten (Kiel) for substantial comments and discussions on this article. The title is taken from the name of the research commission established at the 41st Congress of the German Society of Folklore Studies (Volkskunde) held in Marburg in 2017.

rural areas "where everyday life, from shopping to visiting the doctor, is increasingly difficult" (Merkel 2018). Public discourse in France, Turkey and other countries also revolves persistently around the fragile options available to rural areas in the future in the aftermath of major political processes. Debates around these issues tend to be characterized by narratives of loss that often interpret conditions of rural living as being deficient or not "equal" to those of the metropolitan centers (Barlösius 2006: 16–22). In contrast to interpretive patterns like these, a veritable boom in positive perceptions is to be found in an array of consumer products. One needs only to think of the yogurt brand *Landliebe* (love of the countryside), the magazine *Landlust* (passion for the countryside) or the "Country" range of toys and games from Playmobil. German television and cinemas are riding the same wave with formats such as *Landpartie* (country outing) and the *Neuer Heimatfilm* produced among others by directors like Marcus H. Rosenmüller (Ludewig 2018: 159–174).

This trend poses a challenge to European Ethnology. We can see that the countryside and rurality, as categories of ordering and perception, influence the everyday cultures of broad segments of the population in a dynamic and contested way. Under pressure from global changes in the agriculture, energy and food sectors, everyday practices in rural areas, along with their cultural imaginaries, are undergoing fundamental transformation. Within this transformation, demography, structural change and peripherization constitute the arguments through which the rural manifests, similar to the way it does in media imaginaries involving idyllic villages and intact communities – and not just in 'felt' ways, either: The territorial inequality between rural areas and metropolitan centers has again been growing in real terms since the 1990s (BBSR 2005; Neu 2006: 8–15).

The present article seeks to explore these current 'booms' and indeterminacies in the context of European Ethnology issues. We address this task in three stages. The first stage serves to tighten up the terminology we use and to call into question demarcations and boundaries between countryside and rurality by adopting an interdisciplinary standpoint. The second stage involves looking at the relevant debates in ethnology: Some of the key research positions here are presented in the context of the transformation of rural areas since the Second World War, which is read as a reflexive process of agricultural modernization. Within this field, the third stage then discusses an overarching theoretical framework for European ethnological cultural analyses, illustrated by reference to a selection of recent studies. The emphasis here is on viewing the rural from the standpoint of the actors concerned, particularly by reference to relational theories of space (Lefebvre 2006; Löw 2001) to shift praxeological approaches to the fore. This account is based on a conception of the rural as not being a research 'object' to be identified deductively or defined ontologically – one existing, for example, in dichotomous relation to urban centers

– but as a research 'perspective,' which can help to bring issues in many different fields into focus and generate new insights.

1. Countryside and rurality as perceptual categories. Definitions and questionable premises

Despite the high public visibility of the rural, European Ethnology/Cultural Analysis researchers are apparently loath to conceive of it as a category in its own right. Yet, the boom in all things rural is accompanied, nonetheless, by a conspicuous return to interpretive patterns relating to territorial space. The clear-cut demarcation of an allegedly clearly defined rural space with specific cultural characteristics is a questionable premise, however. Given current dynamic processes of de-spatialization, it seems less plausible than ever nowadays to understand the countryside as a framework of reference whose contours derive from some internal logic (Appadurai 1996: 178–199; Kaschuba 2004; Löw 2001). Despite – or rather, because of – these semantic conflicts between popular and academic approaches, any European Ethnology working on current cultural processes must take diverse experiences of the rural seriously.

However, the terminology for doing so turns out to be hazy. At a basic level, the knowledge framework can be arranged in relation to at least two conceptual strands that currently shape discourse. Firstly, as a category linked to topographical, physical characteristics, 'rural areas' (*ländlicher Raum*) are distinct from the concept of 'rurality' (*Ländlichkeit*) as a social imaginary. Let us look firstly at the concept of rural areas: This concept does not initially constitute a direct object of ethnological cultural studies research. It is true that the paradigm of the countryside served to highlight and promote a genuinely ethnological field of research during the phase of institutionalization of the discipline around 1900. This led, however, to the creation of a concept of culture which imagined (rather than empirically grounded) peasant culture, first and foremost, as a foil to a culture conceived of as urban and middle-class (Naumann 2011; Scholze-Irrlitz and Jacobeit 2005: 240–241). Thus, the key to any framing remains recourse to neighboring disciplines, such as spatial geography and agricultural science. The recent interdisciplinary approach is generally characterized by a processual understanding that takes the complex interrelationships between town and countryside as given but, nonetheless, assumes that the rural possesses characteristic specificities (Henkel 2004: 30–33; Mahlerwein 2016: 182–183; Woods 2011: 1–15). From an agricultural and ecological perspective, rural areas emerge frequently as a sphere in their own right in terms of their functions: They are defined according to their physiognomic characteristics, their provisioning role and their natural resources. The influence of agriculture is especially prominent here. Definitions grounded in the social sciences also emphasize more close-knit social relations, whereas those found in planning studies place the development of

rural areas in dependent relation to cities or towns at the center of their approach (Christaller 1980 [1933]; Kegler 2015). This kind of framing of the rural as a residual planning category can be found nowadays in various spatial planning documents (Dax 2014: 3–18; Mahlerwein 2016: 182). Gerhard Henkel sums up the most common attempts in German research to delineate the rural as follows: Rural areas, he notes, are defined according to physical features, such as type of countryside, architecture or agriculturally influenced views of a place, as well as by social specificities, such as interpersonal relationships or economic strength (Henkel 2004: 32–33). Henkel states clearly that such attributions fail to do justice to the complex reality. The problem with any definition of the rural, he says, lies initially in looking for overarching characteristics for something that is intrinsically heterogeneous (Henkel 2004: 33). Secondly, commonplace definitions are continually being called into question because their point of reference is rapidly changing. This applies particularly to the issue of agricultural influence, which became fragmentary in the 20th century, bringing far-reaching functional and societal differentiation in its train (Lowe et al. 2005: 7–30).

The category 'rural areas' exists in opposition to the concept of rurality. The latter has detached itself from concrete physical places as a cultural dispositive. In the form of a collective "imaginaire" (Lindner 2008: 86), it gathers together the heterogeneous production of the rural discursively via a figurative core of symbols bearing 'rural' connotations. It is through this overarching simplification of increasingly differentiated rural areas into an imagined homogeneous whole that the iconographic and narrative canon of rurality performs various 'glossing over' functions. Rurality, thus, becomes an ordering social representation of selected isolated aspects of rural areas and communities, often exaggerated in a folkloristic manner – regardless of whether these can be proven to exist in a given place or, indeed, have ever existed at all (Murdoch and Pratt 1993: 421).

Economist Ulf Hahne used the term "New Rurality" in 2011 to refer to this performative and consumption-oriented market, and this term met with a broad response especially in German-language publications (Hahne 2011: 12–22). He associates the term with a "lifestyle" whose thoroughly positive representations are arranged above all to display the "beauty, naturalness and authenticity of rural areas" (Hahne 2011: 12). In this way, he argues, possibilities open up for slowing down and finding orientation; chiefly, however, it provides opportunities for enhancing the value of crisis-prone areas (Hahne 2011: 16–17). In contrast to this, rural sociologist Claudia Neu has stressed the idealizing tendency of this "New Rurality": "'Rurality' is thus conceived not as a spatial category or feature but rather as something that is created socio-culturally (like 'doing rural' in analogy to 'doing gender'). This may be discourses, representations, literature or supposedly rural practices such as growing fruit and vegetables" (Neu 2016: 5).

The question that inevitably arises, especially from the perspective of a self-confident European Ethnology, is how 'new' this feverishly debated "New Rurality" actually is. Indeed, interpreting it as a compensatory response to the flaws of modernization leads directly to the ethnological debate about 'folk culture' (*Volkskultur*) and folklorism (Moser 1962: 177–209). Then as now – in 1962 as in 2018 – what is basically going on is a selective recontextualization of (in the broadest sense) traditionally rural phenomena by a largely professional interpreting elite. Even fairly recent research is able to counter current interpretive templates of the "New Rurality" with a considerably more complex picture, one that similarly takes account of the significance of popular cultural, economic and ethnopolitical implications. Sabine Eggmann, for example, points to a politicized "understanding of 'folk culture' as society's mode of societal formation [*Vergesellschaftung*]" (Eggmann 2013: 17). Other studies also focus on the ways in which 'folk cultural' phenomena are used to generate meaning. These phenomena also perform important representational functions particularly for the urban domain (Egger 2013: 136–148; Moser and Becher 2011) and within modern cultures of entertainment (Oehme-Jüngling 2011: 67–70).

2. Rural structural change and disciplinary history: Reflexive modernizations

The previous section sought to frame the issue of countryside and rurality within a conceptual pairing in which two mutually referencing fields become visible and, thus, available to various kinds of cultural analysis. The competing accounts that are currently forcing their way to the surface are the result, in part, of the crises accompanying adaptation processes in rural areas and the uncertainties and insecurities to which they give rise. They are also based on the associated transformation of rurality as a historical and present-day category of classification into town and countryside. It is between these two developmental trends that the rural is increasingly becoming a field of conflict in which different everyday cultural spatial practices encounter one another in a divergent context of "doing rural" (Neu 2016: 5): Planning, industrial, media and touristic practices – and those of local people themselves (Lowe et al. 2005). Processes of comprehensive structural change in the 20th and 21st centuries lie at the center of this complex transformation, and agriculture lies at the core of this change as the gravitational center of traditional rural cultures right up to the present day.[2] The changes can be observed in highly specific, locally diverse factors, such as natural conditions, and individual actors, the existence or otherwise of state financial assistance and existing infrastructure (Thünen-Institut 2018).

2 The following account of rural structural change is necessarily limited to the German situation. Despite some considerable regional and national differences, several of the larger strands of transformation (technologization – intensification – differentiation) are similar in Central and Western Europe, as demonstrated by the case of England (cf. Halfacree 2006: 52–59).

Taken together, there emerges a complex and locally diverse picture of the structural change that is frequently addressed in the media and politics as a one-dimensional process of shrinkage (Neu 2010: 244).

It seems plausible in the interplay between ever greater individualization and growing conflicts over technically and industrially generated side effects to interpret the development of rural areas over the past 70 years as a process of reflexive modernization (Beck 1996: 19–112; Beck, Giddens, and Lash 1996), at the core of which lies agriculture. To draw on Ulrich Beck, this means that agriculture, as a key component of economy and society in the late 20th century, has been caught out by the hidden side effects of its own modernization, oriented as this has been towards increases in production. These side effects – environmental destruction, land-grabbing, alienation between farmers and consumers – were already an incipient part of agricultural modernization from the very start. They began to exert their own influence in rural areas during the second half of the 20th century and, thus, also in cultural perceptions of rurality. The key here is the local individual negotiation of what are essentially five intrinsically reflexive strands of transformation. It is also helpful to contextualize this structural change in terms of the history of ethnology. Doing so reveals just how powerfully the debate about the rural within ethnology is itself determined by responses to experiences of agricultural modernization.

A.) Rationalization and technicization

One strand of the transformation is rooted in an agricultural policy which, since the period immediately after the war, has been oriented towards rationalization and industrialization. After 1945, politicians directed their efforts initially towards securing the country's food supply and ensuring rapid growth to deal with the dramatic shortages of the postwar years (Kluge 2005: 34). This productivist ethos led to differing paths of modernization in East and West Germany. From 1946 onwards, large-scale agriculture in East Germany was broken down into smaller units and, until 1949, adapted into a peasant economy that was as piecemeal as it was ineffective. It was not until 1952 that the SED leadership took action to counteract the weaknesses of these newly created farms (many were only eight hectares in size) by collectivizing them in the form of so-called agricultural production cooperatives (*Landwirtschaftlicher Produktionsgenossenschaften*: LPGs). The modernization process was additionally supported by the comprehensive technicization of farm work (Bauerkämper 2005: 16–24; Mahlerwein 2016: 30–37, 80–82).

By contrast, the modernization of West German agriculture was pursued by strengthening small and medium-sized farms along the lines of the family farm model; such farms had already begun to operate successfully prior to 1950 (Kluge 2005: 32–36; Mahlerwein 2016: 139–140). Marshall Plan funds amounting to more than half a billion deutsch-marks contributed to the growth-fueled euphoria. Broad-

based political support for farmers accelerated not only the process of securing food supplies, but also the technicization of farms themselves. At the same time, the growing use of machines led to a decline in the numbers of farmworkers required. A further factor that led to fundamental changes in the countryside and the economy alike was the reallocation and consolidation of agricultural holdings, undertaken from 1953 onwards to foster growth; this policy had far-reaching consequences. In addition, the influx of refugees who had migrated away from destroyed towns and cities and the former eastern provinces led to lasting changes in rural social structures in both East and West Germany (Mahlerwein 2016: 198–201).

The reform of ethnology (*Volkskunde*) as a discipline in Germany after the Second World War led to a change in research perspectives, with this branch of cultural studies now also exploring issues of contemporary concern. Being an acute problem at that time, the issue of refugees and migration became an inevitable focus of research. The Tübingen research project on "new housing estates" that ran between 1955 and 1959 was an early response to this development (Ratt 2011: 181–196). In the context of their field research, Hermann Bausinger, Markus Braun and Herbert Schwedt brought the integration of refugees into focus and with it, contemporary problems in rural small towns. To be sure, customs and traditions still served as research objects in their study, though no longer for purposes of gathering knowledge about them but rather from the point of view of their social functions. The subtitle of their publication (Bausinger, Braun, and Schwedt 1959) – "ethno-sociological studies" – was a deliberate reference to the new approach, which bore close similarities to empirical social research.

Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann, taking a historical perspective, also contributed to countering outdated notions of a timeless, homogeneous farming community with her differentiated inquiry into the social dimensions of rural cultures of work, rights and customs. Her approach was grounded in a critical analysis of the material gathered in the 1860s through a questionnaire campaign by Wilhelm Mannhardt. Weber-Kellermann's reading of these findings – from a resolutely social and economic historical perspective as opposed to Mannhardt's mythological interpretations – also drew attention to the complex differences in status and the different professional groups present in the villages, not least the system of farm work (Weber-Kellermann 1965). A precedent for this new perspective already existed in the historical-archival studies conducted by the Munich school around Hans Moser and Karl Sigismund Kramer from the 1950s onwards. With their rigorously matter-of-fact work on sources, Moser and Kramer demystified older interpretations of rural cultural forms, especially festivals, customs and notions about rights, placing them firmly in the context of historical and social conditions (Köstlin 1987: 7–23). They enabled villagers and small-town inhabitants to emerge from the shadows of what had, up to that time, been highly homogenizing notions of rural life by unearthing

the historical and archival evidence relating to everyday rural culture. Silke Göttsch, prompted by the newly emerging discipline of historical anthropology, developed these approaches further in the 1980s: she opened up a more differentiated perspective of work cultures and status consciousness in rural areas by taking archival sources as a foundation (Göttsch 1978, 1981, 1991).

Debates in ethnology about the modernization of rural lifeworlds after the war were accompanied by a wave of newly established open-air museums. From the mid-1950s onwards (e.g. Illerbeuern 1955; Kommern 1961; Molfsee 1965; Perschen 1964), there was a new focus on social settings and formative everyday practices in rural areas (Waldemer 2006: 9–24, 173–178). As a result, the open-air museums advanced to become some of the most important research institutions, capable even today of regularly rekindling a differentiated awareness of the "patient almost left for dead" (*"fast totgesagten Patienten,"* Scholze-Irrlitz 2008: 7), i.e. rural areas.

B.) Globalization and industrialization of agricultural trade and production

A second strand of transformation has its foundations in the internationalization and industrialization of agricultural production and the selling of farm produce from the late 1950s onwards. The modernization of agriculture in the East progressed slowly until the 1960s and was characterized by a shortage of labor and experts. The 'class struggle in the countryside' had led many East German farmers to flee to the West during the (forced) collectivization of the 1950s; this came to an end with the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961. The modernization of East German agriculture focused similarly on increasing production by means of industrialization, technicization and the development of a factory farming system. The traditional rural triad of family, ownership and work unraveled as it had in West Germany (Kluge 2005: 42–46; Spieker and Friedreich 2014).

The far-reaching transformations that brought about change in traditional farming work and rural forms of social cohesion, employment and tradesmanship led to a momentous response in the ethnology of East Germany in the 1960s. Its adoption of a new view regarding the material aspects of culture delivered a significant impetus to reconstitute ethnology after the Second World War. While "machine-tractor stations" drove the technicization of the LPGs, Wolfgang Steinitz at Berlin's Academy Institute formulated the task of furthering "research into the old forms and implements of farming" in 1955 (Steinitz 1955: 23). A team gathered around Wolfgang Jacobeit investigated the 19th-century industrialization process associated with sugar beet growing in a broad-based study begun in 1956 that focused on an important farming area near Magdeburg (Magdeburger Börde) (Jacobeit 1965; Jacobeit and Quietzsch 1964). In this way, Jacobeit developed an innovative approach that represented a substantial advance in comparison to the pre-war eth-

nology that had been fixated on 'intellectual traditions.' Conducting hundreds of interviews with informants, museum directors and representatives of neighboring disciplines, Jacobeit sought to gain a holistic perspective on the development of rural society by taking peasant farming implements as his starting point. A whole range of influences on the discipline emerged from the 'Börde study' in terms of understanding things as indicators of sociocultural transformation (Heilmann 2015: 297–315; Rach 2011: 173–180).

In the West, the Treaty of Rome signed in March 1957 opened up the international market for German agriculture. As part of a European agricultural policy, farms that were growing at an unprecedented pace continued to pursue a productivist ethos. The goal was to achieve an expanding export economy with high production surpluses. During the 1970s, the political model of the modern farming entrepreneur began to replace the traditional small-scale family farm, a process expedited by the dynamic (over-)mechanization of farms between 1950 and 1980, and by intensification in the form of, for example, chemical inputs. As the food industry began to play an active role in factory farming and the importance of large producer communities grew, this development gained rapid momentum and eventually evolved to become part of global agribusiness (Bodenstedt 2005: 89–96). Parallel to this, a growing dependence on borrowed capital along with falling prices resulting from overproduction and unwise subsidization policies led from the late 1970s, to the 'disappearance' of smaller farms that were no longer profitable – a trend that continues to this day – while the size of farms still in business is growing. Jobs taken by former farmers, tradespeople and farm laborers shifted increasingly to the nearby towns, which gradually began to 'draw in' the villages; these, in turn, have gradually adopted various social and cultural similarities with the towns. The enactment of further policy-based regulatory instruments, particularly the district reforms of the early 1970s, led to small rural towns not only losing various privileges that had existed for hundreds of years and thereby forfeiting more of their autonomy towards the urban centers but also to the loss of administrative and educational facilities (Hamann 2005).

In view of this "crisis of local community" (*"Krise der Gemeinde"*, Jeggle 1979: 101–110), rural communities started to attract greater attention from ethnologists. Herbert Schwedt drew attention to the "cultural styles of local communities" (Schwedt 1968) in his habilitation thesis, thus, establishing a connection between issues of rural structural change and transformation processes internal to specific localities. Studies focused on individual villages in the Hunsrück and Eifel regions have discussed the severe problems of demographic change, the demise of village centers, the outward migration of young, educated sections of the population and the ties to central towns or cities. Postwar processes of modernization have also influenced a range of key studies in Tübingen. Utz Jeggle delivered an extraordinar-

ily detailed analysis of the Swabian village of Kiebingen in his habilitation thesis (Jeggle 1977). Using a complex, multi-method approach combined with many years of participant observation, he revealed the ways in which village cultures and mentalities are conditioned, not just structurally and psychosocially but also over time, by rural places and spaces.

C.) Demographic change and mobility

If we read rural structural change as a process of reflexive modernization within agriculture, then the much-belabored figure of demographic change no longer constitutes a reason for the drifting apart of strong and weak regions but rather signals a response to the prior modernizing processes of rationalization and internationalization. The loss of jobs in agriculture since the 1950s has led to changes in the rural economy and society on many levels. Commuting into town has become a symptom of this development – one that has brought about a further social differentiation of rural areas (Kluge 2005: 45; Mahlerwein 2016: 201–205).

At times, the emphasis placed on the demographic side effects of agricultural modernization has led to a latent form of pessimism, which itself has often articulated ideal types of rural culture. The motif of a rural culture under threat returned noticeably to the discipline, together with new town–countryside dichotomies, in the application-oriented research that led to collaborations between ethnologists and village development planners during the 1970s (Wehling 1978, 1980). Utz Jeggle, in an unusually conservative contribution to this debate, outlined the "specifics of rural modes of perception and action" as a nexus of traditional practices and forms of communication, in which he claimed to recognize "village willfulness," "a historically evolved way of life" that was in danger of "dissolving within suburban culture." It was important, he wrote, that "the village way of life should not 'dry out'; it has to change, though not in the wrong direction" (Jeggle 1987: 42). Alongside this example of research addressing issues of village development policy, unusual for the 1980s, the basic trend in the discipline remained one of generally maintaining a distanced approach to formulations of rural ideal types (Bausinger 1989: 82).

D.) Ecology and the critique of industry

A second important response to the modernization supported by the growth-fueled euphoria were ecological and consumer-critical negotiations of the rural which grew in significance from the 1970s onwards. Price crises, the disappearance of small-scale farms and the shrinking of small-town structures provided clear and public evidence of the fact that the productivist approach of the postwar years would not deliver comprehensive success. The political changes that came in 1990, especially in the East, led to the collapse not only of the LPGs, which had been geared toward mass production, but also of the agricultural labor market, affecting more than 80 %

of those employed in farming (Kluge 2005: 47). The major food scandals of the 1990s – perceived strongly by the general public as a symptom of a dehumanized agri-industrial complex – served to heighten a new awareness of organic farming, regionality, environmental protection and local traditions; these were the ideals that increasingly influenced perceptions of the rural in towns and cities as well as in rural areas. A further differentiation of rural areas and their associated imaginaries of rurality occurred, with spaces previously dominated by farming being attributed greater value through tourism, political protest and the reactivation of nonmaterial cultural heritage.

It is against this backdrop that the culture–ecology perspective emerged in Frankfurt at the end of the 1970s. This approach studied cultural transformations in close reference to their historical and societal environment. The school associated with Ina-Maria Greverus created a pathbreaking synthesis in numerous research studies of lifeworlds in rural areas in which the exploration of actors' practices was interwoven with a critique of the everyday regimes that conditioned them (Greverus and Haindl 1984; Welz 2011: 197–212). Falkenstein's suggestion regarding "helping to solve sociocultural problems" (Brückner 1971: 303) manifested in the aim of providing a practice- and application-friendly critique of the side effects of structural change in agriculture (Greverus 1979: 87–92).

E.) Mediatization and folklorization

A fifth strand of transformation within the modernization of agriculture is not so much a developmental moment *per se* as rather a catalyzer for various negotiations of the rural. As television – and, more recently, the internet – became ever more significant in the second half of the 20th century, the discourse about agriculture that has been dominated up to now by experts such as politicians and academics has become transformed into a multivocal mélange of knowledge, opinions and ideals. This heterogeneous mediatization of the debate about the role of agriculture adds a further dynamic to the conflicts. There, thus, arises a powerful responsive setting that popularizes selected aspects of life in rural areas on a broad scale via representations based frequently on agrarian romanticism. As early as the 1950s onwards, research on the past and present of rural cultures has provided sufficient material for a critical perspective on the rural as a marketable cultural representation. Its use as traditionally conceived folk culture in the modern-day media and leisure society has come especially to the fore. Adopting folklorism as his key concept, Hans Moser (Moser 1962, 1964) drew attention to rural cultures under the conditions of the culture industry. Hermann Bausinger's habilitation thesis "Folk culture in the technical world" (*Volkskultur in der technischen Welt*) appeared in 1961 and fundamentally questioned the transformation of traditional folk culture into modernity (Bausinger 1961). This signaled the start of a debate about the need of modern societies for

historicity and tradition, a debate that shaped the discourse for a long time (Köstlin 1991; Köstlin and Bausinger 1980). From the mid-1980s, Konrad Köstlin, Wolfgang Brückner and Hermann Bausinger particularly built further on the older folklorism discourse of the 1960s (Bausinger 1985: 173–191; Brückner 1984: 14–24; Köstlin 1984: 25–31). In the course of this, the rural – now an alien entity – often became a 'folk cultural' compensation for the negative side effects of industrial-technical modernization experienced in daily life. This is often associated with a semantics of the exotic and of primevalness (Köstlin 2000, 46–66). It is here that the current discourse of a 'New Rurality' begins in European Ethnology.

3. Praxeology of the rural: Approaches and perspectives

As a result of the modernization of agriculture and its consequences, we are faced today with a "differentiated countryside" (Lowe et al. 2005: 154) whose heterogeneity presents us with an array of competing interests, functions and developments. The epistemic framing of the rural in this differentiated countryside remains a challenge here. The very act of querying its ontology is an expression of the unease that has accompanied the debate in *Volkskunde*/European Ethnology through the years. Helge Gerndt subjected the discipline's conceptual terms to fundamental critique at the *Deutscher Volkskundekongress* in 1973. The term "rural lifestyle," he noted, had no "explanatory power." Countryside as an analytical concept was "and always has been useless" (Gerndt 1975: 38). Gerndt's findings pointed to a fundamental problem: How can the countryside, in all its heterogeneity and in its complex interrelationship to towns and cities, be modeled as an autonomous entity to open it up to cultural analysis? In spite of everything, Gerndt concludes that it is worthwhile looking at the "town-countryside combination" "in a broader sense," in those contexts where it is not about evoking dichotomies but rather about referring to spatial fields which are to be rendered "visible as diverse cultural entities" (Gerndt 1975: 38). For Gerndt, this can be done only by means of relational approaches.

Taking these considerations as a point of departure opens up a workable approach to the rural when it is not an object to be found, defined and delineated but is rather a perspective found in European ethnological research. This research studies the rural only in those places where it comes conspicuously to the fore as an interpretive and perceptual category in the lifeworlds of actors and groups or in specific constellations of power, and where it gives expression to certain values, norms or needs held. The question then becomes not so much what the rural is, but rather where and in what ways it is used by certain actors to construct an argument and which interests, needs and traditions are manifested therein.

This attention to the perspective of the actors is connected to a growing convergence with more recent cultural theories of space. The key here is generally a change in the understanding of spaces from something defined by physical

characteristics towards a conception of spaces as something brought forth in social interactions by actors within given power relations (Lefebvre 2006). In this view, spaces are constituted by an interplay of actions, memories, habitual influences and the material substrate of physical space in actors' everyday lives. According to Martina Löw, the production of space possesses a dual structure: Actors produce space by means of their actions, while, at the same time, these actions are determined by spaces (Löw 2001). Thus, we need to take account of both individual cultural imaginaries of rurality as well as the rural areas on which they are based. Both aspects are constituted ever anew in direct interrelationship (Lefebvre 1974: 335). Thus, in an understanding of current negotiations over the rural as "doing rural" (Neu 2016: 5), actors incorporate knowledge, routines and ideas about the rural and reproduce them in their own everyday lives in a way that structures reality. It, thus, becomes an "interactive matter of doing" (Hörning and Reuter 2016: 10). This applies in part to the act of "doing rural" in rural areas, where specific features of the physical locality, a lower population density and the still considerable importance of agriculture shape daily life. However, it also applies to rural cultural imaginaries, which themselves become newly differentiated in reflexive relation to developments in rural areas and especially in the world of agriculture.

An actor-centered praxeological understanding appears to be proving useful within European Ethnology too, where a turn toward cultures in rural areas has become apparent in more recent research since 2000. An approach has opened up in a characteristic synthesis of studies on the lifeworld transformations in rural regions and cultural imaginings of rurality that is especially well-suited to empirical, qualitative methods. This interweaving of perspectives gives rise to an epistemological balancing act which, on the one hand, takes materiality seriously as a substrate for spatial action (Reckwitz 2003: 290–294) while, on the other hand, not losing sight of the heterogeneity of the actors involved in "doing rural." When accompanied by a historical sensibility that is capable of critically assessing current developments and conditions based on disciplinary history, this leads to a broader research horizon that can penetrate the complexity of the rural on a macro- and microlevel, while referring back to human actions and the way they are tied into spatial arrangements.

How can this extremely heterogeneous field of "doing rural" be comprehensively structured for European Ethnology and its knowledge framework? Starting out again from the critical constructivist theory of space, spatial action materializes, as Henri Lefebvre argues, in three mutually interwoven fields (Halfacree 2006: 44–62; Lefebvre 2006). Firstly, actors produce space by the things they do in their everyday lives being experienced directly in relation to perceptible physical qualities (*le perçu*): Commuting to work in their own car over the bumpy road or protesting against the wind turbines erected in the wide-open spaces of the rural countryside. The object of the research here is the everyday cultures of local people, provided

they are influenced by their rural surroundings and make use of rural motifs in their arguments. "Doing rural" occurs, secondly, via the production of cognitively abstracted representations of space. By this, Lefebvre means space conceptualized by experts, such as spatial planners, media workers and academics (*le conçu*). Attention here is directed at the regimes which control the rural with their powerful designs. Thirdly, actors produce space on the basis of imaginaries or biographical experiences (*le vécu*). The kind of "doing rural" referred to here is clearly determined by myths, stories and memories: The happy childhood spent in the countryside, the arcadias of shepherds and farmers, the desire for a cottage in the country. Drawing on Lefebvre, it is possible to arrange the field of tasks to be addressed by European Ethnology in a cultural analysis of the rural in a triad: Regimes of the rural, cultures in rural areas and imagined ruralities.

A.) Governing the rural: Regimes of the rural

The reflexive modernization of agriculture is leading in the 21st century to a growing similarity between lifestyles in town and countryside, on the one hand, and to an increasingly rapid process of drifting apart regarding infrastructure and provisioning, on the other (BBSR 2015; Thünen-Institut 2018). Many politicians who are aware of the different opportunities available to town and country dwellers in the future currently articulate a rhetoric aimed at demonstrating their concern that "equivalent living conditions" be established. These policy-oriented planning regimes, which frequently formulate ideal conceptions of the rural from a top-down perspective and apply them to rural areas in the form of funding programs such as LEADER (Ramming 2013: 262–271), point to a topical assignment for European Ethnology: Narratives of inequity and shrinking (Neu 2006: 8–15; Trummer 2015: 123–148) that obscure the complexity of the transformation are frequently co-produced by policy- and media-based interpretive regimes in which the living conditions and future potential of rural regions are negotiated exclusively in terms of their demographic development (Neu 2010: 244). This tendency to homogenize rural regions and their diverse living conditions statistically can be countered using the sensitive methods of ethnology. Doing so not only generates a greater awareness of local negotiations of a life that is fit for the future and is experienced by the actors themselves as "equivalent" but also enables a clearer assessment of the efficacy of policy instruments. Since January 2017, a DFG research project based in Bonn has been addressing precisely such questions as "how the EU funding program LEADER for rural areas is implemented by local actors, how local people participate actively in its implementation and how the measures effect the daily lifeworld of the local population" (Sutter 2017).

Another development is the use of sparsely populated rural areas as a location for renewable energies and their industry, as in the form of huge solar parks or biogas facilities that are visible for miles around. Franziska Sperling identifies the

differentiation of agrarian structures in the context of interests relating to energy policy and economics as a "politically induced process of transformation" (Sperling 2017). New power relations are becoming especially apparent here, finding expression in fundamental conflicts between the spatial practices of local people and those of the planners (Sperling 2012: 17–18).

Radio, television and the press in their portrayal of rural development also develop regimes characterized by a selection of isolated issues perceived to be especially relevant (Jonasson 2012: 17–30; Trummer 2018). The agenda set by the popular information media involves problematizing rural lifeworlds; this often being accompanied by one-sided narratives of loss, even though examples of best practice are also presented prominently. The emotionalizing potential of this polarizing presentation of issues also offers notions of a good life or of a life "of equal quality" (Ludewig 2018: 159–174). In this context, one often finds strategies of othering which allocate specific roles to people in rural areas (Little 1999: 437–442; Stenbacka 2011: 235–244). These frequently give rise to new town–countryside dichotomies – for example, regarding a supposed educational gap or higher levels of alcohol consumption (Campbell 2000: 562–581). Commonplace constructions of difference within this visual governance of the rural, thus, reach broad sections of the population with stereotypes of rural gender roles (Fenske 2015: 87–90; Oltmanns 2015: 91–102), rural patterns of education and consumption (Eriksson 2010: 95–104), and even new lines of ethnicization (Krug-Richter 2016: 195–204). To date, there has been no broad-based analysis of the visual media regimes for the "doing rural" of actors in rural areas.

B.) Living the rural: Cultures in rural areas

The restructuring of economies previously dominated by agriculture particularly in regions on the periphery is frequently accompanied by the dismantling of public infrastructure. This results in educated young people – especially women – migrating away from these areas, demographic change that leaves larger numbers of older people in the 'shrinking regions,' and a downwards spiral in the range of local facilities available for consumption and leisure. These changes are often also accompanied by public narratives of demise which predict the decline of the regions concerned – indeed sometimes of 'rural areas' *per se* – and, thereby, play a part in shaping negotiations over the rural. This is where a counter-narrative is needed – another task for cultural analysis. European Ethnology with its carefully calibrated empirical methods is well-equipped to reveal the complexity at the heart of rural change by, for example, conducting local studies of actors and circumstances and, where appropriate, establishing comparisons with the past.

Open-air museums continue to be a significant resource for newer research, as they document and explore societal transformations in a historical perspective

almost up to the present day. This has most recently involved looking at classical issues, such as inward and outward migration, and changes that have occurred as a result of processes of popular cultural exchange. Transformations of the rural also constitute a major part of the work done by regional ethnographic agencies and institutes within Germany's Academy of Sciences. The framing here generally forms a regional perspective, as in the studies done by the Dresden institute around Ira Spieker (Spieker, Bretschneider, and Friedrich 2016; Spieker et al. 2008). Over the last few years, the films made by the LVR Institute for Human Geography and Regional History (*Institut für Landeskunde und Regionalgeschichte*) have offered important insights into rural and village-based lifeworlds (Dafft and Bauer 2017; Hänel 2016, 2017). Visual ethnographies constitute an important corrective to media obfuscations given the aesthetic and atmospheric qualities with which the media's 'countryside industry' works. The visualization (and digitization) of rural transformations has recently also formed a major part of the work done by Munich's Academy Institute. This was done by accessing more than 6,000 images and planning documents from its own archives and making them available online between 2014 and 2016 via the internet portal bavarikon.de.

Leonore Scholze-Irrlitz focused attention on the changing lifeworlds of rural actors and the complexity of rural processes of transformation in a series of research and study projects conducted in cooperation with the Berlin laboratory "Anthropology of Rural Areas." These projects were often focused on specific villages or small towns. As most of these are communities in eastern Germany, developments here reflect the impacts of post-1990 politics, i.e. after the formal reunification of Germany. This kind of study, such as the one conducted in Wallmow in the northeastern region of Uckermark (Scholze-Irrlitz 2008, 2011: 213–232), manages to deliver a differentiated corrective to one-side narratives of shrinkage by focusing on specific spheres. Issues such as school lessons, nutrition and civil society initiatives illustrate how new opportunities and strategies for action arise within larger strands of transformation and how actors renegotiate rural areas in ways specific to the locality.

Work and social security in conditions of rural transformation have especially come to the fore as key issues in many more recent studies. Anja Decker, for example, draws attention to rural areas in the Czech Republic, with an account of how families and gender roles have reconstituted themselves anew since 1990 against the backdrop of considerable pressure to migrate and structural inequalities (Decker 2014, 2017). Agricultural modernization and its side effects continue to be highly significant issues in recent research. Changes in peasant farming culture forced by changing food habits and the necessity to diversify structures of farming income are among the key issues here (Dietzig-Schicht 2016; Meyer-Renschhausen 2004: 83–97; Wittmann 2016, 2017).

C.) Experiencing the rural: Imaginaries of the rural

A third perspective has opened up latterly in media negotiations of the rural which differs markedly from other approaches in research undertaken since 2000. An extensive media/advertising landscape ranging from *Landlust* magazine (Egnolff 2015) and '*Landliebe*' yogurt to TV formats of the 'Farmer seeks Wife' variety displays an astonishing dynamic of interest-led representations. Such examples bring to the fore ruralities whose component motifs have become largely detached from their point of reference, namely, everyday life in rural areas (Edensor 2006: 484; Woods 2010: 836–839). The distance between signified and signifier seems, in itself, to give rise to a specific kind of aestheticization and reduction in complexity. Rurality, detached from the material countryside, thus, develops qualities that offer up numerous opportunities for positive identification. Rurality becomes a commodity in late capitalist practices of space and power relations within these often urban processes of selection and re-contextualization, one which – frequently given an exaggerated agro-romantic spin and formulated from an urban perspective – makes historical and present-day elements of rural life available for contemporary lifestyle bricolages. Market-friendly ruralities are associated with certain promises of authenticity, rendering the countryside available to experience through taste, smell and touch in the form of courses in wild herbs, rural women's countryside cuisine and hand-painted fruit crates. The term "atmosphere" has been used most recently by Silke Göttsch-Elten (2017) to refer to the sense-based aura that attaches to the figurative core of images and narratives in this popular form of rurality.

Here too, amidst all these images, the actors' perspective remains important. This is because, within this market, the rural turns into a performance for the people who live in rural areas themselves. The examples of harvest festivals, countryside markets and reactivated customs illustrate how local points of orientation and strategies of revaluation are developed by going back to and drawing on agrarian, often preindustrial imaginaries (Edensor 2006: 484–495; Woods 2010: 835–846). A whole range of significant consequences for society become apparent in this: Advertising images of lush landscapes, articles about rural lifestyles and picturesque countryside markets lend the realities in Germany's shrinking rural areas a patina of nobility that serves to conceal this or the other sign of shrinkage from their own inhabitants as well as outsiders. Claudia Neu points out a tangible sociopolitical danger in this: Images of rural idylls and egalitarian village communities, she argues, threaten to overshadow the public perception of real processes of shrinkage and other problems (Neu 2016: 8–9). This calls the positive impact of the "New Rurality" into question in a fundamental way. The vehement recourse to arguments based on community or homogeneity, she argues, may also lead to dangerous illusions:

> From an empirical point of view, the New Rurality activists (space pioneers, urban community gardeners, self-sufficiency activists) are a rather small group, but one

> which – with the help of media hype – may provide the background static to a new mood in society which, at its best, shows the way towards more sustainability, prudent stewardship of resources and solidarity. At the same time, we need to beware lest these positive associations are outstripped by the "real" rurality which, at worst, favors a "racist Bullerby," fantasies of homogeneity and simplistic answers to complex questions. (Neu 2016: 8–9)

Conclusion

This article began with an observation that there has been a boom in the rural as an argument and interpretive category in public discourse, and that this boom derives from a stronger perception of unequal living conditions in urban and rural regions. These divergent experiences are accompanied by a dynamic market in rural imaginaries. Magazines, television programs and popular music all lend expression to experiences of loss and longing and changing expectations of the rural. In this way, they impact back on perceptions of the rural in society. Thus, between the economic-social transformations of rural areas and the narratives of a (not particularly) new rurality, the actors involved, in other words, all of us, negotiate the cultural significance of the rural in the present-day individually and often competitively.

The changing meanings inscribed in rural areas and rurality in a "doing rural" are based on diverging cultural sensibilities. This is the way in which actors reassure themselves regarding their own position within the spatial constellations of an accelerating, globalizing modernity. This multi-voiced public discourse about the rural, thus, forms an important focus for European Ethnology in terms of some of the most important sociocultural processes of transformation today. In the course of this, however, the rural is not so much the 'subject' of cultural analysis but rather a 'perspective' capable of sharpening our awareness of numerous contemporary and historical developments, of critiquing wayward political developments and identifying sociocultural change.

A praxeological view not only offers the opportunity to bring town and countryside together in an overarching frame but also highlights the role of individual actors within dynamic processes of transformation. Historical developments, such as structural change, agricultural modernization and the production of popular 'countryside magazines,' do not happen randomly. At their core, lie the interests and values of specific actors and institutions. The task at hand is to identify the sensibilities of their frequently countervailing productions of space. Issues to do with the actors and their individual agendas seem far more relevant here. When understood as a search for order, the negotiation processes, struggles over interpretation and consumption-oriented idealizations of the rural along the way shape contemporary and historical everyday lives, and can help in understanding the fundamental crises of late modernity. As we have seen, it is precisely the large-scale regimes of

demographic interpretation, planning and funding that more likely contribute to the concealment and homogenization of heterogeneous, contradictory lifeworlds. It is here that the qualitative approach of the discipline can help to deconstruct the fuzzy notions and ideologemes produced by media and politics alike.

Finally, it seems important to emphasize that focusing on the rural does not entail competing with other disciplinary perspectives on space, towns and the countryside. A cultural analysis of the rural poses no contradiction to urban research, regional cultural analysis or research on local communities. On the contrary: All these approaches offer epistemic framings in which the periodic booms in all things rural can be identified as such in the first place. At the same time, however, a cultural analysis of the rural can heighten awareness among urban, community and regional researchers about the remarkable popularity of the rural and the momentous transformations of rural areas and ruralities that lie behind this popularity.

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Anja Decker

A freezer full of meat*

Subsistence farming in the context of social inequality

Abstract: Based on participatory observations and semi-structured interviews, this article examines different forms of subsistence farming in the rural Czech Republic. The study contributes to the renewed debate in European Ethnology on rurality and rural everyday life in late-modern societies by focusing on the voices and perspectives of less privileged social groups and examining less visible practices of small-scale agricultural work. Against the backdrop of far-reaching transformation processes in post-socialist societies, the three cases explored in the first part of this paper show that subsistence farming is an informal economic practice and moral economy that can strengthen the agency of members of the lower classes. It is an important part of my informants' economizing and income strategies, enables experiences of continuity in life and grants social recognition. The second part of the paper demonstrates that, in the light of the – at times conflicting – social differentiation of rural communities due to the influx of people from the creative milieu, ideals and practices of subsistence farming can produce contexts in which mutual rapprochement, appreciation and cooperation are possible. At the same time, the encounter between the two groups also highlights the differences between milieus, which are illustrated and discussed using the example of the production and consumption of meat.

Keywords: rural anthropology, informal economies, social inequality, subsistence farming, Czech Republic, meat

In the summer of 2017, Viktor[1] gave me a tour through the extended garden of the weekend house he had purchased five years earlier in the western Czech Republic. Walking over the property, I was astonished by its spatial division that seemed somewhat chaotic and rather unpractical to me. Self-constructed fences made from wooden pallets crisscrossed the garden, separating a vivid mix of pastures, beehives, vegetable gardens, stables and outdoor enclosures. As I learned later, what had appeared to me as a confusing and needlessly complicated structure of the property was the result of the successive expansion of Victor's subsistence farming activities

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1 All informants mentioned in the text were given pseudonyms. Direct quotes were translated from Czech into German by the author.

that had inscribed in the physical environment of his land. Viktor explained that he had used the land initially only to grow fruit and vegetables, which he sold to increase his low income. However, as his local relationships of trust intensified, he gradually took on various farm animals, among others a few sheep he gained from barter trade in the village and bees, whose hives were built by a local hobby beekeeper for a reduced price. Victor had also recently started to keep pigs and poultry. As those were animals which need daily care, his neighbors became an important component of his informal economy, ensuring care for the animals on the days Victor was absent from the village. In return, Victor compensated them by sharing part of the income generated from selling his homemade products through an informal network located mainly in the city where he lived. To secure home-slaughtering, Victor had obtained the necessary equipment from another neighboring family who had given up subsistence pig-keeping 20 years before. It was also these neighbors who Victor visited the next day to purchase a feeding trough made of stone. The exchange and the collective transport of the trough took place in an atmosphere of mutual interest and goodwill. Reflecting on the exchange, Viktor stated his satisfaction. He argued that while he knew from an online research undertaken beforehand that feeding systems cost quite a lot of money, his neighbors had 'only' asked for a piece of pork neck from the next home-slaughtering. He said his neighbor knew that the neck piece was the best part of meat; however, he would give her a piece of loin on top, to make her feel happy. After all, Victor concluded his account, what he was establishing here on his land was something everybody would appreciate.

My encounter with Viktor, a low-qualified informant in his mid-thirties, demonstrates how an informal economy can unfold in a context of limited financial resources. In his case, a high regard for (home-produced) meat, the reduction of and the return to subsistence livestock farming, and a complex network of social relationships both inside and outside the village all play a role. During my field research in the comparatively sparsely populated rural region of the Czech Republic in which Viktor's land is located, I found a wide variety of practices of subsistence farming ranging in their scope from mere imaginaries of starting animal husbandry, to maintaining kitchen gardens or occasionally selling eggs to neighbors, to the deliberate production of surplus goods, as in Viktor's case. Based on these observations, I discuss two related questions in this paper. Firstly, using Viktor's and two other cases as examples, I explore how practices of subsistence farming are integrated into the economic strategies of less privileged social milieus, what premises they are based on and how meaning is produced through them. Through such an in-depth analysis, I aim to understand how my informants negotiate their living conditions and quality of life in the specific context of a highly industrialized post-socialist country in which resources are increasingly unequally distributed between places, genders and social groups. In a second step, I will extend my perspective to representatives of

the urban creative milieu who have recently moved to the region. Returning to one of the three cases discussed before, I analyze the interactions and perceptions of both groups of actors. In this section of the paper, my interest lies in exploring the dynamics that unfold within this specific local constellation through the increased interest of the creative class in subsistence and small-scale farming.

I purposely use a broad definition of subsistence agricultural production in order to capture the heterogeneity of the field. When referring to subsistence or self-sufficiency farming, I do not only mean the production of agricultural products for personal consumption; I also use the term to describe practices of bartering or selling surplus goods as well as home-processing slaughtered animals and other products gained, for example, as payment in kind or through barter trade.[2] My paper is based on ethnographic field research and semi-structured interviews on everyday arrangements, social participation and economic strategies of long-term, recently settled and temporary residents of a rural region in the western Czech Republic conducted from 2014 to 2017.[3] I particularly draw from field notes on walks I took with my informants through their gardens, stables, orchards and fields and during my occasional help while harvesting, processing and selling homegrown products. Furthermore, I have included observations and reflections on the numerous situations in which subsistence farming was the topic of informal conversations or in which I was present (or directly involved) when homegrown products were sold, given as gifts or objects of barter. In the interviews, which form the second pillar of the material I present in this paper, my informants also spoke in detail about their livelihood strategies and their practices of subsistence farming.

Loud and quiet actors

Considering the tendency to construct certain rural regions of Eastern Germany in public discourse as disconnected and shrinking areas with an aging population, Scholze-Irrlitz (2014: 100) stresses that social and cultural anthropology is particularly able to expand this discourse "through an analysis of existing and newly developing capacities to act and everyday practices in rural areas that are overshadowed by this debate." She further argues that taking on such a perspective would bring unconventional, creative economic and societal forms into focus and may reveal counter-narratives to deficit stories. Gibson-Graham (2008) uses her "diverse econo-

2 For a discussion on the concept of subsistence farming, see Kosnik (2017: 68–71).

3 The study is part of my doctorial project at the Institute for European Ethnology and Cultural Analysis at LMU Munich. The project was funded by a PhD scholarship from the German Academic Scholarship Foundation (Studienstiftung des deutschen Volkes) from 02/2014–03/2018 and supervised by Irene Götz and Leonore Scholze-Irrlitz. Parts of the data were collected during the research project "Socio-Spatial Disadvantage of Inhabitants in Peripheral Rural Regions" which was funded by the Czech Science Foundation (No. 15–10602S).

mies" concept to develop a similar line of thought. She calls for putting marginalized and alternative economic practices into the center of research in order to make such practices "more 'real', more credible, more viable as objects of policy and activism, more present as everyday realities that touch all our lives and dynamically shape our futures" (Gibson-Graham 2008: 618).

Understanding subsistence farming and the "agriculture-oriented do-it-yourself" (Hörz 2017: 202) as examples of such unconventional economic practices the authors referred to above call for being made visible, it is striking to see that empirical studies examining this phenomena from the present-day perspective often particularly give voice to middle-class actors. One reason for the overrepresentation of socially privileged informants can be seen in the fact that, in some cases, the specific fields under study are dominated by representatives of this social milieu (Fenske 2017; Kosnik 2017). However, the question arises whether, at least in some cases, the physical and social proximity the researchers might have to certain fields (and their distance to others), a fascination for "new" phenomena and the differences in the cultures of communication between social milieus create a bias. Contrasting his own data with the representation of urban gardening in texts from a well-received anthology edited by Müller (2011), Hörz (2017) shows how practices that are not compatible with the interpretation of farming as a social and political movement are marginalized by actors positioned at the interface of activism and social science. Regarding research on the do-it-yourself movement, Langreiter and Löffler (2017: 8) argue:

> The approach of cultural anthropology and sociology favored until now is discourse analysis and the preferred research fields are [those, which are] visible, expressive. It is often particularly scientists who themselves are active as *craftivists* in the arts and media scene who analyze and comment on the discourses that they themselves have produced and popularized as academic and journalistic authors and curators.

Fenske and Hemme (2015: 10) point to the need for more research in rural areas in order to explore "how concepts of rurality that are constructed in urban milieus affect rural areas." In this respect, they draw attention to the dynamics of devaluation that can emerge within activist groups: "Also the urban farmers' criticism of the conditions of agricultural production in rural areas and of the related desolation of the land reinforces the common contrast between urban and rural areas, center and periphery, progress and stagnation or regression respectively" (Fenske and Hemme 2015: 10f.).

A look at post-socialist societies can add productively to the debate on scale, role and disparate visibility of 'alternative' economic practices. On the one hand, a comparable boom in activist farming can be observed in post-socialist societies, in part, explicitly emphasizing the relevance of transnational (Western) networks and transfer of knowledge. At the same time, the process of adapting European Union

(EU) legislation has led to the marginalization or stigmatization of established practices of (semi-)subsistence farming, even though they show numerous characteristics of sustainable economy advocated by the EU (Aistara 2014; Larsen 2009; Mincyte 2011). Case studies conducted by economic anthropologists in post-socialist societies also demonstrate the discrepancy between the importance attributed to autarky and the actual extent to which material needs are satisfied through self-sufficiency (Gudeman and Hann 2015). Reviewing the findings of a trans-local research project on house economics, Gudeman and Hann (2015: 8) argue that autarky often continues to be an ideal, even though the actual degree of self-sufficiency was low, and the households studied secured their subsistence primarily via market-based practices and/or social subsidies. At the same time, certain spaces of self-sufficiency have been identified in the case studies. However, they strongly varied in scope and scale:

> Self-sufficiency is locally defined and represented. It can mean self-provisioning in a single crop; it can mean keeping domestic animals, such as chickens and hogs, for their meat; it can be represented by herding larger animals for their products; and it can mean having free access to a resource that can be sold (…). (Gudeman and Hann 2015: 13).

In the context of the Czech Republic, practices of subsistence production show similar ambiguities. A close symbiosis of subsistence farming and the state-driven agricultural industry had emerged during state socialism: Whereas only 0.5 hectares of land per household were excluded from collectivization, employees of state farms could borrow machines and other equipment for their personal use and cultivate feedstuff for privately owned livestock on pieces of collectivized land that was difficult to access with heavy machinery. Employees of state farms also received feedstuff as payment in kind. In order to deal with the economy of scarcity, breeding contracts were introduced in the last decade of state socialism enabling subsistence farmers to take on young animals from the state farms and sell them back once they had been raised. This promoted private animal husbandry and contributed significantly to the improvement of the prosperity of the rural population, as was the case in Hungary and the GDR (Haukanes 1999; Schier 2001; Vidacs 2015a). In the wake of the transition to capitalism, an agricultural sector emerged that is dominated by large companies. Today, formal family and small-scale farming in the Czech Republic has far less economic weight than in other post-socialist countries.[4] However, while the extent of self-sufficiency has significantly – and, in the case of animal hus-

4 On average, a Czech agricultural company farms on 152.4 hectares of land. This is by far the highest figure within the EU. Moreover, only 15 % of Czech farms are smaller than five hectares (compared with 93 % in Romania, 87 % in Hungary and 55 % in Poland), 89 % of agricultural land is used by businesses with over 100 hectares and less than a quarter of employees in agriculture are working in companies owned by a family member, which is the lowest figure in the EU (European Commission 2013: 22–42, and the author's calculations).

bandry, even drastically – decreased as well (Haukanes 1999), food self-provisioning still constitutes a common practice across social milieus in both rural and urban households (Smith and Jehlička 2013; Smith, Kostelecký, and Jehlička 2015). At the same time, established practices of food self-provisioning currently only play a subordinate role in the public engagement of food activists, who tend to focus on advocating for innovative food networks (such as community-supported agriculture) and market-based ethical consumption (de Hoop and Jehlička 2017). Nuances, ambivalences and diversity of interpretations and practices linked to subsistence farming currently become visible only in a very limited way, as ethnographic case studies on subsistence production and informal food-networks in rural areas of the Czech Republic are largely missing (for an exception, see Sosna, Brunclíková, and Galeta 2019) and existing sociological studies are exploring subsistence production from a broader perspective.

Field and research dynamics

The municipalities in which my interview partners produce their agricultural goods are situated about an hour's drive from the German border. They lie in the part of the country which was annexed by Hitler's Germany in 1938. After the expulsion of the German population in the aftermath of the Second World War, the area was resettled; however, the population declined to a significantly lower level than before the war. The resulting shifts in the composition of the population and the structure of ownership, and the particularly fast and comprehensively expedited collectivization of agriculture (Wiedemann 2007: 102–129) established path dependencies that continue to have an impact until today. Under socialism, small municipalities particularly continued to shrink. At the same time, employment opportunities in the newly established state farms and agricultural cooperatives along with the possibility of obtaining a company apartment encouraged people to migrate to the area. After the transition to capitalism, local income strategies became more differentiated. However, employment in smaller industrial plants and the forestry and agricultural industry continue to play an important role. Today, conditions of income production for a number of inhabitants are increasingly becoming precarious. As I will now briefly outline, local income strategies are influenced greatly by the entanglement of spatial, class-related and gender-specific factors.

In the last decade, the number of inhabitants has remained stable and neither the reduction of the public infrastructure nor municipal amalgamations were pushed forward with a similar intensity as was the case, for example, in many rural regions of Eastern Germany. In the region, even villages with less than 500 inhabitants have maintained their status as a municipality, and basic services, such as kindergartens, elementary schools, doctors, grocery stores and post offices – and, thus, employment possibilities – have existed either in the municipalities themselves or in neighboring

communities. Some of the communities were also directly connected to the railway system. Concepts such as shrinkage and depopulation, which are often drawn on in debates on sparsely populated rural regions and contribute to the construction of such spaces as "problem areas" (Beetz 2007; Endter 2015) have only limited validity in the spatial context explored here. At the same time, other basic services and opportunities concerning education, consumption, income production, health and care were available only outside of the municipalities. Furthermore, the number of people with agricultural training and/or a lower level of formal education was disproportionately high.

During the research period, the national unemployment rate sank to a record low and was, at times, the lowest in the European Union. Despite the fact that unemployment in the broader region of the field site was above the national average, the surrounding small and mid-sized towns offered a relatively high number of low-qualified jobs. However, women particularly were less able to take advantage of these opportunities. The increasing precarity of female employment trajectories in the Czech Republic is well documented and the complex set of entangled causes, such as gender norms, the deregulation of labor and the refamilization of family policy has been instructively described elsewhere (Hašková and Dudová 2017; Křížková and Formánková 2012). However, particularities of female employment in rural contexts have only been examined rarely, although in the context of my field, spatial effects were strongly visible (Decker 2019). A considerable number of women, for example, did not possess a driving license or dare to drive on the country roads, especially during winter. At the same time, neither bus nor train schedules nor the opening hours of childcare facilities matched the usual working hours and women with dependent children described their difficulties to do shift work or work until late in the evening, both of which were very common employment conditions. Simultaneously, many informants reported that even in the case of full-time employment, their income was barely sufficient for a decent living. While this was due, in some cases, to wage seizures as a consequence of over-indebtedness, my informants explained their low disposable income by the costs for commuting and the particularly low salaries in the region. They also sometimes pointed to the considerably lower wage level in the Czech Republic in comparison to Western European countries. In such accounts, the entire country (sometimes with the exception of Prague) was presented as a precarious region in which social decline can be only avoided by taking up transnational migration. Against the background of the fundamental transformation of employment that has increased feelings of uncertainty and the fear of social decline within a broad range of social milieus (Seifert 2009), the field site can be considered an example of a post-socialist region in which the social situation of the broader lower classes is shaped by the devaluation of manual labor, territorial inequality (Barlösius and Neu 2008) and an highly gendered distribution of work.

Building up relationships of trust with informants from the rural working class was time-intensive and demanded flexibility and a high presence in the field. Potential informants often called on their "right to not be the subjects of research" (Kaschuba 2003: 207) or agreed to participate in an interview only after several preliminary talks. Most notably, they showed an understandable hesitation regarding my interest in being present during the production and exchange of homemade products or being shown their physical places of subsistence production. After all, my methodological approach did not only contradict their concepts of 'science,' it also touched on spheres, such as home and garden, that were otherwise usually open only to a close social circle. Consequently, the material I collected and analyzed using grounded theory methodology was highly diverse: While, in some cases, I was able to establish long-term relationships with working class producers of agricultural products and was given complex insights into their practices of subsistence farming, in other cases, a single interview or field notes from sporadic informal talks served as the basis for my analysis.

Research among representatives of the creative milieu to which I will refer in the second part of the paper had a different dynamic. These informants had recently moved to the field site from urban areas and experienced the region as a place of opportunities that promised a good life. They were committed to revitalizing regional economic cycles and perceived the material environment of the area – its historical buildings, the un-renovated (and, thus, affordable) houses, the structure of the cultural landscape – as carriers of potential. Using public funding, they sought to make these realms of potential visible and to utilize them, for example, by opening information centers, building up organic farms, developing environmental educational programs, identifying and renovating cultural heritage sites, and reestablishing orchards. Their projects, thus, can be understood as part of the turn towards a creative commodification of rurality (Bardone, Rattus, and Jääts 2013; Galani-Moutafi 2013; Wright and Annes 2014) and created income opportunities for them and others (although the jobs were often temporary and poorly paid). These informants were also able to find employment in municipal administration or in EU-funded projects for rural development or employment support because they usually possessed a high formal education. They had established extensive networks with one another and were very willing to let me accompany them to the sites where they produced or exchanged their agricultural products (kitchen gardens, orchards, regional markets). Furthermore, they possessed the skills to reflect on my explorative questions in a complex and self-reflecting manner, using a language which was much closer to social scientific writing than the language used by the rural working class. On the one hand, the increasing size and visibility this group gained during my research posed a certain challenge to my writing in order to not reproduce the class-related inequality in my ethnography by letting their "loud" voices overpower

the voices of others. On the other hand, the social heterogeneity of the field and the dynamics of the research process also makes it possible to reflect in this paper on interactions and mutual perceptions of different social milieus.

Subsistence farming as a part of economic bricolages

Reducing costs for food

Vendula, 59 years old, is one of my female informants whose employment trajectory suffered a significant rupture. She did not have a secondary education and had worked in a forestry company until she became a mother. Afterwards, she was able to change her job for a position as a cleaner in a public institution where she was employed for 14 years. Assessing this work retrospectively, Vendula appreciated not only the salary of 12,000 to 13,000 korunas (440 to 480 euros) per month but also that her employer organized transport to her workplace and that she worked in a collective with numerous women from the region. The public institution was closed in 2012. Since then, Vendula had not had a formal job and received welfare and housing benefits. She had neither a driving license nor the money for a car and, therefore, left the village at most once a week to visit the welfare agency or the post office and to do her shopping.

The advantage of living in the countryside is that you can grow everything yourself, Vendula told me in answer to my question of how she assessed the quality of her life. This statement is remarkable as Vendula was living in a social housing apartment and had neither a garden nor a plot of land. Was this merely a notion of the persistence of the ideal of self-sufficiency (Gudeman and Hann 2015) expressed by a woman who grew up under socialism in a house with a large vegetable garden and whose parents had worked in a local agricultural company? During our interview, which remained our only long interaction, a more complex answer emerged. When I asked Vendula about her economic strategies, she started to speak about a nearby pig farm. She told me how she would wait until the significantly varying prices dropped particularly low to buy half of a pig once or twice a year. To raise the money which she needed to make this purchase – about 2000 to 2500 korunas [80 to 100 euros] – she put aside an amount of money each month together with her partner and her grown-up daughter. Since her neighbor worked at the facility and took the half of a pig with him by car, transportation of the meat did not constitute a problem. Vendula further explained that she processed the meat at home, stressing that she used every part of the animal, including its head. Her partner had learned to process meat from his uncle, a butcher, and passed this knowledge on to Vendula and her daughter. Buying a piglet from the facility and fattening it themselves would be even cheaper, she calculated, arguing that her partner would know how to slaughter it so that they would be able to save the costs for the butcher and would also have the chance to use the blood and the offal, which were not included when

purchasing a half of a pig. In fact, Vendula had only seldom made use of this option as the feed needed to fatten a pig would increase the costs. She did, however, remember one exception connected to her extra job in the barn of an organic farmer who had recently bought land in the locality. As a reward for good performance or for additional hours worked, she usually received payment in kind, for example, in the form of meat from poultry she used to slaughter for the farmer. In the year prior to the interview, the farmer had also fattened six pigs and rewarded Vendula with one of them for home slaughtering. Vendula stressed that the farmer had also offered her use of his land for private animal husbandry. However, as she would have to buy the feed at her own expense, this offer had not been attractive to her.

Similar to many of my informants, Vendula saw saving money on food as one of the few options to reduce her household expenses. Economizing on food proved to be a complex social practice that gave my informants agency. Flyers from supermarkets giving information about discounts were studied intensively and discounted goods were bought in bulk. Women were proud of their ability to cook (well) for little money and linked growing their own fruit and vegetables to saving costs in a twofold way, reducing costs for both food and transport to the supermarket. Making use of subsistence knowledge, social capital and storage space, as well as the geographical proximity to the pig farm and the barn of the organic farm, extended Vendula's possibilities to save money on food beyond the usual scope. Processing half a pig would put her at ease for another half a year, Vendula concluded, putting her agency into her own words.

Vendula's case illustrates how, within contexts of precarisation, the mobilization of subsistence knowledge and contacts to farmers can expand the scope of action for people who do not own any land or livestock. Vendula's contacts with an employee at the pig farm proved to be particularly relevant. Viktor, whom I introduced in the beginning of this paper, also bought the piglets he fattened, with his neighbors' assistance and equipment, from a commercial facility. These findings demonstrate that the presence of agricultural companies, which are now integrated into a neoliberal mode of production, continues to be a relevant factor enabling subsistence farming and, ultimately, the production of agency for the rural population though economizing on the cost of food.

Continuity, surplus and recognition

Tracing practices of subsistence farming over the course of biographical and social transitions also yielded a great deal of insight into the case of Maria and Vašek, both in their mid-50s. The couple farmed about twelve hectares of land while commuting every day to full-time employment in a town situated 55 kilometers away. They kept livestock and grew fruit and vegetables. The products were used partly for self-provisioning and partly for sale informally at the workplaces of family members.

Maintaining the farm, where I was a regular visitor and helped several times with the harvest, constituted a heavy workload for all members of the household. Work was performed in the evenings and on weekends, and also involved Jan and Klara, the couple's adult children, who regularly took over tasks. Vašek and Maria's subsistence farming was rather extensive compared to practices of other informants. The number of farm animals, particularly, was unusually high, because the practice of keeping livestock that had been very common under socialism had been either given up or reduced to keeping poultry and rabbits. Preserving the extent of their farm was one of Vašek's life goals. His parents had arrived in the village during the resettlement of the borderland after the war and had taken over the house and land of a German family with whom he still maintained contact. Vašek's childhood and youth were characterized by his parent's resistance to the collectivization of their land. The family was subject to severe repressions but succeeded in preserving their status as private farmers. After finishing school, Vašek moved to a town and was trained in a manual profession. Later, he found work as a technical worker in a public institution where he is still employed today. Having moved out of the village, he continued to work on his parents' farm together with his wife and moved back to the village after their deaths. Vašek argued that it was important to him to honor his parents' life achievement: "It was impossible to just take it and throw it away [..]. What would have been the point of our parents enduring all the difficulties connected with these times? Well, it would be a shame if we simply gave that up" (Interview August 31, 2014).

Vašek emphasized that, given the repressions they had faced, growing up on the farm had been a time of privation, but neither he nor his siblings had ever gone hungry because the family had always been able to provide food for themselves. Among other things – such as generating additional income that widened the financial scope of the family and compensated for the daily commuting costs – Vašek saw this as a reason why it was so important to him to preserve his farming skills. It is in accordance with this reasoning that Vašek was also reluctant to formalize his economy by registering as an agricultural business. While a registration would have provided him with access to public funding, to Vašek, it meant a threat to his autonomy. Vašek's example shows how the entanglement of financial motives, the wish for continuity in the family and experiences with a repressive system entangle, shaping practices and subjective interpretations of subsistence farming.

If we incorporate Jan, aged 25, Vašek and Maria's son, into our analysis, an interesting shift in the allocation of meaning becomes visible. Jan worked full-time as a technical worker in a hotel. Reflecting on his current situation, he told me that there was enough work, but it was extremely poorly paid. According to his own words, Jan earned significantly less than the average wage, a condition he did not perceive as extraordinary, arguing that none of the 100 to 150 people he knew had

a salary that would come at least close to the national average. In the context of his perception of living in a thoroughly precarious country, Jan described subsistence farming as an economic practice that increased his room to maneuver significantly:

> Let me give you an example. Some chambermaids are working at our hotel [...]; they're single moms with two kids each and they truly earn 9,000 korunas [340 euros] and with this money they have to feed two children of school age [...]. And, you know, when these women go shopping, they have to count every penny instead of buying meat. So, in this respect, by contrast, we do have an advantage. We just head to the freezer and make a schnitzel or whatever we want. This woman can't do that. That's really common here. These are working poor. (Interview October 14, 2014)

The well-filled freezer providing large quantities and varieties of meat at any given time is the condensed symbol of the agency Jan experiences regarding the self-provisioning of food. It is indicative of the persistency of meat consumption as a status symbol and as the embodiment of a good life (Haukanes 2004; Trummer 2015). Having one's own meat means being better off and having autonomy regarding an important part of what makes up the quality of life. Jan constructs additional agency by comparing his seemingly unlimited consumption possibilities with the stereotypical figure of the single mother with two children who can only survive through sacrifice and self-control. Jan argued that if he took over the farm, he would reduce the surplus production but would maintain the keeping of livestock for the self-provision of meat.

The value attributed to home-produced meat does not derive only from its relevance regarding economizing, quantity of consumption or the possibility of creating extra income from selling it. Vašek, Maria, Jan and Klara all emphasized that food self-provisioning also means having access to good food. When they spoke of the quality of their homemade products, they constructed a dichotomy between self-produced products and goods available in stores. They argued that homemade food was healthier, tasted better, did not contain additives and that the animals could be raised more slowly because the family was not aiming for maximum profit but for some extra earnings. Along with homemade alcohol, homemade meat was a product with a particularly high exchange value, ensuring its producers social recognition stretching beyond rural or working-class milieus. Jan and Klara, for example, stressed that doctors from the city asked for their homemade meat and saw their interest as proof of the high quality of their products. Similar remarks highlighting the connection between the quality of the products and the interest shown by clients of a higher social status from urban areas were also made repeatedly during conversations with my other informants. The value of homegrown food I have identified in the field confirms findings on the integrative function of small-scale farming in rural communities (Decker 2014; Vidacs 2015b). It, furthermore, indicates that the ideal of subsistence work is relevant for a broad range of social milieus.

Thrift, entrepreneurial spirit and a willingness to work

My informants' concepts of good and healthy food, on the other hand, proved to be both fluid and ambiguous. Food self-provisioners, for example, would sometimes praise their products as being organic and, in the very same conversation, speak about the chemical pesticides they had applied. When I mentioned that this seemed contradictory to me, my remark immediately created distance. This pointed to a cultural field of conflict which I will explore in more detail further on. Once I had learned to formulate my question on the use of pesticides more appreciatively ("Did you have to use a lot of pesticides this year?"), I was given answers that indicated a very pragmatic approach: My informants argued that there were certain kinds of vegetables that simply required the use of pesticides in order to make the work invested pay off. If the agricultural season was fortunate or the soil conditions were good, my informants would sometimes also refrain from using chemical pesticides.

Pragmatism also explains the seemingly contradictory practices of animal husbandry I met in the field. Exemplarily, whereas pigs and rabbits were often kept in very small spaces, I also met with references to the happy free-range chickens kept in the owner's garden; a retired man argued that he did not keep his goats on his meadow because building a fence would cost both too much money and effort; instead, he transported freshly cut grass from the meadow to the barn daily. Vašek stated that the animals behaved more quietly when being walked to slaughter if they had been kept in a barn. In Viktor's case, which I will now discuss in more detail, farming and the keeping of livestock was also guided by a number of pragmatic considerations. Each day, his neighbor, Karel, who took care of the pigs during the week, let the animals into an open-air enclosure for some hours so that they could eat the fallen fruit from under the trees. Viktor also obtained a considerable portion of the feed for his livestock from contacts in the urban neighborhood in which he lived and worked. In this respect, the composition of the feeding mash he prepared over an open fire during the two days I helped out on his farm was exemplary: Leftovers from a restaurant (picked up daily and frozen until use) were cooking in a huge pot along with products from a major grocery store that had become unsellable (obtained by one of his friends who worked there), eggshells (supplied by clients visiting Viktor's place of work) and edible waste collected at this workplace. In the course of my fieldwork, I also learned to appreciate leftovers, eggshells and, especially, jars of all kinds as resources of high value, as passing them on to Viktor and other informants helped to foster our relationship. Pragmatic considerations (What and who is available? Where is there still space?) were also central when Viktor carried out improvements and renovations. Material whose origin he remembered exactly and which he expected to become useful for a yet to be defined purpose at some point in the future was stored all over his property. Gudeman and Hann point out the high relevance of thrift in rural house economies in post-socialist societies:

> Being thrifty, which can be accomplished by restricting consumption, by saving leftovers, or by finding new ways to accomplish needed ends, preserves means for a new day. Thriftiness can be consistent with profit making, as in downsizing a corporation, but in the house thrift is not about making a profit. It is a strategy for making savings to be held, as in reusing string or carefully preserving potatoes under stairs for the winter. Thrift helps achieve self-sufficiency. House maintenance and growth occurs through saving and risk avoidance rather than the 'animal spirits' of entrepreneurial investment. Savings as hoards are often put into the house itself: with savings a new room is added, or another floor is constructed, rather than directed to a venture outside the house. (Gudeman and Hann 2015: 14)

Even though Viktor stressed that, in the long run, he aimed at making profit through his agricultural work, his activities still corresponded with the logic described in the quotation above. He emphasized that all the money he earned from farm work was reinvested into the farm. For this purpose, he collected all income from selling his products in an envelope and only used this money to finance any investment on the farm. However, there was one exception to this rule: Viktor fed the income from the sale of pork into the common household budget. Both control over spending and evidence of additional income enabled him to justify to his partner the huge workload invested into agricultural work. Emphasizing that he enjoyed keeping livestock and that he had a comfortable and good life, Victor argued that as long as his activities did not place a financial burden on the family budget, it was his business how he spent his time. He also saw farming as a means that set him apart from his circle of friends at his main place of residence in a large Czech city, who – according to his account – lived in poverty and were, thus, forced to stay living with their parents. Within this context, to Victor, the sale of homegrown products, first and foremost, constituted a means to maintain a self-chosen lifestyle despite limited resources. In this respect, his practice, which was directed more strongly towards the monetarization of his products than the other cases discussed here, certainly shows an "orientation towards subsistence" (Baier 2017: 23).

Creatively using all available resources to find the cheapest possible arrangement was a logic that, in Victor's case, was also based on his experience of precarisation. Victor stressed that he had always been used to seeking additional income due to his low income from paid work, even if it meant an increase in his workload. Interactions with other subsistence farmers revealed a similar 'entrepreneurial spirit' and attitude towards work. Vendula, for example, pointed out that she was known in her village as someone who was reliable and hardworking. She argued that she had found her extra job thanks to her ability to take the initiative, having called the employer immediately after learning about the job opportunity. She also said she worked in any weather and that, since she did not have access to a tractor, she used to roll the balls of hay for feeding the cows into the barn by hand with her daughter's help. She emphasized there were not many people in the village – especially not

women – who were willing to work that hard and that she would not shy away from this kind of work, because, after all, her parents had also worked in a cowshed and she had grown up with it. My willingness to work (manually) was also constantly evaluated by my informants and the result determined whether I was again allowed to be present when they worked on their land. The emphasis my informants placed on their entrepreneurial spirit and their allegedly outstanding willingness to perform hard work was also apparent in their reflections on other economic practices, such as earning additional income with craftwork or in construction. In such contexts, they acted in line with what has been described as the imperative of the entrepreneurial self (Bröckling 2007), presenting themselves as subjects able to address their current situation proactively, to identify potential and resources, and to exploit them in a creative manner. Recalling the lack of agency many informants perceived regarding formal employment, the diverse practices of small-scale farming I have identified in the field emerge as realms of life in which they could experience autonomy, agency and recognition. In this regard, thrift, entrepreneurial spirit, a willingness to work and a pragmatic 'ability to help oneself' were the central premises for their activities.

Cooperations – imaginaries – irritations: informal farmers and the creative milieu

Self-sufficiency, short food chains, and access to 'good' food were also topics much reflected by the new residents from the creative milieu and shaped their activities in the communities I have outlined above. The dynamics of transformation connected with the arrival of new residents and the valorization of the natural and cultural heritage were especially high in one municipality. Here, the activities of the new residents were met with a mixture of indifference, skepticism and rejection from some of the inhabitants, which challenged their vision of successful life. One telling example was a conflict about the distribution of agricultural land. Towards the end of a municipal council meeting at which, once again, a small piece of farming land was sold to a large-scale farmer who owned a large portion of the surrounding land, a participant demanded that the interests of young people be taken into consideration. After all, he argued, they wanted to settle in the area and build their lives here. This incited strong reactions. A woman of retirement age argued that no one had a problem with the large-scale farmer and that she would not mind if he owned all the land. A representative of the municipal council repeated an argument I had already heard him expressing in other contexts, stating that people moving into the area were exploiting the state and did not contribute anything positive to the municipality. He argued that while he had worked in agriculture for 27 years and had been responsible for 3,000 animals, the newcomers would only have a few animals and yet wanted to give him good advice. He admitted that they may know how to write a grant application for a project and how to present themselves well,

but he was convinced that they would have a huge problem once there were no more subsidies. He concluded that he perceived it an outrage that people owning just a few animals received public funding, whereas large "professional" companies who "knew what they were doing" were not entitled to this funding. Whereas this statement should not be read as a description of the actual distribution of agricultural subsidies, it does, however, illustrate how rural transformation can produce loss of status and destabilize the social roles of previously established actors. In this case, among other things, these effects were enforced by the decreasing relevance of employment in agriculture, the local social differentiation though in-migration, and the emergence of new knowledge formats and techniques of governance, such as European Union funding programs, which have established new criteria for success (such as being able to write grant applications or 'present' oneself well). The refusal to sell land to newcomers can, thus, be interpreted as an attempt to preserve the accustomed order and as a realm of rural working-class resistance against the devaluation of their employment biographies, life models and everyday practices. These kinds of dynamics have been also reflected in ethnographies of conflicts over nature protection and species conservation, for example, regarding the restriction of hunting rights (Mischi 2012) and the protection of wolves (Krange and Skogen 2011). The emotional debate at the municipal council meeting is also informative when brought into dialogue with a later observation that destabilized the apparent distance between the two groups: A small-scale farmer, who had moved to the area from a larger city several years before, hosted a farm festival on his property. Both persons who had taken a stand against selling land to the new small-scale farmers at the municipal council meeting attended the event. When I met both of them in the recently established kitchen garden of the farm, the representative of the municipal council commented that he had to admit that he was pleasantly surprised, and that the farmer had truly put a great deal of work into the garden. The women of retirement age pulled out a few weeds in passing, while telling me that this had once been her land, but that she had sold it to the newcomer years ago. I learned that her parents had used the land to keep a cow and goats and to grow feedstuff. However, she said that she was not sorry for selling the property as she no longer had either the time or energy to take care of such a big plot of land stating that, in fact, she liked what had been done with it. Several years had passed between these two events, making a direct juxtaposition difficult. However, it does seem remarkable that it was the kitchen garden that became the subject of admiration at the farm event. Food self-provisioning emerges here as a shared frame of reference, forming a meaningful practice that transcends social boundaries and lines of conflict which still existed between the two groups during the time of the second observation. I will now follow this line of thinking further by examining the interactions and mutual perceptions between Vašek and Maria, whose practices of subsistence farming I have described

above, and Martin, 25, a resident of a regional capital who had been periodically living in the village for about five years.

Contacts to other people with experience in farming were helpful for newly arrived representatives of the cultural creative milieu for practical reasons. It enabled them to either borrow agricultural machines, devices and vehicles or to exchange them for animals. It also opened up the possibility of acquiring knowledge or accessing foodstuff in exchange for help with agricultural work. At the same time, self-sufficiency represented practices and ideals the newcomers perceived as belonging to rural areas and in which they saw the potential for social change. Martin, for example, engaged actively in reestablishing orchards and experimented with horticulture. He emphasized that he shared the local subsistence farmers' desire to be as self-sufficient as possible and argued that, to him, their presence was a sign that the village did not consist only of people rejecting or obstructing the activities and moral concepts of the new residents. The representatives of the cultural creative milieu considered Vašek and Maria's everyday arrangement as an admirable and unconventional remnant of a local life model that had been destroyed by both the expulsion of the German Czechoslowaks and socialism. When speaking about the couple with visitors – who were also regarded and courted as potential new residents – Vašek and Maria were portrayed with much sympathy.

In the past, Martin had worked on Vašek and Maria's farm several times, and, for a time, he had been among those persons Vašek would ask for help with the harvest. Being a one-day farm hand at Maria and Vašek's place, a role I found myself in on several occasions, included not only the sensual experience of exhausting physical labor but also of time spent collectively while working, smoking, watching television and being served large meals prepared from homemade products. Martin described his work with Vašek and Maria as follows:

> It's just great. If you have a big plot of land and a big outcome it's a lot of work to harvest it. And the greatest thing is to just call your neighbors and say: 'Let's go harvesting!' We always got a sack of potatoes. It probably would be easier to earn the money somewhere [else] and to buy the sack of potatoes from that [money] but [helping out with the harvest] really is an experience. It's like going to a festival somewhere. The farmer bakes a cake for everyone, and it really turns into an event where people meet and chat. I really enjoyed helping out with the harvest. Whether at Vašek's place or elsewhere. And I think it's slowly developing here. The gardens [of the new residents] need time, but when there are more gardens and crops, we'll also hold such harvesting events. (Interview August 12, 2016).

Vašek and Maria described themselves as poorly integrated locally. They neither visited the pub nor did they attend local cultural events. While Vašek argued this was due to a lack of time and the fact that most of his school friends had moved away from the village, Maria linked their disconnectedness to the decrease in local

cultural activities. If a task on the farm required more work, they usually recruited helpers among their social networks in the town they both commuted to for work or approached their adult children's school friends and work colleagues who also lived in the wider region. Even though no other local helpers were present during the harvest, except for Martin and two other persons belonging to the group of new residents from the cultural creative milieu, to Martin, the experience of collective work transported an ideal of a rural community and turned Vašek into his role model and a source of inspiration for his own activities in the village.

Martin's help with the harvest and his romanticized interpretation of the event, the retelling of Vašek's biography for guests, the perception of a community of values – all of these "twists and twines of imagination and experience" (Goodwin-Hawkins 2016: 310) – can be understood as acts of "doing the village" (Goodwin-Hawkins 2016; Matless 1994) by newcomers with large cultural and symbolic capital. These dynamics also changed the scope of action for the small-scale farmers from the rural working-class milieu, who gained occasional helpers as well as customers for their products. A thirty-year-old woman, for example, who had moved to the municipality three years earlier, told me she liked to buy eggs from an informal farmer because it created an experience for her son and because, in contrast to the owners of the local shop, the subsistence farmer would always greet them nicely so that contact with him complied with her effort to teach her son to greet the neighbors.

On the one hand, Vašek expressed his satisfaction with the increased societal interest in self-sufficiency. He praised my attempt to establish a vegetable garden during my stay in the village as a good example, stating that it would illustrate the growing awareness of the benefits of growing one's own food even if it was only on a small-scale such as in the backyard of a townhouse. To him, the revival of gardening, also taking place in urban areas, proved the legitimacy and moral superiority of his way of life. On the other hand, his encounter with the new residents' interest in his farming created moments of irritation: The new residents positioned their practices of self-sufficiency into debates on a sustainable way of life and on ethical consumption, i.e. in contexts in which animal welfare and a reduction of consumption of meat were central concerns. By contrast, meat products played a key role in Vašek and Maria's system of organizing the informal support with the harvest. They usually rewarded their helpers with meat and other products. That Martin and other helpers problematized animal husbandry and partly followed vegan diets, thus, endangered the reciprocity of the exchange of farm work for shared meals and payment in kind and produced uncertainties, which I – being a vegetarian myself – also experienced while working on the farm. Even though Vašek tried to replace the meat with eggs and vegetables, a sense of 'outstanding debt' remained. At the same time, he saw vegetarianism as a devaluation: "If someone doesn't eat meat, for example, then they are judging the people who do things such as slaughtering and stuff like that"

(Interview August 31, 2014). Martin also saw large differences in the concepts of 'good' food and meat within both groups:

> The most important thing for them is to be able to produce their food on their own. And that they can do so cheaply and effectively. The young people who move here focus more on quality, not on efficacy, and on doing things themselves […]. So Vašek and his family, for example, would never buy something [certified] organic because it's more expensive and it's from a brand name. […] And they would never waste time trying to further improve the things they are already doing. No, wait – I'm exaggerating here, but you know what I'm trying to say. They are more orientated towards doing things straight away and effectively. […] And that means they make a lot of compromises, lots of 'I found something and so I'll use it since I happen to have it.' And they don't care if that's healthy for them or not. […] Well I don't share these values. I don't do something just because it's an easy way to feed me though I know it isn't good. I don't keep pigs in a sty because I believe that this isn't ok. Even if it were easier for me to do that and I could easily live off it. That's where I see the difference. They do it because it ensures their self-sufficiency and it's effective. But I see a moral boundary there. (Interview August 12, 2016).

In this excerpt, Martin formulates a milieu-specific commitment (Köstlin 2006) to ethical consumption and animal welfare and positions himself as morally superior to Vašek and Maria. He is distancing himself from the community of values proclaimed previously between informal working-class farmers and the new residents from the creative milieu and uses moral arguments to distinguish both groups from one another. Whereas, in his perception, the former base their actions on the imperative of economizing and the ideal of self-sufficiency, the latter prioritizes quality and ethical principles of sustainable production and consumption and sees self-sufficiency and small-scale farming only as a means to achieve these objectives. However, during our conversation, Martin emphasized that he is still open for helping Vašek and Maria on their farm and that – in order to maintain a good relationship with them – he is willing to compromise, for example, by having prepared fish on one occasion.

Towards the end of my field research, the three informants from the creative milieu who had occasionally helped Vašek and Maria had stopped doing so and Vašek had ceased to approach them when he needed help. This development cannot be fully explained with the help of my data. However, the statements of the informants indicate that the increasing number of new residents and their growing success in building up economic strategies and their high degree of mobility all played a role. One former helper said that she now had a garden of her own and was able to provide herself with her own food so that she no longer sought payment in kind. In addition, she also argued that there were now more people in the village to whom she felt closer than Vašek and Maria. If she wanted to discuss gardening issues, she would, therefore, no longer approach Vašek but would ask her closer friends instead. Martin emphasized that he was, in principle, still open to helping Vašek and Maria,

but as he had been away a lot from the village in the past months being on longer trips, he had preferred to spend the little time he had there with people to whom he felt closer.

Discussion

The profound processes of transformation that are taking place in the Czech Republic as a late-modern and post-socialist society at a relatively fast pace lead to an increase in social inequality. This brings about shifts concerning the agency and self-positioning of members of the working-class milieus in rural and urban contexts. Income strategies, possibilities for participation and the social composition of rural communities are diversifying, resulting in uncertainty, new fields of conflict and changing symbolic boundaries. I have shown in this paper that, within this context, subsistence farming constitutes a heterogeneous, ambivalent and dynamic social practice. The informants I have focused on in the first part of the paper experienced difficulties in making ends meet, despite having formal employment, or found themselves excluded from the labor market. The ability to produce their own food (or to access food through barter trade or payment in kind) is part of their repertoire of economic strategies and, as such, subsistence farming continues to be economically relevant for my informants. At the same time, I have shown that the importance of subsistence farming goes beyond this aspect. Subsistence farming and the sale of surplus production also made it possible to establish continuities over biographical and social transformations and to complement experiences of precarisation with narrations of entrepreneurial success, autonomy and self-efficacy that comply with the social imperative of individual responsibility and entrepreneurial thinking. The broad recognition of their subsistence work as it manifested itself, for example, in the demand for homemade products among customers from privileged milieus constitutes another important factor and points to the persistence of the ideal of self-sufficiency across social classes. In the second section of the paper, I have included representatives of the urban creative class into my focus in order to explore milieu-specific nuances in the production of meaning through subsistence farming. On the one hand, the growing interest the creative milieu takes in subsistence farming has created spaces and contexts in which mutual rapprochement, recognition and cooperation between less privileged milieus and (new) residents from the creative class become possible. At the same time, encounters and interactions between both groups in frame of practices of subsistence production have reinforced social distinction and cultural differentiation. In the cases discussed here, these processes enfolded around questions of ethical consumption and the different value of meat. The freezer full of meat – to refer to the title of this paper – is, thus, symbolic in a threefold way. Firstly, it highlights the agency of less privileged social milieus that experienced devaluation and social decline. Secondly, it is a call for food activists

and social scientists in Western and Central Eastern European countries alike to pay attention to less visible actors. My findings demonstrate the need to incorporate their voices, perspectives, experiences and knowledge into the debate on changes in the global food system and stress the need to develop strategies that are feasible for less privileged social groups. Last but not least, the freezer full of meat can serve as a reminder that the ability to perform subsistence farming depends on resources, such as knowledge, storage space, time, access to land and social participation, that are highly unequally distributed. Making the agency of the actors visible through an ethnographic study, thus, must not undermine the necessity for structural change to reduce social inequality.

Regarding the debate on the research program of a "Cultural Analysis of Rurality" – to use the title of a commission of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Volkskunde founded in 2017 – the results of this study can be regarded as an encouragement to further examine the nexus of class, rural and urban space, and new and persistent forms of subsistence production within specific local settings and constellations of actors. At the same time, when approaching such fields, it is highly important to critically reflect the mechanisms that regulate and reproduce the unequal distribution of access to power, discourse and resources.

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Wood*

Regarding economies and policies through the eyes of a cultural anthropologist[1]

Abstract: Wood is considered to be one of the oldest materials and, as such, it is currently receiving new attention: As a renewable raw, uncontaminated building and versatile usable material, as a "material of the future," wood is woven into a variety of action chains that connect seemingly remote fields, such as private living and global environmental protection, traditional material connotations and political interventions, economies of the rural and constructions of the urban, the beautiful and the useful, things and landscape, art and everyday life. The article locates in these accumulations, interlinkages and simultaneities, the potential of an analysis of wood through cultural studies. An ethnographically oriented cultural-scientific analysis of the network of action around wood can disclose prioritizations and classification systems precisely because wood shows itself as an omnipresent, variously connoted material and is simultaneously used and negotiated in everyday living environments. A particular interest of the author lies in the economies and policies that constitute the network of action around wood and are constituted by it at the same time. On a broad empirical basis, she discusses how wood is currently used and given meaning and to what extent access via a material enables cultural anthropological analyses of economic and political fields.

Keywords: material, economization, politicization, (investments in) meaning, sustainability, nature, rural area, urban building, future, crafts, wood

Accumulations, interconnections, simultaneities – on the intention of this text

"We are creating a new culture of wood in Germany," says the chief forester of Eichstätt upon opening the exhibition *Wood as a Building Material* in Beilngries in Upper Bavaria (Leidl 2008). He is standing next to a wooden cube with an edge length of about one metre which represents the amount of wood which grows in the Eichstätt district every minute. The fact that it is renewable and absorbs carbon dioxide makes

* German version in *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 2018, 114 (2): 236–258. Translated by Stefanie Everke Buchanan.

1 I would like to express my gratitude to the editors of this journal, the anonymous reviewers, and Markus Tauschek and Bernhard Tschofen for their ideas, initiatives, criticism and encouragement.

wood an ideal building material for the chief forester. He wants to promote its use both for economic and ecological reasons. Wood, he says, could strengthen the regional economy and contribute to global climate protection, and he predicts that: "Wood is the raw material of the third millennium" (Leidl 2008). This phrase also provides the motto for the 12th Rügen Wood Fair, which advertises specialist lectures on heating and building with wood, as well as horn players, jazz and a children's program. The tourism and business association Putbus organizes the fair, whereas it was initiated by the Ministry of the Environment of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and UNESCO with the aim "of creating something exemplary for the development in the biosphere reserve of Southeast Rügen" (Küstermann 2008). Last but not least, the provincial advisory council for wood in Baden-Württemberg states that: "wood is the raw material of the third millennium," and further postulates on its website that energy transition could not be achieved without the intelligent use of wood as a renewable building material.[2]

A newspaper article from Upper Bavaria, a promotional flyer from the island of Rügen, a website with a reference in Stuttgart – three media fonts illustrating that wood is a material which not only has many uses, but is also advertised in many ways and, aside from forestry and the trades, also attracts interest from tourism, cultural conservation, science and politics. These interest groups all have specific, partly economic, partly ecological, partly sociopolitical motivations, but they share a common goal: They want to promote the use of wood.

According to this interpretation, wood, the material of the future, is both one of humanity's oldest materials and sources of energy (Grabner and Klein 2015). That wood is currently experiencing special attention is due primarily to its material properties: Wood, the inner solid tissue of trees, bushes, plant stems, is renewable, it absorbs carbon dioxide, it is available locally and, thus, proves to have a positive connotation, not least in the context of the current discourses around sustainability. Wood can reference nature, visualize growth, evoke warmth and represent both craftsmanship and industrial production, individuality and the mainstream. It is visually, olfactorily and haptically perceptible and, depending on the type of plant and the form of production, a local or global trade good. It can be used in combination with numerous materials, such as concrete, glass, or textiles. Furthermore, research is being carried out on modifying and recombining the wood itself to facilitate further forms of use. Its (manual) processing proves to be low-threshold but, at the same time, constitutes a materialization of a specific and increasingly specialized knowledge (May 2018a).

The simplest things are made of wood, and so are some of the most valuable. They can bear traces of use, survive long periods of time and be repurposed. The use

2 http://holz-bw.de (Accessed December 7, 2017).

of wood can not only have practical, spatial or intrinsic grounds, but also aesthetic, economic and political.

I regard these simultaneous and only seemingly contradictory forms of meaning and use that attach themselves to wood as relational, culturally constituted patterns of action and justification that condense into practices and relationships situationally. Its ethnographic analysis has the potential to reveal contemporary cultural orders. Precisely because wood appears as such an omnipresent, versatile and differently connoted material and is, simultaneously – and this seems to me to be decisive – used and negotiated in everyday lifeworlds. Recognizing the ubiquity of the material, I turn my perspective on these contexts in which systems of order appear and everyday practices condense into patterns (Bourdieu 2001: 41; Korff 2002: 168).

My particular interests are the economies and policies which constitute the network of action around wood and are, in turn, constituted by it. They become apparent along the "value chain of wood"[3] which connects actors from forestry, design, (sub-)assembly, production and consumption. Accordingly, very different people move into the focus of an ethnographic analysis of this material in this network of action around wood. Here, end users (builders, home owners, salespeople, for example, in furniture retail stores, consumers) interact with architects, designers, people from environmental associations, politics, schools and government agencies, with producers in joineries, carpentries, smaller timber trades, manufacturers of semifinished products (such as sawmills) and people from the forestry sector.

Such an ethnographic study, starting from the material, focusing on production and distribution as well as everyday use, has the potential of connecting material culture research with the cultural anthropological analysis of political and economic fields.[4]

In doing so, moving a material[5] – "the wood" – into the center of the network analysis holds a special attraction that results from the challenge of not viewing wood primarily in a predicative manner, i.e. not only as the material of an object.

3 Wegener (2011: 16); the potential of an ethnographic analysis of this value chain is exemplarily affirmed by the grant of the third party funded project "Wood-based Bioeconomy in a Societal Dialogue and Transfer Process" (2017–2020), in which Corrie Eichler and Lukas Feilen, supervised by Reinhard Johler, focus on a selection of individual fields of this value-added chain.

4 Kerstin Poehls, for example, shows this using the example of sugar (Poehls 2016, 2017). On the differentiation of cultural anthropological interests in researching political and economic fields, see e.g. Adam and Vonderau (2014), Klein and Windmüller (2014) and Rolshoven and Schneider (2018).

5 The choice of the term "material" could be justified on an etymological basis alone, since the Latin term "materia" originally meant (building) wood (Böhme 1995). However, I also chose the term due to the observation of an increasing materialization of culture (Reckwitz 2013: 28) and an interdisciplinary discourse on analytical methods, framings and responsibilities in studying material culture (König 2012). By "material," I mean a physical substance which is processed to a

Rather, ways of origin and use become evident through the focus on the differences and dependencies of material and objects as relational processes of the network of interaction (Beck 1997; Ingold 2007; Meier 2015). How far such an approach is productive, particularly for empirical cultural studies, is reflected, for instance, in folklorist Barbara Michal's master thesis "Holzwege in Plastikwelten",[6] in which she describes, on a broad ethnographic basis, how the ways of perception and use of wood and plastic contrast in the 1980s (Michal 1989). Furthermore, Gottfried Korff draws conclusions from the material to the mental orders of the interwar period in his essay "Holz und Hand" (wood and hand) (Korff 2002). Building on this, I am undertaking a long-term ethnographic study (2016–2022) aimed at revealing individual practices and strategies of use and investment of meaning using the example of wood to analyze current societal processes and prioritizations.

The current text follows these deliberately broad questions to put this up for debate: How is wood currently used and valued? To what extent do cultural anthropological potentials become apparent in the analysis of this material and network of action? Recognizing empirical work as a central strength of cultural anthropology (Leimgruber 2013: 79), I argue in the following using primarily my conversations and (participant) observations to date and representations transmitted in the media. In this contribution, these are condensed into three topic fields: "Material connotations," "argumentative potentials" and "spatial relations." Using these perspectivisms, I discuss to what extent wood is connected to affect, how it links ecology and economy, and how it creates and characterizes spaces. Concretely: in a first step, I investigate how wood is perceived sensorially and affectively and how this effect is triggered individually and strategically. In a second step, I focus on actual arguments "pro wood" which reflect both economic and ecologic political interests that crystallize, for instance, in initiatives for the promotion of urban construction with wood. In the third chapter, I look at the sawmill trade and the spatial dependence of wood trading to discuss how far politics and the (forest) economy determine the perspective on rural space and rationalize their influence.

These very different fields of action are connected via their interest in wood and intent to achieve an affective, economic or political added value through wood as a material, which is caused by its material properties. The analysis of these fields of action allows conclusions to be drawn regarding the extent to which nature functions as an urban capital and rusticity as an urban product, and to what extent wood as a materialization of sustainable action constitutes policies and economies.

materially conceived object (Meier 2015) and which, correspondingly, can be put into perspective in a relational and processual manner in action contexts.

6 A liberal translation could be "Barking up the wrong tree in plastic worlds."

Material connotations – on the relationship between sensing, affect and knowledge

"We have a lot of wood around us. The floors upstairs, for example; that's always nice when you walk around barefoot, or in the living room, the floors, they are made of this oiled wood, oak," says Mrs. K. She sits at a long table made of solid oak with her husband in their open floor plan kitchen. As she speaks, she makes sweeping gestures into the different directions of their three-story home and continues: "Walking across it feels warm, always a bit of a rough structure, it also gives you a haptic sensation, at least for the feet." Her husband takes up her statement and adds: "Warm, soft – yes, funnily enough it even makes me feel soft or sheltered. Which is why we chose wooden floors. And they are clean, too, they are clean to my touch. […] Somehow, they're soft, sheltered, clean, natural. Nature…" Mr. K.'s voice lingers for a moment on this word, then he adds a rather determined, "Yes."

The conversation with the Ks is part of a series: In early 2017, I visited people, primarily parents of grown children, in their town houses or single family homes which they had built in the mid-1990s in the Heilbronn district.[7] The latter was the time when building with wood was undergoing a renaissance (Kaufmann and Nerdinger 2011) and, simultaneously, was "atypical," as Mrs. Ö. emphasized. Together with her husband, she decided to build a house in 1994 with isofloc insulation, an untreated wooden exterior, wood stove, wooden floors and exposed wooden beams. When I asked about their reasons, Mr. Ö. said: "Because wood is a great material" and added: "Nature, warmth, shelter – I just find it visually pleasing." Mrs. M. justified in a similar manner why she built a solid home out of wood, a regionally sourced spruce cut in winter: The "way of building, the ecological aspect" had been important to her and today gave her a "warm, pleasant feeling – just a comfort thing." Her husband said: "Wood just makes it cozy."

I identify the different yet consistently positively connoted attributions to wood as one of the central parallels of this series of conversations. The interviewees conceptualize the material itself partly in a specific function, such as a "floor" or "exterior", predominantly, however, independent of specific objectivations. This observation is noticeable, because material knowledge is generally stored and accessible as object knowledge, as art historian Karl Schawelka points out by remarking that the imaginary isolation of a material from its prototypical objects requires an unusual effort of abstraction (Schawelka 2002: 18).[8] I will discuss to what extent

7 Here, as in the following, I am referring to my transcripts of the conversations with the M.s in Bad Friedrichshall (February 27, 2017) as well as the Ö.s (February 28, 2017) and the K.s (March 1, 2017) in Neckarsulm.

8 That a cultural anthropological investigation of materials refers to positions from art history proves to be inevitable as it is precisely there that approaches are established which analyze the dimensions of use and meaning of materials. See e.g. Rübel and Wagner (2002) and Wagner (2001).

this can be considered a specific characteristic of the material wood, and how the sensory and affective impact potentials of the material are evoked individually and, indeed, strategically using the example of the ascriptions of 'beautiful' and 'warm,' which were referred to in the conversations.[9]

'Beautiful' pertains largely to be a criterion of form and not of the material, as Gernot Böhme points out: Beauty concerns proportions, harmonies, symmetries while materiality seems to be overlooked in this, or the honorary attribution of beauty may even be denied (Böhme 1995: 52f.). This observation, however, also contains the invitation to take the attribution 'beautiful' finally as a measure of the material – even more so since Böhme states an aestheticization of our reality which becomes apparent primarily in an extensive presentation of materiality (Böhme 1995: 51). Using the example of wood and specifically oak timber, the terms of material sanctity, i.e. material significance (Schmidt 1952; Kramer 1962), which have long been established in cultural studies, offer an analytical access in their concretization by Hermann Bausinger. Bausinger establishes the term "actualization" to emphasize that things are, in principal, semantically open and their meaning only becomes apparent in the concrete situation of actual use (Bausinger 2004: 204). Respectively, the material's beauty shows itself in concrete situations and contexts that depend on time, as Mr. T., a carpenter, describes: "You can actually make a time line and say: Here is the oak P43, that's a special shade of oak, rustic oak, […] then came the grey in the 80s when everything was tinted, when everyone wanted to get away from P43, then came the great era of pine."[10] Even one single type of wood can be seen in a contrary manner dependent on time and contextual use: As, on the one hand carpenter H. exclaims: "We're still taking out the last P43 oak kitchens today!" On the other hand, Mr. and Mrs. K. praise the beauty of their oak floors and table – and carpenter H. stresses the current strong demand for oak: "Right now, 80 percent of what is made is oak, more than 80 percent. That's amazing!"

Interpretation, according to Bausinger, means that a certain function or meaning is ascribed to a thing – or material. Accordingly, the interpretation of what appears "beautiful" occurs situationally and is always relative: The interpretation "refreshes something that is already given" as Bausinger puts it (2004: 204). As "given", I consider the potential of oak to appear beautiful as its "actualization" instead of the individual appearance of the oak wood: While oak in the shade P43 is now considered rustic and outdated, the "natural shade" of oak is currently considered beautiful. How a material is connoted, thus, proves to depend on the temporal and spatial contexts and individual, i.e. cultural knowledge. Böhme speaks of the

9 Barbara Michal states that wood was primarily given positive attributions in the late 1980s as well (1989: 63f.), however, she does not interpret this further in that instance.

10 Here, as in the following, I cite from a conversation with Mr. T., carpenter and general manager, at his carpentry in Reutlingen on February 20, 2017.

societal characteristics of the material and points to the specifics of material perception. He states that the material's aesthetic is caused neither by an investigation of the material nor by any objective interaction with it but is sensed atmospherically. According to Böhme, we sense the material because its atmosphere enters our affectivities, and we sense the presence of the materials in a particular way (Böhme 1995: 54).

This is reflected in the interviewees' statements by the expression "warm". They seem to use "warm" to grasp an initially sensory impression that has a simultaneous affective connotation. They specify the warmth of the wood in its "warm surface" which is "nice to touch" (Mrs. K.) or in the moment of its processing "when it warms up and has a scent" (Mr. K.). The warmth also has a lot to do with the visual, when wood is called a living material, and that its grain not only reflects the species of wood, but also its growth. The reference to "nature" (Mrs. Ö; Mr. K.) ensuing here appears as an affective semantic addition which corresponds to the sensory perception and is conditioned by knowledge. Precisely because they know that (and how) wood grows, the interview partners see traces of this in the wood and value it as a symbol of becoming, of nature and of warmth.[11] In a similar way, Jean Baudrillard ascribes a hidden warmth to the wood which, according to him, results from the fact that wood is so strongly desired by an emotional nostalgia, because it gains its substance from the earth, because it lives, breathes and works (Baudrillard 2007: 50).

I conceive "warm" (as I do of all other attributions) not in an essentialist way as an objective or measurable material property (Ingold 2000: 340; Meier 2015: 24). Rather, I assume that the warmth of the wood becomes evident in practical use and that it can be generated or evoked accordingly by people who set up their own living space and by those who do this professionally for others. Exemplarily, carpenter H., who says that he can create a "warmer impression" when using wood:

> Whether it was the wagon wheels in the 70s which people put in their gardens because otherwise it would just be green and bulldozed or whether it is the furniture made of old wood in a completely styled white [apartment with] concrete floors, concrete walls – here I just need something, well, that sounds strange, but – something for the soul. And then wood comes to mind.

According to this, there are materials ("concrete") or ways of design ("bulldozed") which produce an "atmosphere of cold" (Böhme 1995: 55). By contrast, wood, with its sensory-affective reference to warmth and nature, appears as a (strategically employable) material which brings the seemingly natural into the private living space. Correspondingly, I consider the creation of a (warm) atmosphere to depend on cognitive, sensory and – very centrally – affective processes. Monique Scheer emphasizes that we do not 'have' emotions, but 'do' them, not in the sense of an

11 Cf. here Konrad Köstlin's considerations on the wooden ballpoint pen (2017).

intentional action but in the sense of 'doing' in performativity and practice theory. Because this 'doing' is always connected to other practices, as she points out, these complexes of practice facilitate an access to investigate affects in cultural anthropological research (Scheer 2016: 16f.). Residential living (with wood) proves to be such a complex of practices, as it is characterized by its integration into cultural contexts and their everyday practices. At present, this can be exemplified in the rising demand for "old wood." Mr. H. says about this topic:

> That's old barns, old houses, and old sheds, whatever. The producer imports that from Austria or Slovenia […], that's re-sawn old beams with worms, sometimes still with a nail in it. People would probably even favor something with shrapnel still in it; it's somehow fascinating: I have a story here.

Wood carries the traces of both its growth and its use. They are visually and haptically perceptible. In no small part, this is how the personified, connoted connection between wood and history, which currently fascinates people and, at the same time, seems timeless, is constituted: Even Walter Benjamin called wood a material of desire which references past times (Benjamin 1969: 63). Gottfried Korff, who sees the anti-modern aspects of wood especially in its proximity to artisanal work, refers to this (Korff 2002: 168f.). It is precisely this which becomes a sort of capital today, as observes carpenter H.: "A large share of it is – is not buying off the rack, we always notice that, we still draw by hand which is supposedly so slow. People notice that."

If wood bears connotative references to nature, history and trade, then we must recognize that these refer to a certain "potentiality." Bausinger uses this term to describe the historic-cultural charge of an object (or a material) that 'can' – but does not have to – be evoked and refreshed because it reaches into the people's horizon of thinking and living – or it does not (Bausinger 2004: 208). If there is a current interest in wood, then this has not only something to do with its sensory-affective effects, but also with the knowledge about its material properties. The fact that wood is renewable and absorbs carbon dioxide makes it an attractive and modern material. It becomes evident in the conversation with carpenter T. to what extent potentiality and knowledge correlate:

> Fifty to a hundred years ago, one went to a carpenter and he told you what was beautiful. […] Today, people come in and know and say: Oak is beautiful. That is a different knowledge: The spread of information via the internet, via television. Today, the customer only half selects based on their own taste, the other half is mainstream.

I consider not only the recommendation by the carpenter, but also the knowledge communicated via the media as part of the aesthetic economy with which Böhme frames the economic potential of subjective desire. In Böhme's words, because capitalism is a form of economy which can only stabilize itself through growth, its base is not needed in the true sense of the word but rather desired. Particularly in

developed capitalism, he writes, in which needs are generally satisfied, triggering and increasing desire gains a growing importance and, thus, capitalism became the aesthetic economy (Böhme 1995: 64).Setting up an apartment or building a house prove to be paradigmatic fields of aesthetic economies, individual consuming and practices of production, i.e. they prove to be part of (and a way of access to) economic structures (Poehls 2016: 58) which, in the case of "living with wood," link private with political practices and urban with rural spaces.

Culturally coded material connotations, such as 'warmth,' 'beauty,' 'craft' and 'nature,' can be situationally evoked, produced and refreshed. It becomes evident in the analytical context of living with wood what Hermann Heidrich terms as the reciprocity of material culture (Heidrich 2007: 34), that man and object, respectively material, command an ability for action which develops situationally and relationally. Those who built a house in the 1990s and used wood decided to use it because of its material properties, and among those, I also count those affective, sensorially perceptible specifics which are attached to wood by connotation and can be used not only intuitively, but also, as will become evident in the following, for political and economic arguments.

Argumentative potentials – on the interlocking of economy and ecology

The website initially shows a large entrance hall: An exterior glass wall, black slabs on the floor. Walls, ceiling, counter and partitions are made of wooden boards in varying shades of brown.[12] "An impressive foyer at first sight," comments the text that is displayed. Then there is movement in the scene: A penguin waddles into the picture. After only a few steps, it stops, tilts its head and stretches its beak. It seems to sniff, to ogle, to check for a few seconds, then it turns away and disappears again behind the wooden walls. The text that is displayed then adds to the first one and corrects: "More precisely, a building in which one feels comfortable." Whoever clicks on the writing is diverted to a subpage which explains "why wood is good for people and climate": Wood smells good, is pleasant to touch, exudes warmth, regulates temperature, humidity and draughts, and, furthermore, reduces carbon dioxide and, thus, protects the climate.

The websites described here are part of the proHolzBW, a society that is 90 percent financed through public funds and aims to improve visibility and cooperation along the value chain of wood in Baden-Württemberg. The society pursues primarily economic and economic-political intentions. In order to achieve these, however, it does not use only economic but primarily ecological arguments: Texts and images are designed as a plea for building with wood and personal concerns are argumentatively

12 Accessed December 6, 2017. Available at: http://www.proholzbw.de.

linked with societal ideals. Such as the visualization of a penguin and Swiss pine bed[13] suggests: Those who build with wood live healthier lives, and save the world and money, too. The guiding principle of healthy living (quieter sleep) stands alongside the one of cost saving (through low energy standard) and climate protection (recycling, cascading use, CO2 absorption).

Starting from such economic uses of ecological arguments, this chapter discusses to what extent wood can function as a concretization, even a substitute for sustainability and how this correlation is used economically and in terms of the 'politics' of economy.[14] The basis of this is the observation made by Markus Tauschek that not only the idea of finite, but also of renewable resources is the result of complex processes of negotiation that are shot through with power relationships (Tauschek 2015: 14).

There are action-generating intents and potentials which are primarily based on the impact of the ecological in the conceptualization of this argumentative nexus of economy and ecology. These are reflected in the advertisement for wood by economically oriented initiatives, such as proHolzBW. The term 'ecological' has developed into a word that is as attractive as it is affective – not least since numerous products, above all foodstuffs, have been declared 'eco because ecology, alongside the economy and social issues, has become of the three central fields of the sustainability agenda. While the term initially describes the interchanging relationships between living beings and their environment, it currently carries additional connotations which reference the 'ecologically sensible,' 'ecologically justifiable' and, consequently, environmentally conscious action. This broad and lifeworld-oriented use of the term of the ecological is also phenomenologically evident in the area of economic activity (and argumentation) with wood that is focused on here. In its analysis, the term always remains a concept from the field which – analogous to the term 'climate change' - can be studied as a communicative practice (Dietzsch 2017: 29).

Accordingly, the political levels also promote wood – both for economic 'and' for eco-political reasons: Alongside a strengthening of the economy in rural areas, as is discussed in the following chapter, achieving climate targets proves to be the main political issue. Councils, states and the United Nations have equally made it into a measure of their work. This political aspiration and the shift of the argumentative potential from the economic to the ecological can be reflected in the charter for wood. Its first version was outlined in a primarily economic manner in 2004

13 With her ethnographic study of the Swiss pine wood bed, Ana Rogojanu demonstrates that the use of (Swiss pine) wood correlates with societal prioritizations such as "health orientation," a "trend back towards nature" and a "scientification of everyday life" (Rogojanu 2015: 188f.; Ionescu 2009).

14 Not only wood, but also clay is currently experiencing a revival due to reasons of sustainability (Hemme 2017).

under the title of "Increased Use of Wood." In 2017, the charter 2.0 followed using its core aims as a title – "Protecting the Climate. Creating Value. Using Resources Efficiently" – which address, in the words of Christian Schmidt, the former Federal Minister for Food and Agriculture, the "central challenges of our time" (BMEL 2017: 3) and link the ecological with the moral – and the wood. Schmidt underlines the relevance of wood for German, European, even international politics, as he implements an aspiration of the Federal climate protection plan with this charter, which, in turn, references the agreement of the UN climate conference (BMEL 2017: 3). Correspondingly, the perspectivation of the charter for wood is global, while its fields of action are small-scale. Even though these are similar in both variants of the charter, their argumentative potential is used differently in each case: While the first charter still emphasizes the economic relevance of wood, the second used predominantly its ecological strengths to serve economic and political interests similarly. The specific fields of funding of the charter for wood 2.0, for instance, aim at extending the potential of the ecological economy and research on wood or at increasing the use of wood in construction.[15] The aspirations are linked, particularly in the latter case, and the economic potential of ecological arguments becomes evident.

Wood was used for construction very early on because of its spatial availability. However, at the beginning of the modern era, it was replaced by building materials such as steel, brick and concrete. Construction with wood is currently undergoing a 'renaissance' which results primarily from, as Kaufmann and Nerdinger observe, the global awareness of the conservation of resources and the observation of ecological principles (2011: 5). While in the 1990s, six percent of detached and semi-detached houses were built with wood, the number now stands at roughly 18 percent (BMEL 2017: 18). This boom has also been observed by Mr. E., carpenter and managing director of a wood construction company that manufactures extensions, developments and new buildings:

> We are looking at our CO2 emissions, and wood as a renewable resource is interesting in many respects […] we notice that also because of an increase in demand. Thus, if one looks at the number of detached houses in the last few years, the share of construction with wood has grown continuously. […] And I think that we in Southern Germany will also increasingly deal with multi-story construction with wood, which, up to now, has been a classic domain of solid construction, and in that, too, we are increasingly entering the market. […] All these building techniques have been

15 Particular (political and economic) attention is paid here to the incorporation of digital technologies and procedures in architecture and construction with wood under the keyword "wood 4.0." Aimed at economic practices and (material and ideal) future systems of order, the digital connection of organizations and the management of the entire value chain as well as the life cycles of products are intended to increase. Effects of "digitization" and "industry 4.0" in the action network of wood can be exemplified both in planning and construction processes as well as in changing (family) business structures (May 2018a, 2018b).

> continuously refined. […] And then also this entire wood industry, it continues to develop new surfaces, new products, that is really quite fascinating.[16]

The changes which Mr. E. mentions link the different fields, since here the interests of the developers meet those of the state, and those from research and industry meet those from the trades. Even though they have different motives, all these professional groups position themselves towards the material properties which are currently mentioned most often – wood is renewable and absorbs CO2 – to profit from it. This becomes evident at the state level when, for instance, minister Peter Hauk praises Baden-Württemberg as "wood construction state number one" (MLR 2017b); or when his ministry funds a research project and announces in this context publicly that it will standardize multi-story construction with wood and hence promote the construction of multi-family homes in urban contexts (May 2018b; MLR 2017a). For it is precisely in these urban contexts, that there are only a few examples or light house projects of such constructions (BMEL 2017: 18). These, therefore, have a special communicative potential, such as in Heilbronn: In the lead-up to the national horticultural exhibition 2019, the currently highest wood (hybrid) house in Germany is being built. The cellar, the base level and the staircase must be made of reinforced concrete. The rest of the house is developed from cross-laminated timber. The ten-level construction is called "Skaio," will stand 34 meters high and will be the first wooden construction to exceed the German norm for high-rise buildings. The narrative which regional newspapers present for its construction differs: Bärbel Kistner writes in the *Heilbronner Stimme* that the council building society had a great interest in high quality and, not least, economically sustainable real estate and, therefore, in construction with wood (Kistner 2017); whereas Brigitte Fritz-Kador, writing for the *Rhein-Neckar-Zeitung*, finds that Heilbronn's mayor had pushed the contract into the very bones of the building society because he wanted the high-rise wooden building to be realized as an innovative and prestigious construction project in order to live up to the aspiration as an innovative city exhibition in 2019 (Fritz-Kador 2017).

That innovative wooden houses are currently prestigious is also evident in Freiburg, where the main association of farmers in Baden erected an innovative four-story wooden construction framed by glass. "The association is seen as very conservative, so it was a surprise to many that we built something like this," says Mr. W., the association's education officer.[17] For him, however, it had seemed natural because "we have many wood farmers in our association." Historically speaking, wood has been an important building material in the region. What was new was

16 Conversation with Mr. E., carpenter and managing director, in Reutlingen on February 21, 2017.

17 As part of a seminar, I organized a visit to the Haus der Bauern in Freiburg for June 29, 2017. The direct and indirect quotes come from my field notes during the roughly two-hour tour guided by W., the organization's educational consultant.

mainly the size and dimension of the building and its aesthetics: "We wanted to have an internal celebration the first day, but the neighbors stood there and wanted in. So, we did tours until eleven o'clock at night," Mr. W. remembers.

As is evident in these 'lighthouse projects' that what is built of wood evokes attention which is constituted in a multivalent and indeed political manner and utilized in different ways. It is founded in the material connotations which here can be termed as 'ecologically sensible,' 'economically sustainable' or 'spectacular in terms of material.' These are not new connotative fields but investments in meaning by politically or economically motivated people who refer to arguments based on ecological sustainability and the corresponding future orientation of wood.

Gottfried Korff points out in his analysis of the use of wood in the interwar era that material meaning originates from investments of meaning which have to be actively undertaken. They must not be arbitrary but situationally plausible and connectable (Korff 2002: 179). Correspondingly, the new connotations of wood as 'ecologically sensible' and 'economically sustainable' function because they connect to the established connotative nexus of wood and nature. This investment of meaning is outlined both affectively and cognitively and finds expression in small-scale fields of action, for instance, in the new construction of an association's house or in the awarding of showcase projects as part of a city exhibition. Here, too, wood in its referencing of nature and future proves to be the argumentative capital of those who operate right at the front of urban political and economic fields.

Spatial relations – on the constitution of influence and value

Boards, weathered and grey, with bits of moss in the deep growth rings, are jammed between slats whose light wood presents a clear contrast to the dark branch bases. Screws press the timbers together; they form rows and overlap, form objects the size of suitcases as well as constructions which take up an entire hall. Light falls on the installation from above. It emphasizes the different shades and structures of the material which Liang Shuo has chosen for his first individual exhibition in Europe: wood.[18]

When the artist from Tianjin, China, followed the invitation from the Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden, he initially explored the city and its surroundings to find the topic of his exhibition. He decided to present a landscape: Forests, valleys and a mountain range of waste timber. Individual nails and metal fittings tell a tale of their different prior use: As floorboards in the church in Rastatt castle or as cladding for a ceiling in the now demolished gym in the Bühlertal. In a conversation

18 Here, as in the following, I refer to photographs and notes which I took during my visit to Liang Shuo's exhibition DISTANT TANTAMOUNT MOUNTAIN on October 13, 2017. The Staatliche Kunsthalle Baden-Baden showed this exhibition from July 22 to October 15, 2017.

with Johan Holten, the director of the Kunsthalle, Shuo specifies: "For DISTANT TANTAMOUNT MOUNTAIN it seemed most appropriate to use lumber from the region. Baden-Baden is surrounded by forests" (Holten 2017). Shuo's installations are seen as temporary encounters with spatial contexts. In Baden-Baden, he negotiates local relevancies in their global relation, asks about individual traces in the material, and reflects their cycle of use and value:

> During the process of preparation, I was also pondering the masses of timber I had seen in the region, most of it was used for construction. While it's easy to work with, it's also very indefinite. I asked myself if it might be possible to express something entirely different with this kind of lumber. (Holten 2017).

Shuo looks at the Black Forest with an outsider's view: By exhibiting the landscape – forest, mountain, barrenness – through used, seemingly worthless wood, he reflects local practices and prioritizations in dealing with the wood which, ever since the decisive phase of settlement of the Black Forest between the 11th and 13th centuries, has been seen as its most important artisanal and trade good. Wood processing trades also have an important function today that is not merely economic, but also political and, as seen with Shuo, visually noticeable.

I study this using the example of the action field of private saw mills and state forest administration to discuss how politics and the (forest) economy provide a perspective on rural space, how they rationalize their influence and, lastly, to what extent wood constitutes spaces.[19] My argumentation is based once again on a series of conversations: I contacted numerous saw mills within and around the edges of the Black Forest in the fall of 2017.[20] The central similarity is initially the (time) pressure which was communicated by the company directors. Aside from flat refusals, they primarily expressed their request that I come back another time or ask someone else – thus also in the R. sawmill: "You can look around as much as you like, I just don't have any time," says Mr. R. His facial expression and body tension reflect the pressure that the carpenter is under who manages the sawmill in the third generation. His uncle, who has been in the business for more than sixty years, finally shows me round the company and makes statements such as: "That long one there, he can work, he comes from a family of sawyers," or "without that hall over there, we wouldn't be around anymore" and, finally, "After my nephew it's over, and he's already 55. We don't buy any more machines. Something like this isn't set up by

19 To what extent for instance (culinary) objects constitute space is demonstrated in several instances by Bernhard Tschofen (2007; May and Tschofen 2016).

20 In the following, I refer to my conversations and observations on November 11 and 16, 2017 on the grounds of the R. sawmill at the Eastern fringe of the Black Forest as well as to the interview with Mr. H., an employee of ForstBW in the wood sales business, on October 26, 2017. What is noticeable is that the interview partners only wanted to be quoted in an anonymous manner and without specific locations.

anyone any more, at the most it will be bought up." For Mr. H., a long-term employee of ForstBW, the family business R. is one of the smaller sawmills, meaning that it cuts between 100 and 200 solid cubic meters per year – big ones, on the other hand, would cut between two and three million solid cubic meters in the same time. Only a few small family-operated saw mills remain, and those also continue to decrease, says Mr. H.: "Sawmills are dying out at a massive rate. […] We have pretty much the same price per cubic meter of wood as we did 25 years ago. And if you know what has happened over the last 25 years with energy costs, the salaries, then you know where the sawyers are at." The economic situation of the sawmills was difficult because "they are competing with a world market" and Germany imported wood products ("paper, wood pulp, boards, beer coasters") instead of using "domestic resources," says Mr. H. The sawmills had to produce in an industrial manner and continuously extend to be able to stand their ground in this competition. However, he explains, in doing so, many mills reached historically caused spatial limits:

> All the sawmills are originally located in Baden-Württemberg somewhere in close proximity to water because they have always used water for power. And water usually flows in the valley, and the valley is narrow, and that's all there is to say about it. That means: They have always only been able to extend lengthwise, there simply wasn't the space to respond to the requirements which humanity today has of wood as a product. For instance, today hardly anybody takes sawn timber which has not been dried artificially. That has something to do with it being easier to transport, it doesn't go moldy, there are some norms. […] A sawyer in the Black Forest can't do that. He simply doesn't have the space to set up a drying chamber. He just can't.

Spatial, technical and financial reasons led to the closure of more and more sawmills in Baden-Württemberg. My conversations and local newspaper reports, however, paint a further narrative of reasons according to which it was primarily interpersonal relationships in the wood trade which lead to economic bottlenecks and the closure of mills: The *Badische Zeitung*, for instance, explains the end of the saw mill in Rötenbach with reference to the managing director with the insufficient provision to the business of raw materials, which had persisted for years (Schilling 2012). The sawmill in Herbrechtingen had also placed its hopes on improved circumstances, on consistent purchase prices and price increases on the sales side for a long time. Its managing director believes the forest industry and politicians have a shared responsibility for the closure of the sawmill (Fordaq 2011).

The wood marketing in Baden-Württemberg (as well as in other states) has been criticized for years in a way that becomes tangible in the figure of the 'integrated forest manager.' It stems from the fact that state foresters do not only manage the state forest, but also the municipal and private forests, and they take care of forest maintenance and the sale of the wood. By doing so, it was alleged that the state forest distorted the open competition in the sale of roundwood. In

the case of Baden-Württemberg, this concerns the work of Mr. H., among others. As an employee of ForstBW, he works in wood sales. When he describes his perspective on wood sales, it becomes apparent what a decisive function the space and, thus, spatially determined trade relationships have:

> Wood is, and many forget that, an enormously cost-intensive product in terms of transport. Wood is heavy, weighs almost a ton per solid cubic meter. This means that the opportunity to transport wood for large distances falls away *per se*. This leads to a completely different customer relationship than in private enterprise. When I produce car tires, shoe soles, men's underwear, I can do that in China and sell in Japan or in Central Europe. When I have wood, it has to be an extremely valuable wood if it can take transport for more than 150 kilometers.

This leads to economic dependencies in a spatially limited area: The state foresters need sawmills to buy their wood, but the saw mill operators – up to now – are forced to buy from the state enterprises. Mr. H. says about this:

> If I said before that wood is a product that has high transport costs, then we and the customers are also not completely free in our selection. Think of the 150 kilometers! If they want to buy a lot of wood, then they can't get around us either.

About a hundred people act in this spatially constituted network of wood purchase and sales in Baden-Württemberg. Most of them are those who buy the wood so that the corresponding structural and subjective rules of the sellers prove to be more potent. Thus, Mr. H.'s self-made rules can serve as an example: He praises loyalty as a central value of his business relationships and maintains corresponding customer relationships – or freezes them. He justifies his motivation with the properties of the material he deals with: Wood was dependent on "natural events," and he names "bugs, storm and drought" as factors with which he can never calculate but always needs to calculate with:

> I would like to sustainably serve the customers who work very closely with us, whom I can also call and say: I have this problem, my forest just fell over. I think of this to a degree as sustainable cooperation. I can't use those, I call them vultures somewhat derogatively, who will only call me if they know I have something to sell more cheaply.

The conflicts of these trade relationships are not least founded in the fact that there are always large sums of money involved in the wood trade. "I had this customer yesterday with whom I made an annual contract – in the ball park of 50,000 solid cubic meters, which amounts to 150,000 Euro for one Euro up or down. So that's a lot of money, for me, that's a lot of money," says Mr. H.

While it is always an implicit part of the negotiations, it now becomes apparent that, aside from affective and ecological values, there are also financial values attached to the wood which, in turn, constitute their own logics of action. In the 'wood state' of Baden-Württemberg, they become evident as power relations between

state and private as well as urban and rural fields of action: The sawmill operators, particularly those who had to shut down their companies, hold the state responsible. Mr. H., who acts as a representative of the state, stresses that "the rural population is furious by now," because the spatial difference also proves to be a difference in influence: "We live in a democracy. It is completely naïve to believe that any politician will campaign for something that does not lead them directly to be reelected."

At the same time, government representatives – at least as part of their public image – emphasize their interest and involvement in economic practices in the rural area. Minister Hauk has recently been quoted as saying that it was their aim to provide space for net products and employment particularly in the rural area, and further, that no other state government had placed such comprehensive modern wood topics into the center of political action (MLR 2017b). Particularly in representative contexts, the minister and his employees emphasize the relevance of regional wood, which is predominantly economically justified but also has an affirmative and identity creating effect. In it, I see a mode to verbally shape the (rural) space: Speaking about the economic potential and the specific quality of regional wood can not only affectively characterize individual occupations, but also entire regions. Thus, spatially outlined, imaginative orders can be generated as powerful social constructs.

I consider Liang Shuo's installation to be a reflection of these. Two days after my visit to Baden-Baden, the employees of the Staatliche Kunsthalle took it down. Even when he conceptualized the installation, Shuo thought about this moment and stated: "That means that after the course of the exhibition, when the installation has come down, all the material will still be just plain old wood. It can return to its ordinary cycle. After the exhibition it will no longer be art, but simply wood" (Holten 2017).

Shuo reflected the local value of the wood by varying and thematizing its forms of use. It may be a specific competence of art to bring out material through de- and recontextualizing it, through suspending its purposefulness and releasing it from its object prototypability (Schawelka 2002) to, thus, put the cultural forms of use and meaning and the cultural biography of a material up for discussion (Kopytoff 1986). In my opinion, however, it shares this competence with empirically working cultural studies, because this discipline, by means of thick description of the micro level, is also able to make statements about a potential meta material such as wood.

Meta, mega, micro – wood as a field of study, a perspectivation

Wood, as the ethnographic foray of this text has shown, constitutes affects and trade, objects and landscapes, programs of action oriented at the future and historically founded connotations, local and global, and private and political processes. Wood is said to be the oldest building material and is, particularly at present, advertised as a renewable raw material, an uncontaminated building material and one that is

versatile in its uses. The line of argument of this text is founded on the observation that there are manifold ways of action and multivalent forms of meaning that are simultaneously attached to the wood, and it discussed this observation using the examples of three densifications.

Under the keyword of 'material connotations,' I showed, firstly, that the extent to which wood is linked with affect continues to play a central role in the exemplary field of private living, in its furnishing and design: Starting from the connotations 'warm' and 'beautiful,' I demonstrated how sensory respectively atmospheric perception and individual knowledge, and knowledge transmitted by the media is involved in the constitution of affective connotations. The reference of wood to 'nature' proved to be central in this. Secondly, this connotative connection is the basis of the 'potentials for argumentation' of wood as a material. It proves to be the basis of the investment of meaning which is presently undertaken by economic and political fields, with the aim of stylizing and promoting wood as a materialization of sustainable ideals and ways of action. In this, the perspective on state funding structures and municipal policies made apparent that wood functions as a stand-in for nature, respectively sustainability, primarily as urban capital. Thirdly, I placed this observation under the perspective of 'space relationships' in connection to the action field of wood sales and purchase, which outlines the value of the wood in a certainly contrasting manner to that of the idealized economic-ecological images of desire of the previous fields. The trade of round wood constitutes spatially limited trade relationships because of its transport limitations in which the power relationships between the people and organizations involved in the trade network become clearly apparent. Here, too, wood proves to be the capital of state offices and enterprises which employ the material strategically – not only economically, but also communicatively – in order to govern the rural space.

I understand these simultaneities which are attached to and constituted by wood as potentials which demand and, simultaneously, challenge a cultural anthropological study, as wood as a meta material[21] presents a mega topic which also decidedly points to the methodological potentials of a discipline specializing in micro analyses. The considerations outlined here are initially the beginnings of a "studying through" (Shore and Wright 1997) with which I ask the network of action around wood in everyday lifeworlds about its economic and ecological, individual, societal and political prioritizations. A special potential in this lies in taking wood with its material specific properties seriously, as its forms of use and meaning prove to be variable and ambiguous and, therefore, do not lead to simple but to manifold

21 Borrowing from Daniel Miller, who, in turn, takes recourse to Malcom Quinn's "meta symbol" and conceives a trade good (Coca Cola) as a "meta commodity" which is representative of economies and markets (Miller 1998: 170).

contexts, according to which cultural orders, societal prioritizations, economic strategies and political potentials can be traced as simultaneities.

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Order, archive, share*

Research data in the ethnological disciplines

Abstract: 'Research data management' is booming. Urgently demanded and driven by such diverse actors as research funding institutions, who are interested in quality control and the efficient use of data, or the 'Open' movements, who advocate free access to knowledge, ethnologists and cultural anthropologists meet this topic with reluctance and often with skepticism. Rightly so, on the one hand, since the archiving of data and, above all, the intended reuse of data by third parties raise a number of practical, legal and ethical questions. On the other hand, the question of how digital data can be organized and especially permanently preserved and used is virulent also in the ethnological disciplines. In any case, the debate on the subject is urgent because overarching regulatory processes have long since been set in motion.

This contribution discusses different aspects of the debate on data management and sketches problem areas, open questions and opportunities which can arise for the ethnological disciplines. Not least, the changing conditions of knowledge production and circulation which occur alongside the establishment of digital techniques and technologies require historical contextualization. Therefore, this contribution also attempts a discipline-specific historical categorization.

Keywords: Ethnography, research data management, data policies, data archiving, secondary use of research data, scientific history of cultural anthropology.

Even though pen and paper maintain their presence, particularly in fieldwork, these days it is predominantly digital data that originates in almost any kind of research. According to the wishes of the research funding bodies, such research data in all disciplines should, in the future, not only be stored, evaluated, combined and interpreted, but also managed, archived on a long-term basis, exchanged as freely as possible and made available for future use.[1] However, what is called for under the term 'research data management' in science policy, what has often already been prepared in terms of technology and, in some disciplines, has already been practiced

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1 Cf. the brief notes, available at: https://www.fwf.ac.at/de/forschungsfoerderung/open-access-policy/(accessed December 13, 2018) for Austria, and for Germany, for example, available at: http://www.dfg.de/download/pdf/foerderung/antragstellung/forschungsdaten/richtlinien_forschungsdaten.pdf. Accessed December 13, 2018.

for a long time is only gradually becoming evident in the methodological, research ethical and discipline-specific political debates of the ethnological disciplines and their specialist societies.[2] In the following, with the intention of contributing to this debate, some aspects of what is discussed in terms of 'research data management' and of how the developments are framed by science policy will be outlined. This will be followed by observations on the use of the term 'data' in the ethnological disciplines themselves, because, currently, it seems unclear what is to be understood as 'research data' in the ethnological disciplines. Finally, the question of which forms of secondary uses have been practiced in the ethnological disciplines to date and where the potential of data archiving for future use may lie will be investigated. The main focus will be on contemporary ethnographic fieldwork, nevertheless, similar questions may arise for contemporary history and microhistory research in terms of methods and emerging forms of data.

The main basis for this contribution are an online survey, interviews and many informal conversations with researchers of different status groups from the ethnological disciplines, research in the environment of research data repositories, and the observation of scientific policy debates and positioning which I was able to carry out within the framework of the *Fachinformationsdienst Sozial- und Kulturanthropologie* (FID; 'Specialized Information Service for Social and Cultural Anthropology').[3]

Beyond this, considering data management in a discipline – historical horizon also offers starting points for a reflection on the associated changes more as a part of a scientific and methodological development, not least concerning aspects driven by technology and science policy. In this sense, my primary concern in the following is to outline problem areas and name open questions. The development of specific, accepted and feasible solutions, and of elaborated strategies of data management for research practice in the ethnological disciplines requires further work, discussion and critical monitoring.

1. Notes on the debate

Petra Gehring, philosopher and current chairwoman of the *Rat für Informationsinfrastrukturen* (RfII; 'German Council for Scientific Information Infrastructures'),

2 'Ethnological disciplines' here means both the tradition of folklore studies/European ethnology and anthropology/ethnology.

3 The FID is located at the university library of the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin and has been funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) since 2016 as part of the *Fachinformationsdienste für die Wissenschaft* program. In addition to myself, the project group includes information scientist Wjatscheslaw Sterzer and Matthias Harbeck, who heads the FID as subject librarian for ethnology at the university library. The FID is 'in charge of' the disciplinary groups of Ethnology and European ethnology; in addition to the topic of research data management, the work also includes other fields and services of information supply, for example, the licensing of online offers of publishers and the development of the disciplinary portal EVIFA. Cf. Harbeck (2018).

has recently written that digital change is still underestimated in reference to the sciences.[4] She pointed out that many of the new possibilities are faced with far-reaching changes in everyday research practice and methodologies in all disciplinary cultures and that, along with the quality of the methods, it was research itself that was at stake. Thus, in her words, research data management became the decisive enabling condition for research in general (Gehring 2018). The latter does not necessarily have to be seen as a special characteristic of digitized science (cf. Zedelmaier 2015) to recognize that digitality not only creates new fields for ethnographic research and permeates established research fields to a large degree, but that digital technologies and their tools have long since changed – and will continue to change – everyday research life and research practice.[5] This is the case even if one does not work with genuinely computer-aided "digital methods."[6] 'Research data management' is, therefore, initially a more or less bulky label under which various aspects of dealing with digitality in the sciences can be subsumed and conceptually linked: Firstly, there are a number of practical research problems, such as the ordering, organization and backup of data and files, data exchange and the joint use of data in research groups, and the implications of different software used. Under the heading of 'long-term archiving', negotiations are conducted to ascertain how volatile digital data can be preserved persistently across rapid technological change and how long 'long-term' can or should be, additionally, where – in the sense of actual storage space – files can be stored as permanently as possible and who is responsible for controlling the data. While, in this case, it is still the basic operations of knowledge production, searching and collecting, administering, processing and safeguarding of material that are concerned, data management, thirdly, also aims for something else: According to the DFG's *Leitlinien zum Umgang mit Forschungsdaten* ('Guidelines for the Handling of Research Data') (DFG 2015), for example, the long-term safeguarding and provision of research data should contribute to the traceability and quality of scientific work and opens up important possibilities for the connectivity of further research. This means, on the one hand, new forms of verifiability and quality control and, on the other hand, the reuse of data by third parties for the development and treatment of new research questions and, ultimately, increased efficiency of publicly funded research. Similar data should not be collected more

4 The RfII, set up by the Joint Science Conference of the Federal Government and the Länder (GWK) in Germany, has been working since 2014. It provides policy advice and, with a view to the development of information infrastructures in Germany, is intended to elaborate positions and mediate them in European and international debates. Available at: http://www.rfii.de/de/der-rat/. Accessed September 15, 2018.

5 On this topic, see Roger Sanjek (2016) and the report by Gertraud Koch (in print) on the change of media, respectively, the technical equipment used over the course of her own academic work since graduation.

6 On the critique of the term see Raunig and Höfler (2018).

than once but rather 'used' more than once and as soon as possible after the completion of a project.[7] The call for and funding of data management and the necessary technical infrastructures are, therefore, also an element of the economization of academic knowledge production (cf. Audehm et al. 2015). At the same time, however, the contrary intentions of the 'Open' movements are also coming into play. In the spirit of 'Open Science,' the promise of more participation, justice and innovation is also expected to be kept (Scholl 2017). Here too, for example, under the slogan Öffentliches *Geld* – Öffentliches *Gut* ('Public Funds – Public Good'), a demand is made that content financed from tax money should be freely available for further use and not only for reception.[8] The overall aim is nothing less than the establishment of a new 'data culture' in academia, i.e. a cultural change in all disciplines towards a self-evident opening of data and data sharing as well as the necessary data management.[9] One also often likes to think big in terms of technology: In Austria, the *e-Infrastructures Austria* project is working on the infrastructural connection of nine universities and other research institutions; in Germany, a *Nationale Forschungsdateninfrastruktur* ('National Research Data Infrastructure') is to be established; and the European Commission has been planning the development of a *European Open Science Cloud* for several years.[10]

Saving Data. On current practice in the ethnologies

Surveys on the current handling of research data in recent years, however, have painted a somewhat sobering picture for many disciplines when measured against the high expectations and far-reaching plans.[11] There are often no standards for data archiving that are recognized and shared across disciplines, nor are there data

7 See Imeri, Harbeck and Sterzer (2018) on the different levels of handling research data: Process-accompanying data management, long-term archiving and reuse, and the contributions in Büttner and Hobohm (2011) on different aspects of research data management.

8 Cf., for example, a panel discussion entitled *Öffentliches Geld? Öffentliches Gut!* on September 21, 2018, in Berlin, organized by the Wikimedia Deutschland association. The video recording is available at: https://www.wikimedia.de/wiki/Monsters_of_Law_-_Crashkurs_für_die_Wiki-Welt (Accessed October 16, 2018).

9 The cultural change desired is often associated with a generational change, as emphasized by several of the lecturers at a recent event held by the *Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung* ('Federal Ministry for Education and Research') in Berlin entitled *Forschungsdatenmanagement – künftige Entwicklungen und aktuelle Fragen der Wissenschaft* ('Research Data Management – Future Developments and Current Questions in Science').

10 Available at: https://www.e-infrastructures.at/de, http://www.rfii.de/de/themen/, https://ec.europa.eu/research/openscience/index.cfm?pg=open-science-cloud. Accessed September 18, 2018.

11 Cf. Technische Informationsbibliothek ('Technical Information Library'), Hannover, FIZ Chemie Berlin, Universität Paderborn (TIB 2010) for Chemistry and Heinrich et al. (2014) for Classical Studies.

repositories which would be needed in which research data can be archived in a way that is adequate for the discipline, in which it can be maintained in a permanently traceable manner and, last but not least, it can be referenced by assigning persistent identifiers.[12] The ethnologies are no exception here: According to the survey by the FID Sozial- und Kulturanthropologie, data from completed research is stored primarily on computers, hard drives, USB sticks or commercial cloud services, and it is hardly possible to speak of long-term or even systematic data backup. Data maintenance in this way occurs individually and rather randomly and – particularly regarding data protection requirements – hardly in accordance with regulations. Almost half of all participants in the survey had not yet drawn up data management plans – which are regarded as a central instrument for the controlled handling of research data and increasingly need to be submitted when applications for third-party funding are made – for their projects; around a further 30 % do not know whether such a plan exists for their project or what it even is (Imeri and Danciu 2017: 14, 18). It is evident that the state of knowledge and practice in the ethnological disciplines are very different things and that – this is also becoming clear in many conversations – to date, the topic has tended to be brought to the ethnological disciplines' attention from the outside.[13]

Moreover, there are hardly any possibilities in the German-speaking countries to archive ethnographic research appropriately and, above all, to make them available for subsequent use. The results of the FID survey suggest that currently available generic data repositories are largely inadequate regarding the particularities of qualitative research and the resulting nature of the data because, for the vast majority of data, it will not be possible to simply be 'openly' available. What is required, therefore, are data archives that, for instance, guarantee controlled access or enter data usage agreements and which are characterized by an overall (discipline-) specific professionalization, which university data repositories, for example, can hardly afford because of a lack of resources (cf. Imeri 2018).

On the whole, an internal disciplinary understanding about requirements, difficulties and opportunities of research data management is urgently needed to be able to speak as a discipline in the debate and participate at all in the design of the regulatory processes that have long been set in motion.[14] The expression of specific

12 Such identifiers can be assigned by research data repositories. They permit the unambiguous identification of data sets in a similar manner to an ISBN. This ensures that data can be found sustainably, for example, in catalogues, but also a regulated form of citation.

13 This may be different in individual segments, as is evident the archive DOBES (Documentation of Endangered Languages) to which ethnographers also contribute. Available at: http://dobes.mpi.nl/. Accessed September 18, 2018. See Widlok (2013).

14 The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Volkskunde ('German Folklore Association') has recently adopted a first position paper on the handling of research data, and the Société Internationale d'Ethnologie et de Folklore will also be discussing the topic.

problems that can be derived from ethnographic research approaches and strategies as well as requirements for the design of data archives is just as necessary in this endeavor as the search for alliances with neighboring disciplines which are faced with similar challenges, for instance, regarding the production of qualitative data (cf. Imeri 2018).

Legal aspects

Depending on the type of data, complex legal questions can become relevant at times at all levels of data management, which are touched upon here at least in a few aspects. Because the legal framework conditions for research data management are only gradually being formulated,[15] procedures and standards that allow legal certainty, on the one hand, but do not hinder or restrict research, on the other, must still be developed.

The most important and controversial topic in the FID surveys, especially regarding the long-term archiving and reuse of ethnographic data, is the maintenance of confidentiality that is assured in the research relationship – and, thus, a topic that can be located at the intersection of data protection, respectively, personal rights law and research ethics. Because ethnographic research – as well as qualitative and quantitative social research in the broader sense – regularly generates personal data which often fall under the "special categories of personal data,"[16] corresponding legal provisions already need to be followed. They have usually been realized in publications with different strategies for anonymization. However, issues relating to the implementation of these rules must be given new and greater weight with the possibilities and risks of digital storage and distribution, and not just or only when publications are prepared. In this sense, data management also means data protection management to a high degree. Above all, the question as to whether and in what form data can be passed on for subsequent use must, as a rule, be answered not only in legal terms but also in terms of research ethics. Data can be sensitive and fraught with risk even without necessarily having personal references, regarding milieus at the edge of legality, in the context of migration, political activism or the like. New requirements will also have to be put in place regarding the anonymization, respectively, pseudonymization of multimodal data collections in the case of a permanent archiving even if – or precisely because – data will not be openly available. This is the case because the extent to which it is possible to

15 Cf. the recently published results of a legal studies project at the Technische Universität Dresden (Lauber-Rönsberg, Krahn, and Baumann 2018).

16 This is data "revealing racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, or trade union membership, and […] data concerning health or data concerning a natural person's sex life or sexual orientation," Art. 9 General Data Protection Regulation (EU), paragraph 1.

balance the requirements for anonymization and the preservation of interpretability and explanatory power is also decisive for the post-use potential (cf. Reyes 2018).

In this context, ethnologists often take a skeptical position towards 'informed consent' – the central instrument of data protection law that permits the processing and archiving of personal data and its subsequent use – as long as it requires a formal, rather inflexible declaration which must, above all, be documented in advance and in writing.[17] There are many conceivable situations in the field in which it is not possible to obtain 'documented' consent even if research ethics require agreement and voluntary participation.[18] Regarding heterogeneous, open situations in the field and forms of participatory approaches to research, consent is understood more as a permanent task and a dynamic, reflexive process of negotiation in a field-specific form and generally without a standardized agreement: "It is the quality of the consent, not its format, which is relevant" (Albro and Plemmons 2016: 120; cf. also Imeri 2018). Generally speaking, in the future it will be necessary to combine a certain standardization of procedures with the necessary individual strategies for dealing with such questions and necessities which depend on the respective field of research in order to maintain the openness of ethnographic research processes and, at the same time, to arrive at reflected routines that conserve resources.

It should not go unmentioned that beyond this, questions of copyright and rights of use of research data are, at the most, in the beginning stages of discussion, and adequate laws are not always already in place.[19] Depending on the research field, aspects of the multilayered problem of 'cultural property' may also become relevant (cf. Widlok 2013).

2. Ethnographic data. Approaches to the use of the data concept

If data from ethnographic research are to be archived for the long-term, it will be necessary to reflect more strongly on the concept of data to highlight differences to other sciences and the more general use of the term, and possibly to develop one's own concepts in order to derive epistemologically justifiable consequences for tech-

17 Both the Datenschutz-Grundverordnung ('General Data Protection Regulation') and national laws provide restrictions and data protection requirements in favor of research (cf. Lauber-Rönsberg, Krahn, and Baumann 2018). See Corsín Jiménez (2018) for considerations on the implications of the General Data Protection Regulation.

18 Hansjörg Dilger (2017), for example, has reported this about his research on the living conditions of people with HIV/AIDS infections in Tanzania. It would not have been possible to obtain documented consent because the disease is associated there with stigmatization. Similar things may apply when illegal activities play a role in the research field, when the groups on which research is done are exposed to repression or when people in positions of power agree to engage in background conversations.

19 Research data, for instance, are not, to date, legal 'property,' cf. Linda Kuschel (2018).

nical and 'political' requirements for data archiving. This is due to the fact that publications and position papers on research data management normally use a highly pragmatic, generic concept of 'research data'. Research data, according to a paper by the aforementioned RfII, are data which originate in the course of scientific projects, for instance, through observations, experiments, simulated calculations, surveys, interviews, the study of source material, recordings, digitization and evaluations. The paper continues that, from the point of view of research pragmatics, although not always clearly differentiated, primary research data can be distinguished from secondary research data which document and contextualize the process by which primary data is created (RfII 2016: A-13). Against the background of technical and information science processes underlying the archiving of research data, 'data' generally refer to distinguishable digital objects that can be captured, described with metadata, secured, exchanged via interfaces and made interoperable, regardless of their context of origin and, initially, also of the content they represent. It is, thus, in many cases, an informational concept of data that is used, despite the fact that research data are also socially produced in communicative processes, are context-bound, loaded with theory and a product of media dispositives already at the time they are generated (cf. Knorr Cetina 1988) and, thus, a concept of data which tends to reduce or eliminate the dimensions of contextuality and referentiality which are central to the ethnographic research process (cf. Koch in print).

There is currently no generally shared understanding in the ethnological disciplines of what constitutes research data and if and at what stage of processing one can or should speak of 'data.' Accordingly, the term 'data' is not used uniformly: While some researchers write decidedly and regularly of collected data – 'ethnographic data' is often mentioned particularly in the Anglo-American language area – others do so rather *en passant*. The concept of data for many ethnologists seems to play a rather subordinate role, and it is often avoided altogether in favor of terms such as 'material,' 'documents' or 'sources' (cf. also Markham 2013; Lehmann, Stodulka, and Huber 2018: 67f.). In the sense that data are perceived as available goods, the term is also explicitly rejected.

On occasion, one can also find a distinction between 'primary data' collected with a view to a problem in the field itself and 'secondary data' collected by others or available in ethnographies, census data and historical material.[20] One distinction that is suggested is a differentiation between 'hard data,'– word by word transcripts which can be stored and analyzed repeatedly, and 'soft data,' impressions and recollections which cannot be archived.[21] Some ethnologists also speak of 'raw data' – a

20 Cf. with regard to the ethnographic comparison Ember, Ember and Peregrine (2015: 566).

21 However, the author himself describes this separation as equally problematic because "hard data" could not be adequately interpreted without "soft data" (Pool 2017).

concept that has by now been subjected to cultural scientific criticism[22] – when they work, for example, with statistical methods in the context of genealogical research or an "ethno-census" (Lang and Pauli 2002).

Around 1900. Data as facts

Historically speaking, the concept of data has been in use in the ethnographies for longer than one might assume in light of these ambiguities. A rough overview of research shows that the data term in ethnological texts and journals – in the broadest sense – was frequently used in the decades before 1900 in connection with temporal determinations, statistical information, descriptions of climatic conditions (e.g. Mori 1888: 239) or anthropometric measurements (e.g. Schellong 1891: 158, 182) and, thus, within the framework of general language use.[23] Beyond this, however, 'data' was also regularly mentioned more generally, for instance, in a statement relating that knowledge of a subject was enriched by the provision of "data from Scandinavian sources that was difficult to access"[24] or, in another instance, that some "ethnographic data had arisen by themselves" which were to be supplemented with earlier Hungarian records on a subject and communicated (Rubinyi 1902, 59). A statement by Adolf Bastian from an 1873 speech in the *Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte* ('Berlin Society for Anthropology, Ethnology and Prehistory') gives a clearer indication of the understanding of 'data' that came to bear here. He described that the many new insights in prehistory in their richness brought such an overwhelming abundance of completely unexpected discoveries that, for the moment, one still lacked sufficient orientation to even attempt a preliminary arrangement. In order not to revert to the earlier error of the deduction method and supplement a lack of facts by hypotheses and simultaneously distort them, he continued, one would have to wait until a sufficient number of "facts" was available that regularity would arise from them and form an organic connection. He also emphasized that in ethnology and in the closely related discipline of anthropology the completion of the collection of "data" required was still missing, however, only as a consequence of the imperfect means of gathering "data" as they were lying out in the open on the surface and only awaited their harvest (Bastian 1873: 3).

The image of data lying around and wanting to be harvested not only combines an almost poetic transfiguration of the different realities of the actual practice of collection (cf. e.g. Förster et al. 2018) into an act of caring with a certain comedic quality, but rather, in the equation of data with facts, points out that the use of the

22 Cf. the contributions in Lisa Gitelman (2013).

23 Cf. for example, Meyers Konversations-Lexikon (1894) for language use in German. A classification of the use in English since the 18th century can be found in Daniel Rosenberg (2013).

24 Michael Haberlandt in a review on Troels Lund (1902, 62).

term was by no means neutral. For Bastian, who, as a trained physician attempted to conceptualize ethnology as a scientific psychology,[25] it was rather a powerful positioning of the self-understanding of a discipline in the making which set itself up as, to paraphrase Bernd Weiler, a discipline supposedly bridging the natural sciences and the humanities and spanning all times and all peoples (Weiler 2006: 231) with the cornerstones of anthropology, ethnology and prehistory. Correspondingly, the orientation towards the claim of objectivity of the positivist natural sciences extended to the logic of the collection of material which was to provide reliable data for a valid formation of theory – in this case, the recognition of natural, respectively, developmental laws of human history[26] – and, thus, contributed significantly to anthropology becoming a powerful bastion of the belief in science of the late 19th century (Weiler 2006). What is also noticeable here is an understanding of "mechanical objectivity," which, according to Lorraine Daston and Peter Galison, was characterized by the attempt to make one's own personality disappear from the collected material wherever possible. "Objectivity was a desire, a passionate commitment to suppress the will, and drive to let the visible world emerge on the page without intervention" (Daston and Galison 2007: 143) and, thus, also to render the made nature of data invisible. Conscious of the fact that objects and traditions were transient and constantly disappearing all over the world, the idea of a data harvest was also associated with an urgency that found a distinctive expression in the "empirical exhortation" (Weiler 2006: 87–89) of ethnology (and folklore studies) and is reflected in Bastian's idea that it was possible and necessary that the collection of data was completed first. The analysis and the formation of hypotheses, however, were postponed to a more or less distant future and, thus, placed in the hands of future researchers.

It is known that the conceptualization of 'data as facts' is not a historical fact but is highly virulent both in general language use and in some areas of research. The idea of 'hard numbers' with a direct reference to being, independent of observers and cleansed from disturbances and noise (Reichert 2018: 18f.), is currently critically reflected in many media and cultural studies works, especially regarding the consequences for the way in which knowledge is generated from big data.[27] A categorical distinction between big data and so-called long tail data, which have little standardization and usually a low data volume (cf. Rice and Southall 2016: 28), yet, as such, constitute research data in many disciplines, has hardly been made to date.

25 See Fiedermutz-Laun (1986) on Bastian's understanding of science.

26 Cf. the similar approaches in US American cultural anthropology by Franz Boas and his students (Johnson and Hruschka 2015: 99f.).

27 In an overview, for example, Iliadis and Russo (2016) and the contributions in Reichert (2014).

The cursory spectrum of data concepts could certainly be expanded.[28] And even if the problems of definition cannot be solved here, the ambiguities in the use of the term, in any case, indicate that the distinctions which are regularly made in the debate on research data between (objective) raw data, primary research data, processed data and interpretations which are located at the end of data analysis cannot simply be applied to all research in the ethnological disciplines. However, because – as is also evident in the quote by Adolf Bastian – data are part of epistemologies, i.e. theories and teachings about how valid knowledge is to be generated in the respective discipline (Koch in print), further discussions are necessary on the question of how the different terms relate to each other and which concept is used when material, documents or sources become data in the ethnographic research process. This is needed to facilitate the necessary communication across disciplinary and domain boundaries, especially regarding data archiving.

3. On the value of data. Scenarios of secondary uses

Science historians Michael Hagner and Caspar Hirschi have pointedly criticized that it would appear as though questions of provision, communication and participation function as new epistemic virtues which take precedence over older virtues such as originality, analysis and criticism (Hagner and Hirschi 2013: 10). Irrespective of the polemics, this poses a legitimate question about the reasoning behind large scale data archiving and provision. This question arises generally because even the permanent maintenance of the traceability, accessibility and interpretability of data is resource-intensive and regarding the considerable effort that has to be put into the processing of particularly qualitative research data: Contexts of data collection need to be documented in detail, metadata need to be created, legal questions clarified and data may need to be anonymized or pseudonymized. The actual time required and costs of processing can, at best, be estimated at this point. Not to mention the "tired user" whose capacities in terms of receptivity and time have not changed along with the digital production of research results and data (Groebner 2014: 109). However, the question also arises regarding the fact that folklore studies and ethnology have tried to free themselves, at great expense after 1945 at the latest, from the

28 There is also, by no means, any clarity in neighboring disciplines: It is always specific data terms that are the subject of consideration. Jörg Strübing, a qualitative sociologist, suggests, for example, differentiating between data and material in the following manner: Data are cognitive relations that we develop in the analytical process between parts of the material and our analytical – theoretical structure, i.e. the material itself (for example, an interview transcript) is not the datum but rather the relationship between the material and the emergent object-related theory bound by our analytical perspective. The differentiation emphasized the processual nature of data generation but leaves open the relationship, particularly to the information science data concept (Strübing 2018: 239). Data concepts in the historical sciences were also discussed at the Historikertag 2018 (Müller and Purschwitz 2018).

image or stigma (and the actual implications) of being a 'collection science.' Moritz Lazarus, for example, had remarked as early as 1891 in a lecture Über *Volkskunde als Wissenschaft* ('About Folkore Studies as a Science') regarding the encyclopedic principle that one should not merely engage in dull and stupid collecting but also had to interpret the material gathered.[29] In any case, it is not without irony that the current culture of searching and interpreting in the mode of databank queries, with ever new possibilities of recombination, pattern recognition and, not least, visualization, also lends new legitimacy to data collection itself (cf. Gugerli 2007). The latter is reflected, for example, in answers to the frequently asked question in the debate on data archiving as to which incentives need to be created for researchers to process their data and make them available for subsequent use. Reference is made here not only to unambiguous referencing and, thus, increased visibility of a data collection; rather, a call is made for their recognition as an original achievement that can be utilized in the scientific reputation economy (cf. e.g. Klump 2017; Wagner 2010).

Just under three-quarters of respondents in the FID survey rated the overall academic value of searchable and reusable ethnographic research data as "very high," "high" or "rather high." In detail, particularly the consideration of being able to generate new questions from 'old' data or facilitate comparisons with similar data was met with approval (Imeri and Danciu 2017: 19f.). Beyond such a general statement of approval, however, it is still largely unclear what benefits subsequent use and secondary analyses of ethnographic data may bring. To put it in other words: The status of such material for further research is unclear.

Long-term work with one's own material

The fact that hardly any scenarios for subsequent use are developed in recent research is also because it is primarily one's 'own' research that is the basis for many careers in the ethnological disciplines. This is, at least, the case when one thinks of subsequent use by third parties, colleagues in one's own or in other disciplines. For many, however, forms of subsequent use or reuse of one's own material, for example, are part of a research routine, as Gisela Welz, among others, has pointed out in her observation of temporalized field work. In such temporally discontinuous research scenarios, researchers return to the site of earlier stationary research, or 'permanent field sites' are maintained and visited through the years for shorter field stays, because intensive field relationships cannot be reestablished time and again in a researcher's life, emotional ties to people on-site can invite or oblige them to repeatedly invest time or the constraints of academic working environments do not permit

29 This is how the report of proceedings presents Lazarus' contribution. The lecture was held in the *Verein für Volkskunde* ("Protokoll zur Sitzung vom 27.2.1891" 1891: 231f.).

other forms of work (cf. Welz 2013). Self-produced material may be supplemented, expanded, repeatedly processed and reworked, rearranged and interpreted over long periods of time (e.g. Röttger-Rössler 2004).[30]

This form of long-term research allows not only new perspectives on 'old' material but also the description and evaluation of long-term social and economic changes, as Gisela Welz herself impressively demonstrated regarding *European Products* and the effects of a specific EU-European cultural heritage regime in Cyprus (cf. Welz 2015). However, this form of research also raises the question of when and at what stage of processing data can or should be archived if research is not organized in the form of a study of clearly limited duration, at the end of which data could be transferred to a repository.

Using 'foreign' data

In addition to the reuse of one's own material, there are also more or less established forms of the shared use of data in the ethnologies. The first area to be addressed here is collaborative research in teams, provided that the context of the project provides for a joint 'data practice' and allows or even requires it. Even though it is rarely explicitly stated which strategies have been developed for the joint work on the same data, one major difference to secondary uses is certainly the fact that, at least potentially, reciprocal influence can be exerted on data production and analysis and that any necessary translation services can be provided in a direct exchange (cf. Amelang 2007; Clerke and Hopwood 2014). Long-term studies involving several 'generations' of researchers are a more concrete form of subsequent use. Thus, anthropologist Lisa Cliggett, for instance, has described the enormous effort involved in working her way into data from several decades of research from the *Gwembe Tonga Research Project* in which research has been undertaken since 1956 – originally with the intention of observing the effects of the construction of a dam on the Zambezi River in Zambia on local populations (Cliggett 2016).

The fact that dealing with 'foreign' material can cause difficulties is evident in an entirely different example. Bernd Rieken, a folklorist and psychoanalyst, had conducted interviews with survivors and those affected about ten years after an avalanche disaster in Galtür, Austria. Within the framework of qualitative disaster research, Rieken was particularly interested in coping processes and the integration of the event into life stories (Rieken 2010). He later asked colleagues, including European ethnologist Michael Simon, to interpret three of these interviews from their own professional perspectives for a publication. However, Simon had reservations: He felt that the task was "extremely ticklish" because foreign data was concerned,

30 In this study, the author draws, among other things, on material which she collected in the early 1980s (Röttger-Rössler 1989).

and he knew little about the way it had been collected. He pointed out that he had not been present at Rieken's surveys in Galtür, had not been able to get to know the people with whom Rieken spoke, had not been able to sense their presence and gain an impression of the location. While the psychologists and psychotherapists who had also been asked for an interpretation did not comment at all on this circumstance, Simon writes that it took a great effort to comply with this request and that such forms of exchange caused difficulties for an ethnologist (Simon 2015: 93f.). What he then unfolds on just a few pages is an attempt to reinterpret temporally current 'foreign data,' including methodological reflections on the process of interpretation – something that has hardly been seen to date in European Ethnology. His observations are instructive, even if the 'subsequent use' here was intended by the primary researcher himself, i.e. the material was not selected for answering one's own research question. Simon initially tried to obtain context material for the three interviews (which were quite short, averaging 35 minutes), such as photos and videos available on the Internet that showed the interviewees. He further describes that the initially problematic lack of closeness to Rieken's interview partners had also made interpretation easier in comparison to material collected by Simon himself, without, at the same time, giving up a respectful basic attitude. Simon ultimately decided to focus on the interaction between the interviewer and their interview partners and to view the interviews more like historical material. Although he by no means spares his colleague, the respectful handling of his work is clearly perceptible in the text.

The latter leads to an observation from the FID surveys: The disclosure of research data to third parties can be associated with fears; the internal editor who might impair the habitual ways of asking, looking and noting, the loss of openness and impartiality, for example, are mentioned. This is so because the intensive being in the field, the researcher's participation in the events extends to their entire person which "does not represent an independent quantity but has a significant impact on research achievements with all their human strengths and weaknesses" (Simon 2015: 93). If researchers themselves become recognizable in their data as persons – and this is likely to be the case on a regular basis – data can also be sensitive in this respect, and in the future, it may be necessary to consider particular research ethical standards for subsequent use.

The unclear status of such material is, therefore, also related to its quality for secondary analysis. It remains unknown, for example, how the contextualization of research data mentioned above, which is indispensable for interpretation, can be adequately realized because "Datasets don't speak for themselves" (Lederman 2016: 261). This does not only concern the documentation of general project background or research strategic decisions, even though such project-specific knowledge often remains implicit, especially in individual research projects or small research teams

(Smioski 2013). Rather, the close connection of all steps of processing to theoretical and methodological perspectives as well as conditions and opportunities that are specific to a field raises questions about the different levels of 'context.' Researchers determine what 'context' is not so much along defined sets of circumstances, conditions or elements of a specific setting; rather, a decision as to which information should ultimately be relevant is made in a dynamic process (cf. Medjedović 2014; for pointers towards a "good documentation of data," Smioski 2013: par. 17–19). 'Context,' in this sense, would also include relational, implicit and intuitive knowledge embedded in the research relationship; this has been repeatedly pointed out in our surveys (cf. also Lehmann, Stodulka, and Huber 2018; 69). The physical and sensual experience, which is so important for ethnographic knowledge production, and the "epistemic affects" (Stodulka, Selim, and Mattes 2018) of the researchers are also part of this; both are reflected in "headnotes" (Ottenberg 1990) but only to a limited extent in the form of data.

In any case, it will not be possible to use ethnographic data immediately for secondary research without further ado – neither in one's own discipline nor in other disciplines.[31] Therefore, adequate procedures and strategies for the documentation of contexts are needed for different types of material, not least regarding temporal and financial resources, because the so-called metadata will hardly suffice.

Subsequent use of historical material

It is interesting to observe that both folklore studies and ethnology – despite all the difference in detail – show features of extensive joint or subsequent use of data in projects with the decoupling often practiced of the collection of material from the evaluation and interpretation up to the 20th century. The extensive data harvest called for by Bastian could only be mastered by a collective which, moreover, often brought with them the sort of local expertise that was crucial for success. Accordingly, researchers regularly arranged and analyzed material that had been gathered, collected, bought or even stolen by others, for example, travelers and colonial officials, interested elementary teachers and members of scientific associations and local heritage societies.[32]

This division of labor – starting with British social anthropology – only lost its legitimacy with the implementation of the fieldwork paradigm as a result of the research and teaching activities undertaken by Bronislaw Malinowski, who himself had still written his doctoral thesis on Aboriginal Australian families on the basis of secondary material (Kuper 2015 [1973]: 9). The establishment of this new form of

31 A similar discussion is taking place for data from humanities research (cf. Sahle and Kronenwett 2013: 82).

32 Cf. e.g. Sabine Imeri (2017) for folklore studies.

ethnographic practice, with the centering of knowledge work in the person of the field researcher,[33] also resulted in large quantities of the collected material being much more closely tied to the person undertaking the research – and, thus, being 'privatized' – than before.[34]

The sometimes extensive material collections of older folklorist traditions, coming partly from problematic contexts of origin, also bear witness in an eloquent way to the practice of the division of labor to this day (cf. Schmitt 2005).[35] They have certainly been used for secondary evaluations: As early as the 1960s, Ingeborg Weber-Kellermann, for example, undertook a reinterpretation in terms of social and cultural historical aspects in her work on harvest customs based on Wilhelm Mannhardt's interview material from the mid-19th century (Weber-Kellermann 1965). In a lesser-known study, Ulrich Bentzien had, at the same time, used an unintended surplus in Richard Wossidlo's extensive material collections, created between approximately 1890 and 1939, for linguistic research and evaluated it under entirely new aspects in *Das Eindringen der Technik in die Lebenswelt der mecklenburgischen Landbevölkerung: Eine volkskundliche Untersuchung* ('The Intrusion of Technology into the Living Environment of the Rural Population of Mecklenburg'; Bentzien 1961). As Bentzien pointed out, Wossidlo had, without having systematically researched the position of this group of people on technology, nevertheless, conscientiously noted casual statements by farm laborers and farmers. Bentzien continued that in addition to these informal statements, Wossidlo had faithfully recorded the penetration of technical elements into folklore genres (e.g. sagas, stories) and the vernacular terms of technical objects and processes (Bentzien 1961: 13). At the same time, Bentzien reflected on the limitations of this form of secondary analysis in terms of both the quantity of actual usable material – measured against the size of Wossidlo's collections of material – and it being shaped by the perspectives of the primary researcher himself. Bentzien pointed out that Wossidlo's decidedly romantically influenced nature of a collector who was always mindful of the age of the heritage items might at times have instinctively resisted the recording of more modern forms (Bentzien 1961: 329).

However, more recent studies that have explored the potential uses of old material have also been published: Michael Simon, for example, has studied the value of the material of the *Atlas der deutschen Volkskunde* ('Atlas of German Folklore') for answering contemporary questions and how it can contribute to the understanding of 'folk-medicine' ideas and practices of the interwar period. Lioba Keller-Drescher,

33 Alexa Färber shows that this went along with a de-formalization of labor relations in the field (with locals, colonial officials, traders, etc.) but that cooperation, nevertheless, took place (2009).

34 Malinowski himself repeatedly evaluated his material from his research on the Trobriand Islands until 1935 and published it in seven monographs (Kuper 1997 [1973]: 18).

35 Some of these collections have been or are being digitalized (Meyer et al. 2014).

together with students, has explored the extent to which material from dialect surveys carried out by the *Tübinger Arbeitsstelle Sprache in Südwestdeutschland* ('Tübingen Research Centre for Language in Southwest Germany') can be used to investigate the performativity of language (cf. Simon 2003; Keller-Drescher 2009).

Apart from the question, asked anew time and again, what an adequate handling of the legacies of older research may or should look like, there is a variety of practices and works to draw on when thinking about the potential of subsequent use of research data for one's own discipline. One question that could be pursued is the extent to which data in permanent archives change their state or their register, as described by Krzysztof Pomian for objects in museum collections (cf. Pomian 1998 [1987]). Even if the change of register may not turn research data into something else in the same radical manner, by being separated from their context of origin, even with every care taken in the documentation of context, they can no longer be used by third parties in the same way as by the people who collected the data themselves. However, they do not simply become historical material either as long as the multilayered contexts of their collection are still present. This only happens when, as historian Almuth Leh put it regarding oral history interviews, the preservation survives the witness when not only research partners pass away, but research perspectives and methods also become historical (cf. Leh 2018). In any case, the usual procedures of a qualified critical dealing with sources that are established in the humanities will have to be applied as regularly as necessarily.

Participants in the FID survey repeatedly voiced the assumption that the value of ethnographic data for ethnographic research itself was likely to increase the longer the survey was in the past. Therefore, many consider an unlimited archiving to be desirable (Imeri in print).

Selecting suitable data

The question remains which data and materials from ethnographic research may be suitable for subsequent use. There have been interesting publications recently by contemporary historians which demonstrate the potential that can be found, for example, in the reevaluation of interviews which were conducted for a different purpose. Thus, for instance, for a study on the controversial work of the Treuhand-Anstalt, commissioned in the early 1990s to privatize the former national wealth of the GDR, Marcus Böick also evaluated around 50 interviews which were conducted by ethnologist Dietmar Rost with employees of the upper and middle management level of the Treuhand-Anstalt in 1992/93 in order to document individual 'interior views' on the work of the agency (Böick 2018). Neither the original recordings of the interviews nor the accompanying material were archived in a comprehensible manner; Böick came across disks with transcripts in private possession that had

been preserved rather by chance (2018: 55). Dietmar Rost himself provided him with supplementary analyses and information on the interviews – an indication of the importance of the contact with the primary researchers, particularly when research contexts have been inadequately documented.[36]

There are also considerations in the context of qualitative sociology which take recourse to the subsequent use of interview material as an independent research strategy (cf. Medjedović 2014); the potentials for subsequent use of other forms of material (e.g. observation logs, images or videos) will need to be examined, preferably in designated projects. Some things may not be suitable. One controversial issue, for example, is the 'reusability' of field diaries which, even though the way in which researchers employ this highly specific format of documentation varies greatly, may be of great value for the production of insight as a type of material that is not only individual but also highly personal material. At the same time, however, the interweaving of the researcher with their material can become particularly obvious here. Accordingly, it is a recurring argument that field notes cannot be adequately understood by third parties and data sharing is often associated with particular reservations (cf. Imeri in print; Lederman 2016; and, Jackson 1990 fundamentally on the importance of field notes for the professional identity of field researchers). It may also be that, for more general reasons of data security, the separation often practiced between the documentation of observations and notes in diary form becomes more common in the future (cf. Cliggett 2016).

As mentioned above, it will be necessary in the future to examine which material is 'worth' permanent archiving at which stage of processing. Even if digital communication channels seem to promise infinity in, as Groebner puts it, the form of unlimited reproducibility and time at a standstill (Groebner 2014: 107), it cannot be the goal to archive all data from all research in its entirety, not only regarding the resource-intensive procedures of long-term archiving (Oßwald, Scheffel, and Neuroth: 16f.). There are also epistemological reasons for making a selection: Completeness – less in the encyclopedic sense but rather regarding data collection – constituted an ideal and epistemic virtue of science, particularly in the 19th century, and was also closely associated with ideas of objectivity and scientific progress. The totality of fossils, all inscriptions, an entire culture – Bastian's idea of a data harvest which

36 In a similar manner, Christina von Hodenberg (2018: 195) contacted the authors of the *Bonner Längsschnittstudie des Alterns* ('Bonn Longitudinal Study of Aging'), a gerontopsychological study in which numerous interviews were conducted between 1964 and 1985, which she reevaluated for her study *Das andere Achtundsechzig* ('The Other Sixty-eight') in a new and interdisciplinary manner. In the case of BOLSA, tape recordings and other materials have been transferred to the Historische Datenzentrum Sachsen-Anhalt, where they are being digitized and made available for further use. Available at: https://www.geschichte.uni-halle.de/struktur/hist-data/bolsa/. Accessed September 10, 2018.

could be completed also points to this. However, the ideal of completeness had already been criticized by contemporaries: Literary historian Richard M. Meyer, for example, called it "bureaucratic" and of little use for scientific insight. In his view, one would unlearn to separate the important from the unimportant and then help oneself to the feeble excuse that everything was important in science. As he put it, "completeness mechanized and dulled the eye" (Meyer 1907: 14).

It will be important, therefore, to develop criteria that can form the basis for the selection and evaluation of data that is suitable for long-term archiving. It will have to be discussed whether this is done in similar forms as those that are also practiced in archives and collections or with new procedures. This is not only because research funding institutions, such as the DFG, expect that discipline-specific data policies in the future will also provide information on which data should be retained for the long-term and for which data archiving can be foregone (DFG 2018). This also provides opportunities less for the control of the quality and the value of ethnographic material but more for the reflection and self-assured assertion, in addition when facing other disciplines, science policy and other public spheres.

Conclusion

Surprisingly few participants in the FID survey answered the question as to whether they could imagine using data from other researchers with a clear "no." Whether there will be studies in the ethnologies in the future which are exclusively based on a reanalysis of 'old' data and without designated field work of one's own – and which may then also increasingly use digital methods – or whether these data will be used in addition to other material, will depend not only on methodological – theoretical openness, the ability to integrate and the willingness to experiment but also on the acceptance such research will be met with.

However, the prerequisite for potential subsequent uses are not only the necessary steps of processing, selection, description, contextualization and legal consideration. There is also a need for data archives or repositories which accept discipline-specific approaches, research strategies and research ethical principles, can establish suitable procedures and develop technical solutions under these conditions. Even if such data archives presently exist, at best, in a rudimentary fashion, it can be assumed with some certainty that they will be developed. The way in which processes of archiving, regulations and standards, and the services of such data archives will be designed will not least depend on whether ethnologists, folklorists and cultural anthropologists who are engaged in research will intervene and position themselves specifically and with which intensity and expertise.

This also applies to the overarching controlling processes. Even though many questions remain unanswered, one thing is very clear: The demand to preserve research data for the long-term and to open them up for subsequent use will continue

to exist, be intensified and gain momentum within the framework of science policy guidelines, regulations on research funding, and university agendas and guidelines. Data management, as part of the digital transformation of science, will continue to change the research practice of European ethnology and cultural anthropology. Therefore, data management should be reflected on regarding both the risks and the opportunities, and also increasingly under methodical and methodological aspects as well as the epistemological consequences.[37] If nothing else, it will be necessary in the future to develop concepts for further training, to integrate data management into the methods curriculum already during the degree programs, and, in doing so, not only to impart more or less generic skills,[38] but, above all, specific, reflexive knowledge about dealing with research data.

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37 Cf. also Gertraud Koch's considerations (in print) on this.

38 As it is promoted by the German *Stifterverband*, for example, with a view of competence requirements beyond academia that is oriented at the labour market within the framework of "Data Literacy Education." Accessed September 18, 2018. Available at: https://www.stifterverband.org/data-literacy-education.

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Designing contact zones

Ethnographic research into relationships between humans and stray dogs in Podgorica

Abstract: This article focuses on a multispecies ethnographic study on relationships between human and (stray) canine inhabitants of the Montenegrin capital Podgorica. What guided the research was the question of how these two groups of actors jointly shape the urban space. This contribution aims to outline strategies of an urban anthropology beyond the human. The intersections of the practices of spatial appropriation of the different actors lead to actual contact zones in which places in the urban space are mutually designed as centers of the negotiations of transspecies relationships.

Keywords: contact zone, multispecies research, multi-sited ethnography, Montenegro, Podgorica, Southeast European Studies

I took a first perceptual walk with my dog Ferdinand through the city center of Podgorica after arriving in the field in early February 2016. Many others like us strolled through the narrow alleys of the pedestrian area on this warm, sunny Sunday. A big white dog suddenly caught up to us in the middle of the Hercegovačka, one of the most famous alleys of the downtown Nova Varoš district, and sniffed Ferdinand's backside. The two dogs had a brief exchange and as quickly as the female dog had appeared, she trotted further along the road until she turned left at the next corner and disappeared from our field of vision (cf. research diary, February 7, 2016).

This encounter between me, Ferdinand and the white dog took place during the first phase of several ethnographic research stays, each lasting several months, in Podgorica, the capital of the South Eastern European state of Montenegro. My research followed the question of how human city dwellers and 'street dogs' (*ulični psi*) or 'stray dogs' (*psi lutalice*)[1] coexist and how human and canine urban dwellers

* German version in *Schweizerisches Archiv für Volkskunde* 2018, 114 (II): 81–99. Translated by Stefanie Everke Buchanan.

1 *Uličnі psi* and *psi lutalice* are the most common names for dogs who have no owners and move around constantly without human companions. The terms are usually shortened in conversations to *ulični* ('from the street') and *lutalice* ('stray') for male dogs and *ulična*, respectively, *lutalica* for female dogs. It was mainly the term 'stray' that was used in conversations in English, rarely also 'street dog.' Animal welfare activists have recently been trying to introduce the new terms

together design urban spaces. The phenomenon of street dogs in urban cultures has been of interest from a cultural studies and social science perspective in recent years: Media scholar Yavor Lilov (2009) deals with discourses on street dogs in Sofia in his dissertation project, and Melanie Köppen (2015) has studied relationships between humans and street dogs in the Moldavian capital Chişinău for her ethnological bachelor thesis. Anthropologist Orit Hirsch-Matsioulas (2014) and urban anthropologist Indrawan Prabaharyaka (2018) noticed the importance of street dogs in their research fields around migrants on a Greek island and the cultural meaning of dirt in Jakarta, respectively. Different perspectives meet in my research: That of an urban cultural anthropological research which conceives of its object, 'the city,' as a sum of its inhabitants (Rolshoven 2010, 23) and the approaches of anthropology beyond the human/anthropology beyond humanity, multispecies ethnography and ethnography after humanism, which assume an interweaving of human and other actors in common everyday lifeworlds (Kohn 2007, 2013; Ingold 2013; Kirksey and Helmreich 2010; Ogden, Hall, and Tanita 2013; Hamilton and Taylor 2017). "Human beings are not the only inhabitants of urban industrial landscapes," as Tim Ingold and Jo Lee Vergunst (2008, 10) emphasize the connection between these two fields of research.

Jutta Buchner-Fuhs' dissertation *Kultur mit Tieren*, published as early as 1996, was a comprehensive attempt at spanning the breadth of locating animals in urban spaces of the 19th century in the German speaking fields of European ethnology/cultural anthropology/folklore studies (Buchner 1996). In 2009, Beate Binder suspected a fertile potential for understanding urban cultures in the consideration of 'wild' animals appropriating urban spaces in a manner that is contradictory to western urban logic (Binder 2009). Soon after, Klara Löffler pursued a similar idea when she used human-dog relations in Vienna as a starting point for the analysis of bourgeois orders (Löffler 2010), as did I when I worked out the meaning of "the dog" for urban discourses of order in Graz (Luggauer 2017). After the animal turn[2] in recent decades, animals are no longer only of interest as a passive presence in fields of cultural and social science research but as acting subjects. Lukasz Nieradzik has recently expressed the transformation of the meaning of animals in European ethnological research as a shift of the animal from an object of cultural research to a perspective (Nieradzik 2018: 52). Everyday worlds and lifeworlds are, thus, conceived of as complex negotiations between actors of different species, and it needs to be asked which cultural analytical insights can be gained from the extension of the anthropo-exclusive view of cultures through the perspective of nonhuman actors. Accordingly, departing from Sarah Whatman's cultural-geographical reflec-

bezdomni psi ('homeless dogs') and *napušteni psi* ('abandoned/cast away dogs') (cf. research diary May 18, 2018).

2 On the coinage of the term "animal turn," see Ritvo (2007).

tions on a "more-than-human world," landscape architect Stefanie Hennecke and historian Mieke Roscher understand "the city" as an agglomeration of "more-than-human places" (Whatman 2006, cited after Hennecke and Roscher 2017: 9). An opening of the gaze which is limited to the practices of human urban dwellers is required to ethnographically study and understand the city in its entirety as a more-than-human place which is designed by human and nonhuman actors. In this way, practices of spatial design between actors of different species can be brought into focus by means of a multispecies ethnographic approach.

Ethnography reloaded

Cultural anthropologist Alexa Färber sees the impetus to lend a voice to actors who have previously not or rarely been heard as something that has always been anchored in ethnography (Färber 2010: 100). The increasing interest in other-than-human perspectives in anthropological research fields means a further democratization of voices from the field. In this context, it is not only a question of no longer writing across research subjects and instead presenting their lifeworlds together with the actors but also of extending the canon of voices to be perceived to include animal ones. This contribution aims to outline methodical strategies for an urban anthropology beyond the human using the example of a multispecies ethnographic study in the urban culture of Podgorica. My epistemic interest in this is to examine cities as sums of human and nonhuman inhabitants and to understand the meaning of these relationships of many species for the design of urban space and culture.

The US anthropologists Laura Ogden, Billy Hall and Kimiko Tanita define multispecies ethnography as "ethnographic research and writing that is attuned to life's emergence within a shifting assemblage of agentive beings" (Ogden, Hall, and Tanita 2013: 6). Challenges of such an ethnography of many species are not only – as in any ethnography – to undertake the research guided by the field and the research process and to choose methods based on their epistemic value in the respective field but also to develop strategies for perceiving relationships between actors of different species and to capture other than human 'voices.' The framework of the research presented here is formed by the points of reference that George Marcus shaped in the late 1980s with the approach of a multi-sited ethnography (Marcus 1995). The perspective on canine actors was woven into the parameters of 'follow the people, the thing, the metaphor, the story, the biography and the conflict,' and it is, therefore, a matter of following the human and canine actors, the things in which these relationships materialize, the stories and biographies of all actors and the conflicts between the actors of different species. These six approaches to the field of relationships between humans and dogs were implemented as perceptual walks, participant observations, ethnographic interviews, and media and archive research. In doing so, the performative positioning of the ethnographer through her appropriation of the

research space of Podgorica encounters practices of the positioning of the actors and produces the research field as a network of relationships between actors of different species. The body of the researcher, which is undisputed as an initial point of ethnographic research, not only fulfils the function of creating the field of research in dialogue with its protagonists but is also, with all its possibilities of perception, a place and means of knowledge (Fenske 2017: 24). On the one hand, this physical commitment is about developing ways of reading the individual possibilities of body language expression,[3] on the other hand, it is about practicing an exchange between researcher and subjects at the level of body language. This focusing on the body of the researcher as an instrument of insight in an ethnography of many species means an emphasis on the acquisition of the object of research, which, for instance, Rolf Lindner has demanded in a total sense of a researcher opening all his senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, feeling (Lindner 2003: 186), or in the turn to the sensual dimension of ethnographic work as emphasized by ethnologist Regina Bendix (2006: 79) or, of course, approaches of a sensory ethnography with which anthropologist Sarah Pink reminds us of the constant presence of the researcher with all her senses in the field (Pink 2009).

(Multispecies) ethnography as footwork

On February 6, 2016, the white female dog and I were drawing lines through the same space in our movements through the city at the same time. The line of the ethnographer had reached the city a few days earlier, coming from the geographical north, and had (at the latest) since then meandered in constant appropriation through the dimensions of the research space of Podgorica – the built space, the space narrated in conversations and interviews, as well as the space depicted in (social) media and literature. Cultural and social science urban research provides a variety of methods for the ambulating appropriation of the built research space, such as nosing around, perceptual walks, go-alongs and participant observation. Ethnography as work on foot (Ingold and Vergunst 2008: 3), because of the constant drawing of research lines through the city, leads to points of intersection with lines of other actors. The practice of documenting the spatial appropriations and proliferation of all actors in the field, thus, traced as lines and points in mental maps abstracted from their movements, made the field appear as an interweaving of crossing points and knots, some looser, others tighter. Tim Ingold assumes that, for instance, walking, weaving, observing, singing, storytelling and writing occur along lines and that humans and other beings, thus, constantly create lines, so-called traces, understood as analytical figures of human and canine appropriations of space (Ingold 2016 [2007]: 1). Traces, which Ingold understands at first sight as physically perceptible forms of leaving

3 I also thank Michaela Fenske for the idea of body language literacy.

or inscribing traces on or into a surface, are also materialized in this research in encounters and narrated practices which are joined together on an analytical level to form the line of the respective being. "Follow the actors," in Marcus' sense, occurs in two ways here. Firstly, it is the actual following or accompanying human or canine actors along their spontaneous and ritualized routes. Furthermore, it means recording and documenting the lines. This two-dimensional application of following the traces also revealed multidimensional points of intersection along the different lines. They cross firstly on a physical level, secondly as narrated encounters and thirdly in the research material where points of intersection are revealed that were neither experienced nor reported as direct encounters by the actors.

From lines to contact zones

My line and that of the white female dog intersected again a few days after our first encounter. I escaped from my apartment and from the rain that had been continuing for days into a café in the Nova Varoš in order to work on the first entries in my research diary. When the dog lying in the opposite corner rose and moved towards my table, I recognized her as the dog from the Hercegovačka. The young woman sitting at the table next to me briefly greeted the dog, who turned to me immediately afterwards.

> [The female dog] now presses against me, I touch her on the back which she has pressed against my lower leg. Her fur is damp and greasy, as if every single hair was covered by an indefinable, sticky, greasy layer. At close range she is more beige than white. An indefinable smell of damp, mustiness and poorly ventilated toilet rises into my nose. Her eyes look at me from below, brightly, her mouth is opened to wide panting. I try not to think too much about what exactly could be stuck to her and now also sticking to my hand while she seems to be enjoying the contact.

The woman bent over towards me a little and explained in an apologetic tone that the dog was a little smelly because she was a stray. In the summer of 2015, she had appeared in front of the café "and wanted to come in." The woman, Tanja, persuaded the leaseholder of the bar to allow access to the dog. Because the café that the dog seemed to have chosen bears the name "Berlin," because the dog was not exactly slender and she also had something bearish about her, Tanja, some of the other waiters and waitresses and some of the regulars gave her the name *Angela*, after the German chancellor (research diary, February 11, 2016).

Tanja, usually dressed in dark clothes, with chin-length, smooth dark hair, is an artist in her thirties. She was born in Podgorica. Her father was a lawyer whose family ran a bakery in the Stara Varoš district which was destroyed in the Second World War and finally demolished along with large parts of the Ottoman Stara Varoš and replaced by streets and socialist residential buildings. Tanja grew up in Blok 5, one such neighborhood of socialist houses that was built on the outskirts of the city

from the early 1980s onwards. After her studies in the former capital Cetinje, she returned to Podgorica. Since then, she has been showing her collages at national and international exhibitions. As a sideline, she also works for an association supporting the rights of women in Montenegrin society. Except for having looked after the dogs of friends several times, she has never had much to do with dogs (cf. interview May 20, 2016). In the summer of 2015, the lines of Tanja and the white dog, whose origin and biography are completely unknown, intersected; the point of intersection was the terrace of the Café Berlin.

For Tanja, the Café Berlin has long been a place of ritualized action where she drinks her morning espresso with a little cold milk and brown sugar, early in the day from Monday to Wednesday and around midday from Thursday to Sunday. Ever since the wish that Angela had expressed – to enter the interior of the café – had been fulfilled, she has been regularly staying not only on the sidewalk in front of the café as well as on the terrace, but also in the interior of the café, which is pleasantly cool in summer and dry and warm in winter. One of the three entrance doors from the sidewalk opens on its own if crossed decisively. Tanja provided two bowls behind the bar for Angela, which are filled for the dog by the waitresses working in the café upon the dog's arrival. Angela visits the Berlin almost daily in the mornings and spends a few hours in or around the café and usually returns in the early evening. When Tanja and Angela encounter each other in the café, they greet each other with an exchange of a few friendly words, grunting and barking noises, tender hand movements across the head and the back and a nestling, with tail wagging, against Tanja's body, bent down to Angela (cf. research diaries, February 4 to September 10, 2016 and May 28 to June 29, 2017).

The Berlin is situated in the Njegoševa, one of the most important streets of the Nova Varoš district which developed from the late 19th century onwards after the Ottoman Podgorica was conquered by Montenegro. The Nova Varoš was built on the northern bank of the Ribnica, largely destroyed in the Second World War and then rebuilt as Titograd in the course of Podgorica's redesign (cf. Karačić and Vukanović 2013). The Café Berlin has been a well-known and established meeting place for different marginalized groups in the city for many years. As a café and bar, it is an intended point of intersection for human actors and, with Tanja's support, because of the desire for admission expressed by Angela, became a ritualized meeting point between the two actors of different species and a space that is now also partly open to dogs. "She is all over now," says Tanja with a circling movement of the head when I ask her, in our fourth interview on the terrace of the Berlin in June 2017, whether she knew how Angela spent her days and where she spent her time. Tanja told me about places, bars and outside dining areas which are located a few hundred meters away from the Café Berlin. She told me that Angela had set up a second base in the Skadar Café when the waitress who had fed Angela in the Montenegro Pub had

moved her workplace there. She further reported that Angela also visited Andrea, who works in a "Petshop"[4] only a few streets away where Tanja buys Angela's food, at her workplace. When Angela and Andrea meet in one of the cafés, Andrea is greeted excitedly by the dog. Angela follows Tanja into other venues and was seen, for example, soon after the opening of the Kafana Biro in the Bokeška and Tanja's and Andrea's first visits to the bar there. Since then, she has also regularly been there in the outside dining area as well as the interior. Angela accompanies guests and their dogs on walks through the nearby parks. Tanja tries to care for Angela's recurring injuries, mostly cuts on her paws, and, in this context, expresses her role as a significant other for Angela:

> I chase her with jod[sic] when she is hurt. [smiles] Now she won't come to me, it was like I was the only person she let look at her wound, and now she doesn't let me because I sprayed her a couple of times with jod [sic]. And now whenever I want to check something on her, even if it bubblegum that I want to remove, she runs away. (cf. interview on June 19, 2017; research diaries on February 4 to September 10, 2016 and May 28 to June 29, 2017).

Tanja not only feels responsible for removing the traces of the appropriation of space that have got under Angela's skin but also for limiting her in these endeavors. One evening in August 2016, for example, there was a lot of activity in the streets of the Nova Varoš. Young adults out for a stroll, families and begging people moved through the alleys of the pedestrian zone. The outside dining areas set up on the sidewalks of the Njegoševa were bursting at the seams so that some consumed their drinks standing in front of the bars. Some dogs were also moving through this hustle and bustle, some of them associated with people, some without people, alone or in groups. I sat with Emir, one of the main informants for this study, my dog Ferdinand and the stray[5] who had been accompanying me frequently almost since the beginning of my research were lying under our table. Tanja sat with some friends in the outside dining area in which Angela, the bitch, lay stretched out between the armchairs and tables on the ground. Two young men with a husky on a leash walked along the sidewalk between the entrance to the restaurant and the outside dining area. Angela and the stray under my table jumped up and followed the husky, barking loudly. Tanja got up and called Angela back to the outside dining area. I tried something similar with the stray, for whom I somehow felt responsible, but was less successful than Tanja. Angela had already been stretched out under the tables of the terrace again for a long time when I could still hear the high-pitched bark of the little stray between the music and the voices in the street (cf. research diary, August 21, 2016).

4 In many Montenegrin cities, "Petshop" is a term for a shop in which food and accessories for *kućne ljubimce* ("pets") and sometimes animals are also sold.

5 My research partners called him *lutalice* in Montenegrin and "stray" in English.

The Café Berlin, as a place in the urban space in which the young artist and the white dog had both appropriated, became the point of intersection of their lines through the overlapping practices of appropriation, and forms the starting point of the complex relationship between the woman and the female dog which both constantly renegotiate. Science and technology studies scholar Donna Haraway has developed the concept of contact zones as "mortal world-making entanglements" for the interpretation of the relationships between actors of different species, where "becoming with," that is, the joint becoming of highly diverse actors, occurs (Haraway 2008: 9). Haraway adopts the post-colonialist approach of linguist Mary Louise Pratt, who conceives of contact zones as an exchange between actors from different cultures who are in asymmetrical power relations and often also speak different languages (Pratt 1991, 2008 [1992]). Haraway further develops this approach as a – speaking with sociologists Lisa Jean Moore and Mary Kosut – "conceptual term used to describe the entanglements between species who do not share languages but are otherwise co-present and co-mingling organisms" (Moore and Kosut 2013: 30). One of Haraway's examples for a contact zone is the relationship between herself and her female dog Cayenne who practice dog sport together and can only be successful as a team if they understand each other to the extent that Cayenne, following Haraway's instructions, can master the agility course flawlessly. "Cayenne and I came close to killing each other in this contact zone. The problem was simple: we did not understand each other. We were not communicating; we did not yet have a contact zone entangling each other" (Haraway 2008: 215). Contact zones are understood as a meeting or being together of actors of different species who initiate processes of friction, conflict and negotiation in this togetherness. They are a joint becoming, synthetic arrangements that shape all participants anew. Contact zones in Pratt and Haraway's sense present the situative overlappings which have so far been defined as points of intersection of lines in this text and form ritualized, differentiated relationships with an increasing intensity. This contact zone between Tanja and Angela began to grow when Tanja believed she recognized a wish that had been expressed, yielded to it and was confirmed in her interpretation by Angela's actual entry into the café. In this contact zone, the young woman became a significant other for the female dog, a mediator who becomes involved in the conflicts between Angela and the environment and fights to gain rights for Angela. From the female white dog of unknown origin and biography who suddenly appeared in one place, came the canine individual Angela. "Contact zones change the subject – all the subjects – in surprising ways," Haraway writes (2008: 219).

Tanja tells of parallel lines that she and Angela draw through the urban space when Angela accompanies her from the Café Berlin to her apartment at night: "Sometimes, I feel like a part of the gang because I walk with her and Vučka, then we meet another dog in front of Dušan or two or three dogs, then another across

the street, and we all go happily seven or eight of us. I start barking sometimes [laughs]." On these joint walks, the practices of Tanja, who is on her way home late at night, mix with those of Angela who, together with the female dog Vučka, who one day in June 2006 had entered the Berlin with Angela, searches bars, trash cans and fast food snack bars for food. On one of these evenings of walking together, Tanja and Angela also finalized the negotiation of their relationship as a mediator and a street dog: "She was asking me once if I am going to take her, you know with her eyes, but I am not really fixed now for having a … I explained to her, I was … apologizing…" (interview, June 19, 2017).

Haraway's concept of the contact zone materializes in Tanja and Angela's example of the relationship between the two of them which began in a café that, despite many joint moments outside it, remains the spatial center of their meetings. Contact zones, according to Haraway, are not bound to a specific location but conceived of as an in-between of actors. This in-between, in the example discussed here, always materializes in the spatial dimension in which a point of intersection of lines emerges which the actors in the contact zone create for themselves as a ritualized place where they meet again and again, where they wait for each other, repeatedly carry out the same reciprocal practices of action and time and again renegotiate their relationships. Michel de Certeau understands the place as a momentary constellation of fixed points which is spun into a space as a network of moving elements (cf. de Certeau 1988: 217f.). By thinking about Haraway together with de Certeau, I would now like to argue that contact zones oscillate as constantly renegotiable interrelationships between place and space and that these three spheres create and condition each other. Contact zones, thus, emerge from places, understood as isolated intersections of lines, and they, in turn, ritualize intersections in space into specific places. De Certeau sees places more statically and spaces in motion (de Certeau 1988: 219). The movements of the actors in the (urban) space of Podgorica as a broad contact zone lead them repeatedly back to the places from which the direct contact zones arose, where the actors jointly became in order to jointly keep becoming in further expansions. The actors' constant reference back to a ritualized place, thus, produces the constant continuation of their contact zone.

Multispecies – multi-sited research in the contact zone

Tanja and Angela constantly recreate the Café Berlin for themselves as a place where their lines cross when their bodies are in the same place in space at the same time. The researcher now intervened in this intersubjective locality, also drawing lines through the city as a body in space, sitting in the café on the morning of February 6, 2016, thus, appropriating the place from which the contact zone between Tanja and Angela had grown for the purposes of research. The interaction between Angela and me, which, in turn, spawned the conversation between Tanja and me about

Angela and the relationship between the two, marked the researcher's entry into the everyday lives of the two of them. This interaction is interpreted here as a contact zone and explored with the strategies of *follow the people and the dogs*, *the thing*, *the metaphor*, *the story*, *the biography* and *the conflict* (cf. Marcus 1995). From the research on this relationship of several species, a new contact zone between the field and myself as a researcher is formed as the becoming of the researcher with her field. Each actor, each line of each actor brings stories and meanings into the contact zone where they mix and form new knots.

Regarding Donna Haraway and Cayenne, lines from Irish Catholic ancestors, incorporated scientific, (post-) feminist, scientific-philosophical capital and the history of herding dogs which were imported to herd the sheep of the gold diggers on this land at the end of the 19th century link on the Californian coast (Haraway 2008: 16). In the contact zone between Tanja, Angela and myself, two women of a similar age, both from an academically trained background, and a stray female dog meet on the semipublic ground of a café in the Montenegrin capital of Podgorica. My line, coming from Central European capitalism, from an urban culture that has known the practice of keeping luxury dogs[6] since its beginnings in early modernity, overlaps with the line of a young Podgoričanka.[7] The latter had spent most of her life in the post-socialist Podgorica, welcomes the fruitful effects of the country's international connections on the Montenegrin art scene, indulges from time to time in older people's memories of socialism as a time of security and community, takes a critical view of political strategies and the Europe-oriented course of the government in recent decades and repeatedly drew my attention to the fact that the Yugoslav President Tito and I celebrate our birthdays on the same day (cf. research diaries, February 4 to September 10, 2016 and May 28 to June 29, 2017, interviews on May 20, 2016 and June 19, 2017).

The exchange between Tanja and me took place mainly through the medium of language. We succeeded in finding a synthesis from my Montenegrin, which was still quite clumsy at the beginning of my research, and her very good English, which in the course of the research allowed me to learn many rare words of Montenegrin, and Tanja many English terms for canine body parts. The interactions with Angela, on the other hand, took place on a physical level, apart from the understanding of different verbalized languages. The presence and research, with all the senses at my disposal, made it possible to absorb information communicated by both actors, which, taken together, told the nature and stories of this relationship. Donna

6 The term of keeping luxury dogs is here oriented at the use of the term of the bourgeois luxury dog in Jutta Buchner-Fuhs based on cynological literature from the 19th century (Wörz 1896, cited in Buchner 1996: fn. 9).

7 Podgoričanin and Podgoričanka are the expressions for a man and a woman, respectively, from Podgorica.

Haraway's reflections on contact zones begin with the question: "Whom and what do I touch when I touch my dog?" (Haraway 2008: 3). Who do I touch when I touch Angela? Angela's greasy and dirty fur, which feels and smells so different from the body surface of dogs I am otherwise familiar with, telling a story of the outside in this interior space. Of places where her body, by moving in space, by drawing lines, has absorbed the smells, liquids and chewing gum sticking to her fur, which combine under my hand, in my nose and eyes to form an unfathomable and mysterious biography. Did Tanja notice my thoughts? In any case, she apologized for Angela's smell and explained that Angela had never consented to being washed but that in the summer, she sometimes swam in the Morača, one of the rivers that meander through Podgorica. Angela's attentive, cheerful eyes looked at me while Tanja told me that Angela might have been taken to the city from the coast because the seaside tourist spots were cleaned up every year for the summer season. She told me that when Angela was in heat in autumn, many male dogs had gathered around the café, and that she had soon become pregnant afterwards; and that Tanja, together with waiters and guests, had built a house from an old refrigerator in one of the side streets behind the café which was to protect Angela and her puppies from cold, heat, rain and snow. Suddenly, however, shortly before the presumed birth, Angela had disappeared and after several weeks suddenly reappeared in front of the café, however without puppies and with a large scar on her stomach instead. Tanja and many guests had been angry because everyone had been looking forward to the puppies. Tanja assumed that dog catchers from the city's animal shelter, the 'Azil,' had probably picked up Angela and neutered her there (cf. research diary, February 6, 2016).

Human research partners in this constellation play the role of narrators about the animal research partner with whom they have a relationship. These stories occur embedded into cultural narratives. Angela's unknown biography, the missing beginning of her physical being in the world, made her into a projection surface for a narrative that recurs in various forms. This narrative claims that stray dogs are moved by different people within and outside the country's borders. Thus, 'disturbing' dogs were brought to other places, particularly from districts which had no 'Azil,' to neighboring districts. Croatia was said to have so few stray dogs now because most of them were driven across the borders into Montenegro and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The narrative also reports that well-known street dogs who suddenly disappeared might have been sold "to Europe" to experimental laboratories and brothels (cf. interviews with Nebojša, July 19, 2016, Tamara and Emir, May 6, 2016; Šćepanović 2012; research diary, February 28 and September 7, 2016). These narratives are about the canine crossing of borders at different administrative levels and are characterized as being impossible without human intervention. These narratives mark an interior which can be seen in its entirety and an exterior in which incomprehensible processes occur. They convey the different appreciation of the particularly well-kept

coastal region and the rest of the country and point to Montenegro's self-image as a country outside 'Europe.' As an Austrian, I was often described as a fundamentally different 'European' by Montenegrin actors, and sometimes classified as a spy of the European Union and a mastermind in the trade of street dogs with the European Union (cf. especially research diary entries on September 7, 2016 and November 20, 2017). In those forms of this narrative of moving dogs which are about 'Europe,' the suspicion expressed in many research talks about the government's policy approaching the European Union might be reflected, and 'Europe' is constructed as a power that interferes in Montenegrin everyday phenomena such as the handling of street dogs and even enriches itself by doing so.[8]

Tanja's biography depicts the history of Podgorica as a city almost completely destroyed by German bombs in the Second World War which, from the 1950s onwards, was built up as Titograd to become the political and economic center of Yugoslavian Montenegro, and which created space for the steadily increasing number of human inhabitants through the construction of numerous residential buildings after the Second World War. The capital of Montenegro, known as Podgorica again, has an international orientation, especially towards Europe, having been governed predominantly by the Democratic Party of the socialists of Montenegro since the 1990s (cf. Bieber 2003; Rastoder 2003). This 'western' orientation is now reflected in Blok 5, the district where Tanja grew up and where her mother still lives, as a densification of space through the emergence of new residential buildings and shopping centers with numerous bars and cafés. Numerous buildings in the vicinity of the Café Berlin from the beginnings of the Nova Varoš and the construction boom of the young Titograd have been demolished and replaced by bright buildings designed with lots of glass that house cafés, hotels, embassies, consulates and other offices, as Tanja tells us several times. In 2015, for example, the hotel *Crna Gora*, a symbol of economic development in Yugoslavian Montenegro of the postwar era, was replaced by a Hilton chain hotel. In addition to numerous new buildings, the Mediterranean spirit of optimism is spread by squares that have been redesigned as places of leisure or places to stroll about in, such as the *Trg nezavisnosti* ('Independence Square'). When Montenegro became independent from Serbia in 2006, the square named after the communist national hero Ivan Milutinović was renamed the 'Square of the Republic' and changed from a parking lot into a spacious place with fountains and benches under trees. In March 2016, the Parliament decided to rename it again as *Trg nezavisnosti*. Entertainment is provided in the square via a large screen showing music, sports and advertisements and is a frequent location for rallies, concerts and open-air festivals (cf. e.g. Café del Montenegro 2016). The main source of income

8 Cf. interviews with Tanja, June 19, 2017; Tamara, June 26, 2017; Andrea, September 10, 2016; research diaries February 4 – September 10, 2016 and May 28 – June 29, 2017. On the self-location of Southeast European citizens, cf. especially Roth (1988).

for the South-Eastern European state is summer tourism in and around the coastal towns of Kotor, Tivat, Budva and Ulcinj, which, some of them only after the end of the First World War, came to Montenegro from the Ottoman Empire, the Kingdom of Venice and the Austro-Hungarian Empire (cf. Rastoder 2003).[9] Angela's narratively constructed biography now tells the story of a female dog who, like many other dogs on the coast, was brought inland before the start of the summer season that is of high importance for many workers living on tourism. Human actors remember that there have 'always' been street dogs in Montenegro, but that their number had been kept low through shootings and poisonings, also by the authorities. A steady increase in the number of stray dogs has been observed in recent years, especially in cities (cf. interviews with Tamara and Emir, May 6, 2016, Tanja, May 20, 2016, Darinka, July 6, 2016, Andrea, September 10, 2016). At the beginning of the millennium, animal rights activists called for the establishment of an urban asylum to house street dogs and, thus, protect their lives. The 'Azil' was built in Vrela Ribnička, the southernmost district of Podgorica, between the municipal landfill and the Roma settlement. It is always overcrowded and rarely accepts new dogs. Female dogs who are on heat or pregnant are picked up on the street by employees of the 'Azil,' neutered and set free again in the same place (cf. interviews with Tamara and Emir, May 6, 2016, and Senada, August 8, 2016; Nikolić 2014; Vijesti 2000; Nikolić 2014). In 2008, Montenegro enacted an animal protection law based on a western model (*Zakon o Zaštiti Dobrobiti* Životinja); since then, the shooting or poisoning of street dogs has been prohibited. Informants involved in animal protection do not primarily see this law as the reason for the increase but rather the fact that the keeping of dogs as social and leisure time partners, described as a "trend from the West or Europe" (cf. interviews with Tamara and Emir, May 6, 2016, Darinka, July 6, 2016, Maja, June 26, 2017, Saša, June 22, 2016), has been booming in recent years, particularly in the cities. On the one hand, diseased dogs or those who are no longer wanted were said to have be abandoned by their owners and continued to reproduce, and, on the other hand, unwanted puppies were abandoned. That many street dogs had originally been pets or family dogs was also used as an explanation as to why many of them belonged to a currently popular breed of dog (cf. interviews with Tamara and Emir, May 6, 2016, Darinka, July 6, 2016, Andrea, September 10, 2016). Angela's broad head and square, muscular physique are reminiscent of a Staffordshire terrier, an American Staffordshire terrier or a pit bull terrier, which have been among the most popular dog breeds in Montenegro in recent years.

9 On the importance of tourism for the Montenegrin economy, see e.g. the 2017 report of the World Travel and Tourism Council (2017) on Montenegro.

Knowledge generation in contact zones

My researching presence in the contact zone between Tanja and Angela lets me experience how the relationship between the young woman and the white street dog is structured, how it is constantly renegotiated and how the two of them also redesign themselves in this exchange between different species. Tanja's tales about Angela's possible biography project onto Angela the cultural narrative of dogs being moved by humans so that the coast remains as attractive as possible for international tourism, thus, making Angela an opportunity for me as a researcher to trace this narrative. Angela's greasy, dirty fur and her smell tell of her everyday practices as a street dog in the urban culture of Podgorica and let me experience how her line winds through the urban space, which spaces she appropriates and in which negotiations she might be involved. But Angela also behaves towards me as a researcher and other actors in a way which may be guiding the research attention just as much as the tales of her body and spoken narratives of human research partners can.

The male stray dog eventually returned to the Café Berlin on this summer evening after he had barkingly followed the two young men with the husky for a while. Emir and I wanted to go for a walk with him and Ferdinand to the nearby Njegošev Park. Angela came with us. On the street corner between the Skadar Café and the park stood several men. An older, bearded men held a schnauzer on a leash, pulled it towards him with a hectic movement and uttered the "gsht" hiss that had become so familiar to me when the three dogs ran towards the schnauzer. Angela planted herself in front of the two of them and stared, barking, at the schnauzer wriggling on the leash. Emir and I ran after the three of them, whereupon the man asked us in surprise: "Jesu li vaši?" ('Are they yours?') "The two small ones are," I said, feeling responsible for the stray who moved with me, whereupon the man tried to keep especially Angela away from his schnauzer. He stepped between the two and kicked a foot in her direction several times. Emir and I probably both wanted to get away quickly and made sure that we moved us and the dogs into the park. Emir said it was good that we had been there, otherwise the man would probably have attacked Angela (cf. research diary, August 21, 2016).

Ferdinand's presence in the fieldwork and, thus, also in the contact zones facilitated numerous situative conversations about dogs in Podgorica, and his interactions often initiated new contact zones between me and the research field. The design of my everyday life with a dog in Podgorica revealed to me the numerous public, semipublic and private spaces that were closed to dogs as well as the few that were open to them. In the contacts he made, I was pointed again and again to the differences that are made between street dogs and *kućni psi* ('house dogs') or *vlasnički psi* ('owner dogs'). The situation of conflict which Angela's making contact opened up at this point of intersection constituted a decisive moment in my positioning of dogs with a home or owners in the field. From my perspective, which resulted

from my cultural embedding and my knowledge about the history of the domestication of dogs, the relationship between humans and the dogs called house dogs in Montenegrin represents the normal case. Accordingly, the ethnographic interest was on the relationship between humans and stray dogs as a form of relationship which was 'foreign' to the researcher in an urban culture. The 'house dog' who, particularly in the cities, is usually kept as a purebred and dearly bought social and leisure partner or as a prestigious object, was described by human actors as a post-socialist cultural phenomenon, whereas there had "always" been stray dogs, abandoned dogs or descendants of dogs kept in rural spaces for hunting, herding or as watch dogs (cf. interviews with Saša, June 22, 2016; Maja, June 26, 2017; Tamara and Emir, May 6, 2016; Tamara, June 8, 2017; research diary, February 6, 2016.).[10] Accordingly, starting from the usual horizons of meaning, I first positioned the 'house dog' as an actor between humans and stray dogs. The figure of the street dog was classified as further away from humans than the 'house dog' in this first interpretation, starting out from the direct perceptibility of the human-dog hegemony. The determination with which Angela had stared down the schnauzer in 'her' neighborhood, however, allowed me, indeed standing behind Angela, to suddenly see the situation from the perspective of the female street dog, to rewind the field accordingly and look at it from the perspective of the historical figure of the street dog. This figure constituted, albeit in smaller numbers than today, a fixed component in urban and village spaces of socialist Yugoslavia and moved, in contrast to the few 'house dogs' who were mainly used for hunting, herding or guarding and otherwise lived in kennels, through the streets. The number of street dogs in the urban cultures of Montenegro rose with the number of 'house dogs' as 'luxury dogs.' Nowadays, street dogs as actors in the urban culture of Podgorica, therefore, do not only negotiate their spaces with human but also with canine city dwellers who, for the last few decades, have not only been living in kennels but are taken for walks on the street as 'house dogs' according to their new meaning as leisure partners and prestige symbols of humans, and who have a different status in this urban culture than street dogs. The schnauzer was protected especially from Angela, and only to a lesser degree from the other two dogs who did not seem to be street dogs. The little stray kept accompanying me over the months of the fieldwork again and again in the morning and the evening on my walks through our common city quarter, also into the '*pasi* park' ('dog park'), which had been initiated by Rajko, a city dweller with a dog, as

10 This "always" was the answer I received as *uvijek* or, in English, as "always," whenever I asked, usually phrased identically, since when had there been stray dogs. Further enquiries revealed that the respondents, who were aged between 21 and 65 years old at the time of the interviews, perceived the presence of stray dogs as normal in their course of life of varying lengths. A conscious perception in their everyday life with stray dogs, however, was always the quantitative increase in recent times.

the first of its kind in Montenegro on a large green area in my and his residential area. The visit of the stray dog to the 'dog park,' which had been founded for leisure time with house dogs, repeatedly caused irritation. Even after the veterinarian had certified his complete health, his presence prompted other walkers to warn me again and again about him and the diseases he could transmit to Ferdinand. Street dogs, Rajko told me on one of our go-alongs, were a different kind of dog. They may be immune to diseases; however, they could transfer them to our 'house dogs.' Street dogs were also happy in the street because, in contrast to 'our' dogs, Ferdinand and Rajko's shepherd dog Rea, they were not bothered by cold, heat, rain or snow. Rajko's typification of dogs makes the street dog into an entity that is fixed in a taxonomy from the outset. However, *ulični* ('street') and *kućni* ('house') turned out to be fluid attributions because through the act of abandonment, a *kućni* can transform itself into a *ulični* in a few moments, while the return into the other category is less likely but certainly does occur.

Contact zones as research spaces for an urban anthropology beyond the human

Contact zones are interrelationships that arise in the urban space studied here at the intersections of the lines of practices of spatial appropriation of the actors of many species. Points of intersection occur through the repeated meeting of all actors involved in the contact zone and, thus, form ritualized spaces of negotiation of relationships. The contact zone as, in de Certeau's words, a network of moving elements (de Certeau 1988: 219) is constantly recreated in the space. It is precisely such places that give the ethnographer access to the field of urban relationships of many species, to the consideration of urban culture from the perspective of an urban anthropology beyond the human in a space which is designed from these relationships of many species.

In the summer of 2015, a young woman's relationship with a street dog began in the Café Berlin. The practices of negotiation in this relationship between Tanja and Angela gave Angela, who is assigned to the public space as a street dog, access to an interior space. In the contact zone between Tanja and the female dog, Angela received this name which binds her to the central place of the contact zone and an imaginary biography, generated from the cultural narratives of the research space, which assigned her an identity in the urban culture. On an analytical level, contact zones function as a canalization of urban cultural phenomena and processes which are carried via the lines of the actors to the places where they, in turn, become tangible for research into multispecies negotiations of urban spaces and analyses of the respective urban culture. Angela's origin from 'western' breeds of dog, which are becoming increasingly common in post-socialist urban culture, is truly written all over her face. The biography constructed for her testifies to the attention paid

to the care of the coastal region as a source of income and international center of attraction for the state of Montenegro. The line that Angela draws through the Nova Varoš as a construct and product of cultural processes of transformation of the Europeanizing[11] urban culture of Podgorica takes its starting point in a café located in one of the few original buildings of the urban quarter from the beginning of the 20th century still in existence, runs through this quarter, which is constructed by politics as a stage for Podgorica's departure to the West, and leads to the 'Azil' and, thus, to post-socialist practices of action, such as the castration of street dogs.

The final step of this research will aim to interpret the (political) practices of action, forms of relationships, conflicts and narratives captured in contact zones, to bring together threads of action from different times and structures, and, not least, to create a new contact zone on paper.

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11 In the context of this research, "Europeanizing" means, first of all, attempts to locate various trends or phenomena in the urban culture of Podgorica that originate in the field. In a further step, Europeanization is of interest here as a doing Europe or doing West as everyday cultural processes of negotiation with innovations perceived as 'coming from there' and threats on a social and governmental political level which manifest themselves, for example, in the stories about an interest from the side of the European Union in marketing Montenegrin's street dogs. Europeanization as an analytical description of practices of action and negotiation in the field of Podgorica's urban culture can be traced back, as Klaus Roth already noted at the end of the 1980s, much further than to the transition from Socialism to post-Socialism in Yugoslavia and Montenegro's pro-European course in government policy since the beginning of the 1990s (cf. Roth 1988).

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