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More on Cannibalism and the Development of Early Human Society

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ABSTRACT

A substantial body of archaeological research over the past 25 years supports the proposition that Paleolithic and Neolithic cannibalism was a sub-optimal survival strategy. This is because early modern humans had to compete with non-human scavengers and predators for meat, and so plant food became essential for survival. We now know that 'man the hunter' was successful in relatively few hunts, and so probably lived on the margin until foraging skills developed sufficiently to provide nutritious supplements not available from meat. Seasonal variations in food animals caused food stress, thereby depressing women's fertility. This probably promoted intergroup co-operation, rather than cannibalism.

Keywords: *cannibalism, dietary effects on hunters, butchering and defleshing human remains, nutrition, body fat and female fertility, low probability of cannibalism for human survival.*

INTRODUCTION

'Cannibalism' commonly evokes responses of repugnance, amusement or 'we don't do things like that' in most people. For the researcher into the question why evidence of cannibalism has been found in Europe, the Americas, Micronesia and Oceania, but only a few instances in Africa, at least until the revolt against British colonialism in Kenya in the 1960s. Cannibalism thus raises a scientific challenge, namely to explain why the phenomenon left its imprint on so many archaeological sites in Europe.

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In an earlier article, I argued from a social anthropological viewpoint that during the late Pleistocene, cannibalism was a sub-optimal survival strategy for several socio-demographic reasons. Since then, I have become aware of a substantial body of meticulous archaeological research that supports my original conclusion, and raises several interesting avenues for further research. This paper is divided into sections that deal respectively with how early hominins fitted into the overall predation system, in which predatory species were significant competitors of anatomically modern humans (AMH), their efficiency as hunters and scavengers, seasonal changes in the availability of prey, and nutrition, including the nutritional effects of cooking. Also discussed are the 'proofs' of cannibalism, the relationship between body fat and fertility, environmental constraints on human predation, especially climatic change, and how changes in early human physiology may have influenced whether or not early hominins ate each other persistently.

Together these factors also compel the conclusion that persistent cannibalism was a sub-optimal survival strategy.

HOMININ AND NON-HOMININ PREDATION PATTERNS IN THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RECORD

Anatomically Modern Humans (AMH) were omnivorous predators who competed with other carnivores for meat, obtained by hunting and scavenging. The availability and types of prey animal early man hunted or scavenged successfully, naturally depended on several factors, including climatic and environmental change, adaptive cognitive, physical and behavioural changes in both hominins and their prey, and the degree of competition for specific types of prey or dead meat. The amount and types of mammalian prey that early man ate depended on his hunting techniques, his toolkit and his weapons. Finally, after killing his prey, early man's sociological development was also important, especially where large prey animals were successfully hunted in groups, and required the transportation of the meat from the hunting site to the consumption site. During six months' research among the Dobe !Kung in 1970, the author witnessed how, after large prey, like a giraffe, had been killed, one of the hunters went to fetch porters from the camp while the others protected the corpse while butchering it into narrow long strips that were hung up in tree branches to dry, so as to lighten and preserve the meat. John Marshall's 1957 film 'The Hunters' provides a good example of these processes (Foley 2009: 3, 5–6).

This reveals the importance of an understanding of scavenger behaviour, particularly of avians, who tend to be forgotten by researchers, since they are seldom found in close proximity to humans. This situation was likely to have obtained during and after the late Pleistocene. Additionally, the size and social organization of the hunting band must have influenced both the division of the spoils of the hunt, its women's fecundity and the amount of manpower available to it for obtaining food and providing mutual protection.

Thus, early Paleolithic hominin hunters were part of a complex, dynamic ecosystem of predation and scavenging, which determined their caloric intake, cognitive and physical development and the evolution of their social organization. Developments in tool making indicate the increased mental development and cognition, physical growth, and the nutritional and cognitive benefits of increased meat intake. We may add to this the supposition that trade, inter-marriage (Heyer *et al.* 2011: 62–64, 73), and the dissemination of knowledge, propagated these cultural developments as hominin populations in specific areas interacted and probably co-operated in hunting, intermarriage, trade and defence (Kurland and Bekerman 1985: 73). If the research on hunting societies published over the past 60–70 years is any indication, an important component of hunters' store of knowledge is their understanding of the reproductive practices of their prey, and the long-term impact of over-hunting on their diet.

In the early 1970s, the possibility of overhunting was a common topic of conversation among !Kung hunting bands in Namibia, as they planned their hunting strategy for the following week's hunt, and for the rest of the season. During the dry season certain types of *cervidae* disappeared until the first rains, so there were substantial seasonal changes in the composition and plants of their diet. The importance of this point is that the variety of osteological and other relics (such as fossilized pollen) found in archaeological excavations, is partly the result of hunting and scavenging preferences, and partly the result of seasonal changes. Here there was a major difference between Africa and Europe: Africa, especially the northern and southern regions, was substantially more arid than Europe, a factor that affects hunting and scavenging among the few extant groups that still subsist on these activities. Finally, the !Kung were also aware of the different composition of different types of meat, which was reflected in the prey they preferred.

In the Kalahari Desert there are far more scavengers than competing predators. The scavengers, both mammalian and avian, can strip

a 200-kilogram animal in less than an hour and a half. This raises a point seldom discussed, namely that if contemporary man's most efficient competitors in hunting are scavengers and not other predators, the same might well have been true of late Paleolithic man as well. We should remember that scavengers like hyenas and African Wild Dogs are serious competitors to hunters using relatively primitive technology. Thus, the osteological relicts that archaeologists uncover and analyze with ever-increasing accuracy probably do not represent the full amount of the actual prey killed by the group's hunters. If the Dobe San are anything to go by, hunters lose up to a third of the animals they kill (Gerald D. Sack, Unpublished Research Notes, 1971-2).

In competition with avian scavengers and predators, early hominins must have been at a particularly big disadvantage, given birds' long-distance vision and rapid arrival at the kill site. At the same time, smaller scavengers like foxes are easily driven off, but nevertheless, the bones discovered in hominin home bases, must have been far less than the actual osteological residue that would have accumulated, had all the prey been successfully recovered. A final point to consider is the quantity of successfully hunted and retrieved prey that is consumed on the hunt. Again, the Dobe San are opportunist hunters, happily killing and consuming small prey which are not worth bringing back home, since the individual shares would be very small indeed (*Ibid*). The nutritious value of such small prey is of high utility to the hunters, particularly while they are running down their prey. Since the poison used by the San on their arrows is relatively slow-acting, a large wounded animal can lead the hunters on a merry chase for as long as 7–10 days, in the case of a giraffe, for example (*Ibid*).

Naturally, this discussion is obviously not a critique of paleoarchaeologic methodology, but simply raises points that are not always taken into consideration.

THE IMPACT OF CLIMATIC CHANGE ON HUNTING AND SCAVENGING

To a large degree, late Pleistocene hunters and gatherers in Africa were also subject to similar endogenic changes in their subsistence system, which, however, were probably more frequent and more extreme than those in Europe. It was axiomatic when I was an anthropology student in the late 1960s, that the lower the rainfall in any area in Africa, the greater its annual variability, and the more likely it was that prolonged droughts would occur. European rainfall is both higher and more regular, which would have provided late Pleistocene hom-

inin hunters and gatherers with congenial hunting and foraging habitats. John D. Speth contended that in regions where there is a marked difference between hot and cold periods of the year, groups accustomed to high animal-protein intakes during one season, were likely to suffer from 'food stress' and the depletion of their body fat reserves during the winter (Speth 1987: 20–22). This may have led to persistent changes in the timing of births.*

Another point not always considered regarding hominin predation, is that it favoured specific traits by promoting the selection of those most conducive to good health and predation (White 2001: 86–88; 93; Olshansky, Carnes and Butler 2003: 50–55). One of the points made by Olshansky *et al.* (2003: 95), is that

> Designs that seriously hamper survival in youth will be weeded out (selected against) because most affected individuals will die before having a chance to produce offspring. More important, anatomical and physiological quirks that become disabling only after someone has reproduced will spread (*cf.* Lieberman 2013: 16–18; 20–21; 23).

The high nutritional quality of meat was thus crucial to the physiological, mental and social development of early man. A 'bioenergetic' model developed to evaluate the energy requirements of AMH, especially his brain metabolic requirements (Leonard and Robertson 1992: 179–180), showed that they were surprisingly high among the young, but declined with age (*Ibid.*: 180). Also unexpected was the contention that after the age of two years, when at rest, the brain requires more energy than the body in order to develop (*Ibid.*: 181–182).

The emergence of *homo erectus* and its descendants, therefore, required a substantial increase in both the quantity and quality of food, and in the amount of energy expended in food collection in order to support the increased energy requirements of the developing human brain (*Ibid.*: 186–191). The point here is that a higher quality diet, therefore, was a *sine qua non* for the development of *homo sapiens*, precisely during the period when east Africa was becoming drier. This obviously meant that substantially larger quantities of protein and carbohydrates were required just when their harvesting became more energy demanding. One possible solution could have been cannibalism, which would have provided closely matched edible energetic solutions to what the human brain required. The fact that cannibalism seems not

to have been widely practiced in Africa at that point in time, then, raises an important but still unanswered question.

If the solution was cannibalism, it would have been either endocannibalism (the consumption of group members), or exocannibalism (the consumption of non-group members) (White 2001: 88). Exocannibalism was logically preferable for group survival. If exocannibalism was practiced on the relatively young, they could potentially make lengthy contributions to the bands' acquisition of vegetable and animal food. This suggests that the consumption of elderly group members would be both efficient regarding the investment of energy in food getting, and the number of mouths participating in the proceeds of the hunt and gathering. Interestingly, among the Siberian Chuckchi in the contemporary period, this was a major rationalization for 'voluntary death' (suicide with the assistance of lineage members) (Willerslev 2009: 693–694).

The potential drawback to endocannibalism of the elderly, of course, is the loss of their knowledge and experience. The evolution from *homo erectus* to *homo Neanderthalensis* and *homo sapiens* took a long time – between 1.6 million to 800,000 years. It is thus possible that the increased increments of metabolic energy required for the completion of early man's cerebral development were sufficiently spread out, as to make the process sustainable with only relatively small increments in the quantity and quality of the food required, thereby obviating the need for cannibalism that at first seemed necessary.

We cannot establish whether late Paleolithic man persistently practised endocannibalism or not. However, the analysis of the sexual and age composition of cave-dwelling groups should provide insights into the role endocannibalism might have played in the complex biological, ecological, climatic and predatory system in which man developed and competed with other predators and scavengers. This is particularly true of the competition for the high-quality food that gave him the evolutionary advantages, of longevity and cognitive development.

To assess the impact of primitive exocannibalism would require DNA testing of a vast quantity of paleosteological material. The question is whether the investment in time, effort and material would be worthwhile, something I am not qualified to comment on. Speaking as an anthropologist, however, there is a tantalizing hint regarding potential endocannibalism of the elderly, which derives from Chuckchi and Innuit 'voluntary suicide', that is, suicide of the elderly performed with the assistance of kinsmen (Willerslev 2009: 693–694). Research-

ers into the topic, however, argue about the 'reason' for the practice, namely whether it derives from an altruistic concern for the well-being of the band, or is a religious ritual, as Willerslev contended. Still other researchers, however, think that this type of suicide was rare among the Innuit, though having similar motivations. It appears that the religious motivation derives from Innuit beliefs in the afterlife (Willerslev and Vitebsky 2015: 1–23).

Sandgathe *et al.* (2011: 248–250) and Rendu *et al.* (2014: 5), showed that already in the late Paleolithic period and among Neanderthals, there was evidence of purposeful burials, without evidence of associated cannibalism. This suggests that both purposeful burials and cannibalism were selected, purposeful acts, rather than unplanned and episodic events. Both sources hint at the absence of other non-human bones in the 'graves'. This deliberate separation of human from non-human remains also suggests a different attitude towards the remains. While this point is seldom specifically raised in instances of reported cannibalism, its absence would appear to suggest that cannibalized corpses were regarded as food, rather than items to be respected or revered. Moreover, both reports specifically note that non-cannibalistic burials were of complete corpses, in specific poses, relatively 'untainted' by other non-human bones, while cannibalized bones were scattered and mixed up with animal bones (*cf.* Saladié *et al*. 2015: 3–4). They stated (2015: 18), that

> In general, most descriptions of European prehistoric cannibalized assemblages describe a butchering process that is similar for humans and animals, as a result of a consistent pattern in the exploitation of meat, bone and brains of the bodies. The only possibly ritual processing described in any of these cases was that applied to the skulls in some of the assemblages that contained anatomically modern human remains.

This, together with the cave bear skulls found in Polish (Zbiorowa 1989; Baca *et al.* 2012) and French sites (Joachim 2002: 58; Montelle 2022), suggest a direct link between the skulls and ritual attitudes towards them. Karavanić (1993: 100–102), Wunn (2001: 459–460) and Bednarik (2010: 14–17) cite earlier research linking cave bear ritual sites to human cannibalism, but both warn that most of the previously published material was more speculative than scientific (Chase 1987: 6–9). Similarly, it has been argued that the reported evidence for at

least some purported Neanderthal burials is suspect (Dibble *et al*. 2015: 649–657; Trinkaus 1985: 203–216).

David W. Frayer *et al.* (2006: 519–524) argued that many of the defleshing marks on skulls could not have been made in order to scalp or deflesh for eating purposes, and concluded that there was little evidence for cannibalism in the Krapina cave. Later, (Frayer *et al.* 2020: 714–5), however, the researchers suggested that the identifying mark of cannibalism was the smashing of bones to get at the marrow or brain. If this was absent, the defleshing was probably for mortuary purposes. This seems logical, as opposed to arguing that cut marks must be either mortuary or evidence of cannibalism. It is, of course, also conceivable that the defleshing was for both ritual purposes and consumption in some cases (Ullrich 2005: 249–261). Tony Phifer and Joshua Zaffos (2019/2020) came to the same conclusion, after an examination of the defleshing marks on several bones, and thought the 'cut marks' could have been produced by natural means. In sum, at present the debate remains open.

HOW EFFICIENT WAS HOMININ PREDATION?

Most research into the development of hominin predation assumes that AMH were efficient hunters, otherwise they would not have spread and colonized Europe and Asia. There has, in fact, been rather little research into hominin predation, and what was apparently the first such investigation into the topic, that of Schaller and Lowther (1969: 307–341), had only a minor impact on subsequent research into 'man the primaeval hunter'. The author remembers reading the article as an undergrad, and finding it thought provoking, but did not pursue the topic further then.

In the context of this examination of whether (AMH) practiced cannibalism, however, it is relevant. Schaller and Lowther were interested in non-human carnivorous predators' hunting patterns and degree of successful hunts in order to evaluate how efficient early hominid predation and scavenging had been. They showed how AMH's degree of success in hunting and scavenging influenced their evolution, particularly their fecundity and cerebral development. Schaller and Lowther also found that group hunting was more productive than individual hunting (*Ibid.*: 314), and that the relationship between group size and group territory was important (*Ibid.*: 319–322). Since human hunting and gathering societies are not completely dependent on meat for survival, there was probably little benefit for Paleolithic hunters in defending the territories in which they hunted.

Schaller and Lowther (1969: 312–315; 319–323; 325–329) made several other important observations: first, both carnivores and Paleolithic hominids probably had flexible band composition. Second, the extent of hunting domains determined band size; third, their degrees of success in both hunting and scavenging prey could not provide the large amounts of meat required for the female members of hominid hunting bands to be continuously fertile, and to ensure continued cerebral and cognitive development. Finally, neither hominid nor non-hominid predators could have survived solely by scavenging, so both scavenging and predation were essential for AMH's survival, mainly because his competitors for scavenged meat were numerous and efficient.

Haws (2004: 50–106) and Speth (1989: 329–343; 2010: 64–65), similarly, but from different viewpoints, questioned the assumption that AMH specifically targeted mammalian prey, because meat was a 'high quality' food. Speth even contended that the excessive protein consumption consequent on persistent and successful hunting would have had deleterious health effects on successful hunting societies (Hardy *et al*. 2022: 103105; Sack 2021: 34–35). This is because high percentages of protein in the human diet can be toxic, especially where water is scarce. Speth (2010: 66–68) also contended that lean meat is less nutritious than fatty meat, and that there was a degree of variation in the fattiness of animal prey successfully hunted by the Hadza.

The latter contention is important for our purposes, since it suggests an adaptive advantage for cannibalism, if Ubric's contention is correct. Again, in Africa, the ethnographic and archaeological data suggest that this requires more study. A study of the Aboriginal diet in Australia, bore out Speth's contentions (Smith and Smith 2003: 39–52).

Thus, AMH were part of a complex system of predation, scavenging, group composition, and territorial behaviour, which permitted them to survive and develop. Group living, Schaller and Lowther (1969: 315–316) thought, had both advantages (mainly the opportunity for young members to learn the most efficient scavenging and hunting behaviours), and disadvantages (mainly the requirement for relatively large quantities of meat, which made a sexual division of labour as critical for group survival as it was among non-human predators).

Regarding the significance of this for cannibalism, we may note that hunting (and consuming) hominid competitors in a shared territory, had both a major advantage (more food), and a major disadvantage (less trade and potential spouses). We cannot determine which was the

more important, but I tend to agree with what Dart thought (in discussions we had in his laboratory in the early 1960s): it was likely that *Australopithecus Africanus* preyed on the less-developed *A. robustus*, at least in Southern Africa. Similarly, more modern gracile Australopithecines in Central and Eastern Africa, may well have preyed on *A. bosei*. The fact that evidence for these behaviours is absent, requires more investigation, but suggests that cannibalism may not have been necessary in Africa, in order for hominin survival. It also suggests that since the AMH population was so small, co-operation rather than competition for food was more likely.

Several recent examinations of European Neanderthal sites containing evidence of cannibalism (Sutton 2022) raise the possibility that Neanderthal cannibalism was part of their violent social behaviour, since not all osteological relicts with signs of breakage were consumed. Gat (2015), for example, argued that intergroup violence was prevalent among many hunter-gathering societies reported on during the last 150 years, as well as in many of the Neanderthal groups reported on in the professional literature. Both Sutton and Gat were wary of concluding that cannibalism followed inter-group violence, however, and tended rather, to stress that injuries resulting from violence show, in both prehistoric and historic societies, that hunters, gatherers and agriculturalists fought over territory that they needed for survival. Gat (2015: 113) even made the unexpected observation that in some recorded instances of intergroup violence in 'traditional societies,' a higher percentage of woman were killed than men, and were frequently also abducted in raids (Gat 2015: 117–118). He ascribed these actions to the fact that 'women were another vital and inherently scarce resource under competition' (2015: 123).

This assertion, however, rests on an unproven assumption, namely, that women were a scarce 'commodity.' If this was the case, why were (and are) so many non-Western societies polygamous? Additionally, as Slater showed many years ago in her hypothetical model of AMH reproduction, women were likely to produce three surviving children, on condition that they mated with men from groups other than their natal ones (Slater 1959: 1042–1059). Moreover, contemporary birth statistics show that in most countries, female children outnumber male children at birth, and the sexual imbalance increases with age. In other words, men are the scarce resource!

Hortolà and Martínez-Navarro (2012), proposed an alternative hypotheses, namely that the numerous non-African sites excavated that revealed signs of violent death and cannibalism, were part of the

Quaternary Megafaunal Extinction, in which many large mammalian species simply disappeared, including the Neanderthals, who were probably hunted to extinction in a rapidly changing environment. The Quaternary changes, they hinted, made women foragers extremely important for AMHs' survival, without mentioning that they were in short supply.

Degioanni *et al*. (2019) argued that a small decline in Neanderthal women's fertility – of only about 4 %, – would have been sufficient to lead to their extinction in the face of competition with the cognitively and technologically superior *homo sapiens* colonizers of Europe. Bocquet-Appel and Degioanni (2013), refined this analysis by modelling a relatively small Neanderthal population in Europe (*cf*. Gilpin *et al*. 2013; Melchionna 2018). Thus, it appears that some of the bones with marks indicating butchery may have been instances of intergroup conflict, probably over food-producing territory, although cannibalism may have occurred.

SEASONAL CHANGES IN HUNTERS' FOOD SUPPLY

The !Kung draw our attention to an important point that is sometimes forgotten, namely that the availability of prey animals changes seasonally (Speth 1987: 22), so collections of animal bones in archaeological sites provide indications as to in which season they were hunted. It seems logical to suppose that after the breeding season in spring or early summer, the supply of animal food was at its most plentiful and hence most varied. As autumn and winter approached, there were both fewer prey animals and fewer different types of prey available, until most of them disappeared (*i.e*., migrated elsewhere to more clement climes) until early spring. The supply of plant foods, similarly also would have varied with the changing seasons. Europe was probably blessed with more varieties of plant food than Africa, and possibly more abundant large prey animals, including the auroch, which had no counterpart in Pleistocene Africa in terms of its size, apart from the elephant or rhino. The latter were not seen as prey animals either by the !Kung or the Zulu, whom I studied between 1970–1978.

At the same time as prey animals increased in types and numbers, so the predator populations must have increased and decreased seasonally. The African predators and more particularly pack hunters like hyenas, African Wild Dogs, and lions were probably more dangerous competitors than most of the European predators, because of their relatively high kill rates. In contrast, solitary predators like leopards, cheetahs, civets and other large feline hunters, who were less efficient, nev-

ertheless increased the competition with human predators in a fashion similar to sabre-tooth tigers in Europe. Finally, the scavengers in Africa and Europe while similar in some respects, especially hyenas, jackals, leopards, vultures and buzzards, would have taken their toll of hominin-killed animals, perhaps more so in Africa, where their numbers are (and probably were) substantial. The author observed a mature kudu stripped of meat by scavengers in as brief a period as 30 minutes, so pursuing hunters would have had relatively meagre pickings. These factors suggest that hunting as a way of life exerted strong evolutionary pressures on early hominin hunting societies (Garriga *et al*. 2016: 19–26).

I would also venture to suggest that eating fresh water fish in Africa was probably less common than in Europe, as many African fish live in muddy water, and are consequently less palatable than European fresh water fish. This may partly explain why most South African Bantu-speaking tribes have taboos on eating fish, notably the Zulu. Finally, in Africa there are dangerous predators that make riverine fishing more hazardous than in Europe, notably crocodiles, and the hippopotami, which, while not predators, are territorial, aggressive and dangerous.

The Thonga are a neighbouring tribe of the Zulu, whose diet is markedly different to the Zulus': the Thonga ate both a lot of maritime fish, and legume soup, and the most visible testimony to these items' nutritious effect, was the absence of the protuberant bellies and reddish tint to the hair so common between 1970–1978 among the Zulu. The Zulus' malnutrition was due to rural poverty and the absence of most family heads at work during the ploughing season. Since Zulu women could not handle cattle, this meant that nutritious traditional foods were not cultivated, and were replaced by an exceptionally high carbohydrate diet, principally composed of bleached maize, purchased from White traders.

NUTRITION

Human nutrition is an exceptionally complex subject, that requires an interdisciplinary approach, and so some of the common assumptions we have discussed above will probably require modification. A particularly clear explication of the complexity of human nutrition and food requirements is that of Leonard (2012: 251–324). Additionally, the increasing use of ethnographic studies of extant hunting and gathering societies elucidate the evolutionary implications of an overly rich protein diet, subject to the caveat, of course, that their contemporary behaviour is probably more the outcome of their being pushed out of

their previous hunting preserves as a result of colonialization and the modernization of contemporary agriculture.

It is important to remember that high carbohydrate diets are not necessarily bad, despite what is commonly thought today. The fact is that carbohydrates constitute between 3 % and 50 % of the diets of many contemporary hunter-gatherer societies, but this did not prevent them from surviving several thousand years on such diets. Thus, we may conclude, carbohydrates are not necessarily 'bad', depending on their constituent elements, especially if their source is natural, as opposed to processed carbohydrates (Ströhle and Hahn 2011: 429–435). There is also an interesting 'relationship between carbohydrate intake and different ecoenvironments' (*Ibid*.: 433), with moderate carbohydrate intakes characterizing forager diets at latitudes between '11°–40° north or south of the Equator' (*Ibid*.: 433). Low carbohydrate diets characterized forager societies north or south of these latitudes, with meat being the major food consumed there (*Ibid*.: 433). The authors concluded that it appeared that low carbohydrate diets developed at these latitudes 'late in human evolution (*i.e*., between 46,000 and 7,000 years ago)' (*Ibid*.: 433).

In Paleolithic East Africa, Ubick (2016) argued that a species of AMH developed, which had the ability to store the excess body fat necessary for reproduction. This thesis is developed further below; here, we may remark that carbohydrates provide the human body with more fat than meat does, so a mixed foraging-hunting diet would reduce the necessity for cannibalism as a survival strategy. Since humans are 'limited in their capacity to convert protein into energy', it has been suggested that Neanderthal man developed

> a 'bell' shaped thorax and a wide pelvis … at least in part, as an adaptation to a high protein diet. A high protein diet created a need to house an enlarged liver and urinary system in a wider lower trunk (Ben-Dor *et al*. 2016: 357–368; *cf.* Ben-Dor *et al*. 2021; 1–30; Brand-Miller *et al*. 2015: 252–268; Carrera-Bastos *et al*. 2011: 15–35).

An enlarged liver was required to process the high percentages of protein in the Neanderthal diet, as after metabolizing the protein into energy, the waste had to be eliminated. Because of the severe winters in North America and northern Europe, there was probably less vegetable protein available then than in Africa, hence the protein-rich meat diet required anatomic and metabolic physiological changes. The authors also made the important point, often forgotten, that the Neander-

thals probably also prepared quantities of preserved meat for the winters, in the form of pemmican, to replenish the decreased fat they got from their prey from winter hunting. Similarly, the !Kung of Namibia sun-dried excess meat to make 'biltong' from hunts for 'snacks' when it was too hot to hunt (Gerald Sack, Unpublished Research Notes, 1970-5), but this was a minor part of their diet. Another source has attributed the persistent increase in Type 2 diabetes to modern dietary changes from high protein to high-carbohydrate diets, for example (Brand-Miller *et al*. 2012).

Obviously, the nature of the environment influences hunting and foraging: Kurland and Beckerman (1985: 73) contended that the exchange of information between foraging hominid groups was important in the African savannah, which was a 'patchy environment', and consequently, '… selection would have favored increased gregariousness and cooperation on the part of early hominids' (*Ibid.*: 73). If this contention is correct, we may broaden it for our purposes, to suggest that these behavioural traits would probably have reduced the necessity for cannibalism, at least in east Africa.

A final type of competitor for food in Africa that was probably less significant in late Pleistocene Europe, was the large number of rodents, foxes, pigs, large mammals like elephants, rhinos and hippos, which seem to have existed in smaller numbers in Europe. In sum, we can be reasonably sure that the late Pleistocene hunting hominins that survived must have been efficient hunters and gatherers and possessors of a remarkable degree of behavioural adaptability and development. Given the competitive constraints mentioned above, occasional cannibalism would have provided both additional food and reduced the number of hominin competitors in a specific area. This is also the conclusion of a chapter of Mussini's (2011: 226–246) doctoral thesis in *Anthropological Biology*, which is the most comprehensive and meticulous treatment of cannibalism I have encountered to date.

Human flesh falls in the mid-range of mammalian stored body-fat, so there would be no adaptive benefit to persistent cannibalism (Wells 2006: 184–185). I would venture the guess, based on contemporary anthropological information on the intra-group killing of non-contributing members, that the consumption of group members who contributed the least to the communal food supply, would have been those most frequently eaten; for example, the Innuit and Chuckchi (Leighton and Hughes 1955: 328–329, 335). Willerslev (2009: 693), called this 'voluntary suicide'. Naturally, these examples derive from a lengthy

process of forced marginalization and acculturation of hunters, so parallels require carefully evaluation.

An often-forgotten final point regarding nutrition that needs to be made, is the fact that all foraging societies so far reported on cook their food and meat, because 'many plant foods are too fiber-rich when raw, while most raw meat appears too tough to allow easy chewing' (Wrangham, and Conklin-Brittain 2003: 35). It would therefore seem potentially fruitful for archaeologists to develop a way of establishing if human meat was cooked before being eaten: there may be specific signs on bones of having been cooked.

THE TYPE OF HOME BASE

A final possibly significant difference between African and European late Pleistocene hominin hunters is the type and location of their home bases. It seems that in Europe, though seldom remarked on, most hominin hunters lived in caves, while in Africa many lived in the open in simple shelters, and relatively few in caves. The early South African australopithecines, especially *A. africanus* and *A. Sediba*, were cave dwellers, but the relative scarcity of the remains of *homo erectus* and *homo ergaster* suggest that they lived in the open. The reason could have been that caves in Africa attract many types of predators, especially after the females have littered. Some of these predators, while not competing with man, are dangerous, like snakes, honey badgers, civets and large felines, while in Europe, the animal cave users were probably most commonly hyenas, wolves and bears. In addition, the hilly and mountainous areas where European archaeological research has been carried out provided the possibility of finding alternative caves if the ones first investigated were occupied. European caves are also often near permanent water supplies, while water sources are less frequent in Africa, where most prey animals congregate in the savannahs (plains), and relatively few are found in hilly and mountainous areas.

We may sum up this section as follows:

1. Since the late Pleistocene, AMH subsisted on hunting, scavenging and gathering, and so was subject to a wide variety of influences, competition and restraints in these three categories of subsistence activity. These influences, in turn, had nutritional – and hence reproductive – implications on his long-term chances of survival and population increase.

2. Competition with pack and solitary animal predators was probably more intense in Africa, where there were both larger numbers of species of prey animals and more predatory species than in Europe.

3. Given that Africa is far more arid than Europe, early Pleistocene African hominids may have been compelled to be more mobile than their European counterparts were, and so did not invest much time, energy or resources in developing and maintaining permanent home bases. Seasonal and climate factors, therefore, influenced not only the availability, but also the location of the preferred prey animals hunted and scavenged.

4. Among inland African hunters and scavengers, fish played a relatively minor part in their diets, while the excavated sites of prehistoric coastal groups show consumption rates of oceanic species, as high as European ones. The consumption of fish also seems correlated with cave residence. This may be because there were fewer *cervidae* species in seaside areas, to attract competing predators. A comprehensive survey of the function and availability of different dietary elements is clearly needed.

5. Since there are few reports of cannibalism among late Pleistocene hunters in Africa, it is likely that the previously mentioned factors and constraints may have restricted group size. This, together with the great variety of animal and plant foods available, made cannibalism less necessary than in Europe. Additionally, if the supposition that African late Pleistocene and subsequent hunters were very mobile, the likelihood that relics of cannibalism would have survived or been sufficiently concentrated, is clearly much lower than was the case in Europe. This may explain its relative absence.

6. The extent and richness of early hominins' knowledge of their prey and botanical larders has not received the same degree of attention paid to their hunting. For example, the San identified close to 200 different types of potential faunal and animal food, but only consumed about 40 of them regularly (Lee 1968: 35). When I was in the area several years later, the situation was the same (Gerald Sack, Unpublished Research Notes, 1970). Paleoarchaeologists can only infer things from the refuse that survived to be excavated and analyzed. At least part of the plant foods collected by hunters were consumed during hunts, hence traces of them do not appear in large quantities in excavated sites.

BODY FAT AND FERTILITY

If groups had sufficient food to survive, cannibalism would have been unnecessary, as abundant food would have promoted food collection and tool-making specialization, as well as ensuring the sociological adaptations necessary to optimize hunting and gathering, activities

that unfortunately do not leave traces. Therefore, a wide range of cognitive, motor, linguistic and symbolic abilities, as well as improved reproductive capabilities have not left their traces. Howell (1979) argued that the percentage of females' body fat significantly influenced female fertility. This seems an important selective factor: those females who collected or hunted most efficiently would be those most like to bear children. Ubick (2016: 3) also argued that

> Across cultures, lean women carry almost twice as much body fat relative to total body mass as lean men of the same age, weight and height (*e.g.*, Brown and Konner 1987). Female fertility is contingent on body fat stores (*e.g.*, Frisch 1983).

Ubick's thesis is that *homo sapiens*, before migrating to Europe, had developed the ability to accumulate large deposits of body fat, even in inclement environmental conditions. Brown and Konner estimated that women have almost twice as much the amount of adipose tissue then men do (1987: 31–32). They also argued that both hunters and gatherers and agriculturalists suffered from frequent food shortages (Ubick 1987: 36–38), which show that accumulating excess adipose tissue was an important survival adaptation, especially in women, since it impacted on their fertility, lactation and the survival chances of their infants (Ubick 2016: 38–39), and hence also on group survival. Frisch contended that women require at least 17 % by weight of body fat in order to have their menarche, and thereafter at least 22 % body fat to ensure regular ovulation (Frisch 1983).

Ubick argued that AMH with the ability to store excess adipose tissue originated in East Africa 75,000 years ago, in the Upper Paleolithic (2016: 2–5, 6–7). While nearly all mammals are able to store fat, she argued that only AMH had the ability to do so in inclement conditions, such as major climatic and ecological changes (2016: 14–16). Since female body fat is a prerequisite for pregnancy and suckling, Ubick argued that the ability to store fat even in inclement conditions gave AMH an adaptive advantage by being able to increase its population in difficult conditions. Since the Neanderthals lacked this ability, *Homo sapiens* simply 'outgrew' the Neanderthals and replaced them in Europe (2016: 14–18; Lieberman 2013: 151). Lieberman reminded us that in the Upper Paleolithic period, new foods were added to the hominid diet, like fish, shellfish, small mammals and birds, which could be collected by even young children. It needs to be remembered, however, that the assumption that hunters and foragers have to work

hard for a living is erroneous: Lee (1968: 37) observed that the !Kung, for example, worked only about 4 days a week, and I observed even less, even though it was during the sixth or seventh year of a serious drought.

Moreover, since 65 % of the brain is fat (Ubick 2016: 18–19; O'Brien and Sampson 1965: 543–544), the ability to store larger amounts of fat in the AMH body, also influenced cerebral and therefore cognitive development, which were further important adaptive benefits. Additionally, as just argued, stored structural fat is necessary for sexual maturation, the menarche and ovulation. Human females store much more fat in their bodies than males. This determines their reproductive potential, irrespective of climate, ecology and individual variability (Ubick 2016: 19–21). This fat enables them both to carry their foetuses to term, and to develop the brain and nervous system of the foetus (Ubick 2016: 22). Breast-feeding is costlier in terms of women's stored fat (energy, in other words), than gestation (Ubick 2016: 22–23). This may be the reason that many instances of cannibalism note the probable consumption of brain tissue, which is the fattiest part of the human body. Finally, high levels of maternal stored body fat mean that their new-born infants are more likely to have high birth weights, and hence a higher survival rate than infants born to mothers with relatively low levels of stored body fat (Ubick 2016: 23).

The data just cited show that Slater's model of 'primitive' reproduction mentioned in my previous article, was grossly under-optimistic, if Brown and Konner's and Ubick's nutritional estimates are valid. For our purposes, namely to evaluate whether cannibalism was a viable strategy in the late Pleistocene, the answer must be that it was quite likely in certain conditions, but probably physically unnecessary.

Ströhle and Hahn (2011: 431) observed that hunters in desert or tropical grasslands consumed the least carbohydrates, because their meat consumption was probably higher than that of European hunters. They theorized that this led to European hunters being less susceptible to '… many chronic and nutrition-related degenerative diseases, such as obesity, type 2 diabetes mellitus and coronary heart disease' (*Ibid.*: 432–433). At the same time, they pointed out that at latitudes above 40 degrees north or south of the equator, fewer carbohydrates and more animal protein were available to contemporary hunters and gatherers. This was '… was mainly a consequence of temperature effects on primary biomass (a measure of the productivity of a given habitat)' (*Ibid.*: 432–433). This seems rather naïve and deterministic: as anyone

who has lived for even a short time with hunters and gatherers will have noted, individuals' preferences for specific foods guide their hunting and collecting strategies no less than their need for food. That is, they hunt and gather selectively as much as possible, given the climatic constraints and conditions. We may, however conclude that there does seem to be a marked preference for meat, both for its taste, high nutritional value, and because hunting is a status endowing activity, open only to men.

Thus, there are several important aspects to the Paleolithic diet: first, the importance of carbohydrates for abdominal fat secretion to promote and ensure women's fertility. Second, to ensure persistent ovulation, and third, to ensure timely menarche, a mixed diet was essential. Fourth, in different environments, the contribution of carbohydrates varied according to the climatic conditions, which explains their differing rates of consumption at different latitudes. Fifth, since meat consumption was highest in grassland regions, especially in 'desert grasslands', increased meat consumption in these areas might well have been necessary, given the high amounts of energy expended in hunting. For example, the !Kung hunters could spend two hours running down a relatively small antelope in temperatures well above 35 degrees Centigrade (Gerald D. Sack, Unpublished research Notes, 1970).

Similarly, women's gathering activities, especially during the hot summers, was also physically arduous, involving digging up to a metre down for water-rich roots, thus expending a lot of energy for a gain of relatively few calories while collecting rare desert berries. The !Kung had an important fairly accessible calorie-rich resource in the form of *mongongo* nuts, which were easy to collect. In short, they consumed a lot of meat simply because that was their optimal survival strategy. This, if Ubick, Brown and Konner, and Frisch are right, would have depressed women's fertility, in the relative absence of excess vegetable carbohydrates in their everyday diet. This would have made periodic cannibalism a potential survival strategy whenever there was a lack of prey animals.

Bearing in mind that in the Kalahari Desert a 'drought' is up to 12 years without rain, it is surprising that there have been no reports of cannibalism among the !Kung, even given the fact that animal and avian scavengers abound and are extremely efficient in decimating carcasses. The Sans' practice of infanticide, however, is well-known: if a woman falls pregnant during a prolonged and serious drought, she will frequently choose to abort the foetus, or, if she is near term, will

kill the newborn. This is because, as it was explained to me, the mother does not know how long the drought will continue, and is well aware of the fact that the consequent physiological stress of undernutrition, will probably prevent or shorten lactation. It is therefore more humane to kill the newborn, than to have him die later. Additionally, the !Kung were well-aware of the deleterious effects of suckling a baby only to lose it due to lack of milk. It is interesting that they never raised the possibility of cannibalism as a possible stopgap. Finally, Ströhle and Hahn (2011: 431), noted that

> … the energy derived from carbohydrates in the diets of most hunter-gatherer societies was markedly different (lower) than the amounts recommended for healthy individuals [today].

Since non-archaeological evidence on cannibalism (including travelers' tales and anthropological accounts collected from informants), is less reliable than other sources, this section concentrates on paleoarchaeological sources, with other sources used to illustrate or support the former. Most evidence regarding Paleolithic cannibalism derives from the types and location of the microscopic features of cut marks on bones associated with butchering for consumption purposes (Bello *et al*. 2016: 722–743; Cole, n.d.). After reviewing postmortem cut marks on human bones in four archaeological sites, the authors of a recent paper ascribed 25 % of the cut marks at Atapuerca in northern Spain to cannibalism (*Idem*; White 2001: 91). Bello *et al*. (2016: 722), concluded that

> A distinction between cannibalism and secondary treatment of human bodies can be made based on frequency, distribution and micromorphometric characteristics of cut marks.

To these words, I would add also the significance of the location of cut marks, since dismembering a corpse in order to consume it, would probably be rather different from ritual defleshing. For example, if the brain or long arm and leg bones were consumed, they would show concussion marks of the blows to the cranium to open them up, which would not be the case in some of the other postmortem modifications to corpses (*cf*. Bello *et al.* 2016: 722–724). Bello *et al* ascribed 65 % of the human remains with signs of defleshing or gnawing in Gough's Cave in the UK and in three sites in Serbia to cannibalism (*Idem*: 722). Carbonell *et al*. (2010: 539–548) suggested that there were signs of persistent cannibalism over time on several European

sites, with signs of cannibalistic cuts and bone-smashing on between 10–29 % of the bones recovered. So, they concluded that in the Atapuerca caves in Burgos at least, cannibal was nutritional rather than ritualistic. Saladié *et al.* (2012: 682–684) reviewed cases of infant cannibalism from nine different archaeological sites and among chimpanzees, and concluded that the cannibalism was both nutritious (in the case of exocannibalism, and mortuary (in the case of endocannibalism). They also thought that exocannibalism was prompted by hunting competition in overlapping ranges.

Rougier *et al.* (2016: 6) found several indications of cannibalistic consumption of femurs and tibias, which they characterized as 'the bones with the highest nutritional content (meat and marrow).' These were also the most frequently eaten animal bones, which raises the question whether the choice of what human parts to eat were instrumental, *i.e.,* the most 'profitable' parts of both animal and human prey (*cf*. Defleur *et al.* 1999, who contended that 'The assessment of cannibalism in a prehistoric context depends on the demonstration that faunal and hominid remains were subjected to similar treatment'). If so, this would suggest that the concept of 'ritual cannibalism' may need further consideration. There are also numerous indications that Anasazi cannibals ate human brains (White 2001: 92).

The timing of the signs of defleshing is also important: they may be immediately or soon after death, or after some decomposition, and the differences are observable and can be evaluated (Santana *et al.* 2019: 36; Bello *et al*. 2016: 723). It therefore seems logical to regard immediate postmortem defleshing as ascribable to cannibalism, if we assume hunting human prey for its meat. At the same time, it is possible that the defleshing could have been ritual. What probably would have distinguished, these two types of butchering, may have been the degree of violence: it is unlikely that mortuary butchering would have included violent damage to the corpse, such as smashing open the cranium, as ritual cannibalism would have taken place in an atmosphere of reverence or, at the very least, respect.

CONCLUSIONS

The material cited in this paper constrains the conclusion that late Paleolothic human's East African origin and fat-storing genetic mutation made cannibalism at best an extremely marginal likelihood, perhaps even only something to add some variety to their diet, and not by any means a vital necessity. This would also explain why there are so few reports of cannibalism in Africa. Moreover, we need to bear in

mind that because our Paleolithic ancestors were not very numerous, food shortages were probably unlikely or relatively rare, and even a small increase in AMH's reproduction rate would have enabled him to displace Neanderthal man from his place in our history, without the necessity of consuming him. Similar to Villa *et al.* (1986) early study, Cole's analysis of the nutritional value of human bodies led him to conclude that just as today incidents of cannibalism have complex motivations, so too, Late Paleolithic and subsequent forms of pre-*homo sapiens* probably also had complex motivations for their episodes of cannibalism (Cole 2017). Cole seems to plump for the simplest explanation, namely 'nutritional cannibalism' (see his table on page 3), giving us ample food for thought.

Finally, as Ubick suggested, AMH may have been in some way aware of the (survival) benefits of their mates' unique ability to store the largest amount of fat than any mammal, as witnessed by their Venus figurines, which gives them an added non-symbolic meaning.

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[*] The author is indebted to a Zulu informant for this insight, in response to the question 'What is the most important change in Zulu life consequent on White contact?' He pointed to the fact that most Zulu men in his district worked in cities, coming home mainly on their Christmas leave: 'Therefore we have the new phenomenon of October babies,' was his wry conclusion, 'instead of spaced births.' He was referring to the traditional Zulu lengthy suckling period of three years.

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The People Rus' in the Ninth – Middle Eleventh Centuries: New Approaches to the Study of Ethnogenesis and Politogenesis

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this article is to try to give an outline of modern understanding of processes and mechanisms of formation of the people called Rus' and the polity of the Rurikid lineage. New interpretations of written sources are placed in the basis of the proposed approach. The later Old Russian narratives, first of all, the 'Primary Chronicle', are recognized as unreliable and secondary sources, and the basic factual basis is formed on the basis of documents (treaties, statutes and legal codes, etc.) and synchronous for the tenth century narrative texts, first of all, the Byzantine descriptions of the Rus' in special manuals on diplomacy and ambassadorial protocols. It is no less important now to understand the epistemological and practical limitations of the use of archaeological and linguistic data, and to eliminate schemes based on false interpretations of them. Following these guidelines, the article substantiates the following provisions. First, the autocatalytic process of development of a network of long-distance trade routes and the emergence of urban centres in their hubs became the basic factor for the formation of medium-scale polities on the East European Plain. Second, in the new settlements of the Upper and Middle Dnieper area in the tenth century, new mixed urban communities were formed, including groups of people who called themselves Rus'. Here, both politogenesis and ethnogenesis were triggered and stimulated by long-distance trade and urbanization. Third, no medi-

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um-size polity of the ninth and tenth centuries had the characteristics of an early state, because it was an ecumene without developed writing abilities. Only the complex chiefdom under the leadership of the Rurikids, after joining the Byzantine Christian Church, gained access to the technology of writing. This made it possible, in the first half of the eleventh century, to create a government machine of specialized functionaries, proto-bureaucrats, who produced the first state regulatory documents. By the mid-eleventh century, the early state in Rus' was established. In the same period, the elite and the population of the 'Rurikid empire' finally adopted the ethno-political label Rus', as a result of which a new Christian people with such a name appeared on the map of the Western Eurasia. These processes of ethnogenesis and politogenesis on the East European Plain in the ninth and eleventh centuries fit into the most standard models of socio-cultural and political anthropology.

Keywords: *state origins, chiefdoms, early state, early Rus', Old Russia, political anthropology, polities of East European Plain.*

The articles by Nikolai N. Kradin (2023a) and Alexei A. Romanchuk (2023) published in the journal 'Social Evolution & History', which reveal the current problematic state of research on the emergence of the Rus' people and the formation of polities on the East European Plain in the early Middle Ages, first of all, the polity of the Rurikid lineage in the Middle Dnieper area, can rightly be called the optimal starting point for a new stage of discussion on these topics. Without going into unnecessary peculiarities of polemics on concrete issues, I would like to emphasize that Kradin's article sets the necessary conceptual framework for the description and analysis of processes of politogenesis at the end of the *first millennium* of the *New era* in the space from the Baltic to the Black Sea and from the Volga to the Danube and the Vistula. I will not hide the fact that Romanchuk's article raises a number of fundamental disagreements in my mind, which are not of a trivial, but, on the contrary, of a principled nature, first of all with regard to his attempt to once again present the discussion about the role of the natives of the Scandinavian peninsula in the formation of the early Rurikid state as the actual subject of contemporary historiography. But the basic and most valuable thing about his article is not this, but the fact that it raises the question of expanding the range of cultural impulses that influenced the emergence of *Old Russian material culture* (Shchavelev 2023a) and of the *ethno-social organiza-*

tion of the Rus' people (Shchavelev 2024), and as such, his article is fruitful and interesting.

Nowadays, the description and analysis of 'archaic' (ancient and medieval) societies is most successfully carried out using the methods and meta-language of *socio-cultural anthropology*, and individual archaic polities are successfully studied and classified within the theoretical framework of *political anthropology*. Similarly, to analyse the processes of emergence and transformation of various *communities*, including *ethnic groups*, the so-called *constructivist theoretical approach* to their identification and description has been developed, which consists in the efforts of recording the reflection of 'socio-cultural shells', *i.e*., *traces of manifestations of their unity* found in texts, images and material culture.

By the term *people* or *ethnos* (Latin: *gens*, *genus* vel *natione*; Greek: *τὸ ἔθνος*) I mean any *macro-community of collectives of different sizes and types,* aggregated by the idea of their unity ('*supra-identity'*) and common rules of identification, co-optation and separation between 'Us' and 'Them'. The type of identity of such a macro-community can be different: ethno-linguistic, ethno-cultural (ethno-historical), ethno-confessional or ethno-political, and, of course, any combination of these types is also possible. Such a *collective identity* is based on some common objectively observable and imagined features that become its *markers* (descent from common ancestors, common language and secondary modelling systems, common historical memory and political theology, stereotypes of behaviour, *etc*.).

Belonging to an *ethnic community* is determined, firstly, by the *collective perception* (social reference or collective decision) *of all the members of this community* or only by the decision of its elite, *i.e.,* the carriers, keepers and inventors of this *ethnogenetic* and *ethno-identifying tradition*. Secondly, the *individual's own self-identification*, his or her willingness to accept and share this endo-identity and the rights and obligations associated with it. And, thirdly, the *perception of external observers* ('aliens') of who exactly belongs (has the right to belong) to a given community and who does not. These three factors determine the 'strategies of distinguishing' between 'their own' and 'aliens' (Pohl 1998, 2013) and set coordinate systems (a system of rules and prohibitions) of identification, co-optation, exclusion from the community, as well as sanctions for assigning the status of belonging to community, respectively, rejecting it.

It is obvious that *ethnic identity* ('ethnicity') exists in parallel with, and often contradicts, political, religious and other types of endo- and exo-forms of solidarity. Apparently, this is the course of historical development. *Ethnic identity* makes it possible, firstly, to mobilize significant military and economic resources of dispersed, politically unconnected collectives, and, second, to preserve forms of communication between groups divided by political, confessional or other barriers. The most important feature of *ethnic identity* is its ability to persist after all other formalized ties (economic, legal, *etc*.) between its bearers have broken down. So, instrumentally, *ethnicity* is a *capacity for ethnic mobilization*.

I should note separately that the existence of communities with different types of identity, which do not formed an *ethnic identity*, cannot be an argument in favour of the illusory nature of the historical phenomenon of individual *peoples* ('folks' 'ethnoses'), just as, for example, the existence of communities that have not created *states* cannot be an argument in favour of the falsity of the idea of the existence of states in the history of humankind (Shchavelev 2024).

In modern *political anthropology, politogenesis* is studied in two basic aspects: first, in terms of identifying its *mechanisms*, *i.e*., *causes* and *factors* (*cf*. Carneiro 2012; Stocker and Xiao 2019); second, in terms of *classifying the polities*, *i.e*., the *results* of the action of these mechanisms. The limited empirical data (first of all, the urgent need to publish and generalize archaeological data), does not allow me to discuss the problems of the *mechanisms of politogenesis* on the East European Plain in the ninth and tenth centuries. The theoretical spectrum of external and internal factors is well outlined (Kradin 2023a: 69–76), but how they operated and what their specific weight was in the ongoing processes, remains unclear. The only thing that is clear now is that the emergence of *medium-size centralized polities* was the exception rather than the rule. And the emergence of the *early state* in these territories was not only not 'inevitable' (Claessen 2002), but, on the contrary, is seen only as a practically unique case – on this *path of social evolution*, only one Rurikid polity had time to go and pass it. And moreover, *chiefdoms* and *early states* in the region under study seem to have emerged from the same factors (*cf*. Grinin and Korotayev 2012).

I fully support the idea of *multivariate* and *alternative ways of evolution of social and political systems* (Bondarenko, Grinin, and Korotayev 2002, 2011). But the number of possible types of polities seems to me to be extremely limited. However, depending on different

historical conditions, the processes of political integration of local communities lead to the formation of either *centralized* or *decentralized* polities (Lewellen 2003: 16–41). The first option implies the formation of a *subordinate system of governance levels*, the second – the *creation of socio-communicative network clusters*.

Centralized polities in archaic societies are represented by two basic variants – *chiefdom* (*simple*, *complex*, *etc*.) and *pre-modern state* (*early* and *well-developed*) (Skalník 2004, 2009; Claessen 2010; Earle 2021). The number of types of decentralized polities, *i.e*., *tribes*, or other *nexus-type supra-local associations* (*confederations*, *associations, unions* or *corporations*), was apparently much more diverse, but they are, unless one imagines, very, very poorly recorded on the East European Plain in the early Middle Ages, both in written texts and in archaeological data. Moreover, as far as I understand it, this type of polity, or rather the *direction of evolution of supra-local integration*, shows exceptional variability and, so far, seems to be hardly amenable to a coherent typology based on defined distinctive features, including diagnostic markers. So, I do not yet have either a theoretical framework or an empirical basis for identifying this type of political systems in the section of spatial and temporal continuum I am studying.

In other words, my paper will deal with several *chiefdoms* of varying degrees of complexity and a single *early state*. A *complex chiefdom* and an *early state* can be, to a certain extent, considered as *functional analogues* (Grinin 2011). I do not favour the idea of looking for differences in *structures* (institutional, social, *etc*.), *scale* (one, two, three, or more levels of political control), or other *quantifiable signs* between *chiefdoms* and *early states*, and I am sure that these options cannot serve as diagnostic signals of their difference. But they are clearly distinguished by the *social group responsible for the system of governance*.

In the *chiefdom*, the common people are ruled by the *chief*'s *kinsmen* (members of the lineage) and *clients* (*i.e*., quasi-relatives or imaginary 'artificial' relatives). This chief and his (her) kinsmen have *inherited positions* in the power system, and a relative *monopoly on the manipulation of oral tradition, ritual and mnemonic practices*. They possess and distribute their *consolidation ideology* and *political theology* (see below). In the *early state*, *full-time professionals*, *i.e*., *functionary administrators,* mastered the statecraft using the technology of writing to exercise power. This 'proto-bureaucracy' monopolizes and simultaneously provides services in the quantification and standardization of taxes and other exchange-economy procedures; in the codifi-

cation and standardisation of legal matters and a wider range of social conflict resolution; in the triangulation and standardisation of territorial division and the control of the outer boundaries of the societal zone. In addition, it monopolizes and successfully trades in a *completely new technique of written fixation, accumulation and translation of the historical memory of its people*, *i.e*., it possesses a new kind of cultural-symbolic capital. These full-time specialists in the management of power are *trained in particular skills of statecraft* and *extraordinary habitus* (see below).

Thus, the transition from *chiefdom* to *early state* was a shift from a social field of imagined genealogies and logocentric rituals to a written-documented and quantified space (*cf*. Bondarenko 2008).

Now there is a typical, but no less acute, situation when all the offered generalizing histories of the early Rus' do not correspond to the modern understanding of the epistemological status and specificity of those texts whose data served as a basis for these generalizations. First, it has fundamentally changed the factual basis for the description and analysis of the early history of the Rus' from the ninth to the beginning of the eleventh century. This is because the 'Primary Chronicle' (*i.e*., 'The Tale of Bygone years') of the beginning of the twelfth century (The Pověst Vremennych lět 2003) is no considered a reliable basis for the early history of Rus' in the ninth-tenth centuries. Now it has finally become clear, although it was established in the first half of the twentieth century (Shchavelev 2020b: 22–54), that the text of this chronicle is the result of literary efforts, and a significant part of its oldest part is a compilation of translations of Byzantine chronicles and publicist notes of its author, projecting the reality of Rus' at the turn of the eleventh and twelfth centuries onto the 'pre-Christian' past. All year dates in the 'Primary Chronicle' up to the eleventh century are artificial forgeries and unreliable (Shchavelev 2020b: 416). They cannot be used either as 'approximate' or 'conventional' chronological reference points for the early history of the Rus'. The same is entirely true for the narrative of the earlier 'Initial Compilation', which is partly reflected in the Novgorodian chronicle tradition and predates the 'Primary Chronicle' (Guimon 2021: 91–173). Both the 'Initial Compilation' and the 'Primary Chronicle' preserve some fragments of an undated proto-text that has been tentatively called 'The Oldest Tale' of the mid-eleventh century (Shchavelev 2020b: 193–249; Guimon 2021: 111–119). In this proto-text it is possible to identify a number of fragments dating back to the oral tradition of the Rus' people, narrating the deeds of the first Russian princes and warlords of the tenth and

early eleventh centuries, and only these fragments can be used to study the initial period of the history of the Rurikid polity (Shchavelev 2020b: 337–408).

Absolutely the same should be said about the stories about the early history of Rus' in the *Old Norse sagas*, which received written fixation not earlier than in the twelfth–thirteenth centuries. The sagas reflected only separate units of onomastics and some phenomena of social and cultural reality of the Viking Age of the tenth–eleventh centuries (Jackson 2019), the main plots and descriptions of events related to the Rus' in them are extremely stereotypical and cannot be fully verified.

Thus, both Old Russian and Old Norse retrospective later narrative texts became not basic but secondary additional sources for the history of the East European Plain in the ninth to early eleventh centuries. There is no need to think that these are unique precedents: nowadays almost all early historiographical works of the early Middle Ages, the so-called 'barbarian histories', are recognized more as literary and ideological projects rather than as protocol fixations of reliable knowledge about the past of this or that 'barbarian nation' (Goffart 2005; Shchavelev and Guimon 2022).

Now the early history of Rus' is studied on the basis of synchronous written texts, sometimes, certainly, reached in later variants and revisions: Latin, Arabic, Middle Greek, and Church Slavonic. For the politics of the Rurikid linage in the Middle Dnieper area, the main corpus of data is given by three treaties of Princes Oleg, Igor, and Svyatoslav with Byzantine emperors (I trattati dell'antica Russia con l'Impero romano d'Oriente 2011) and Byzantine treatises, first of all, the diplomatic manuals 'De administrando imperio' of the middle 950s (Constantine Porphyrogenitus 1967) and 'De cerimonies' of 963 (Constantine Porphyrogennitus 2012).

Synchronous texts allow us to create a scientifically grounded new chronology of events that led to the formation of the Rurikid polity, which began to form at the turn of the ninth and tenth centuries. The first reliable date is the date of the Prince Oleg's treaty – September 2, 911. As a result of the refusal to use artificial constructions of the 'Primary Chronicle' reflecting the geographical realities of the Rus' in the middle of the eleventh century, it is necessary to draw a new map of the basic urban centres of the tenth-century East European Plain, which together formed the basic infrastructure of the 'Empire of the Rurikids' (Shchavelev 2020a, 2020b, 2023b).

In order to adequately assess the *type of political organization* and the *level of complexity* of particular Rurikid polity, it is necessary to consider two key points. The first is the specific features of the written sources. The picture of 'the beginning of the Russian land', which is presented in the 'Initial Compilation' and the 'Primary Chronicle', modernizes the reality of the tenth century under the realities of the second half of the eleventh century – the beginning of the twelfth century. The second is the historiographic point: the fragments of these two chronicles were subjected to a number of misinterpretations by researchers who tried their best to maximize and extend the 'Old Russian state'.

Considering the modern state of the research on the Rurikid polity, it is possible to state that it was created in the tenth century, and we know nothing about the social organization of the Rus' groups in the ninth century. For example, we do not know whether there was an 'institute' of the retinue (*resp*. '*дружина*') in the ninth century. The 'ladder system of succession of authority' (the so-called '*lestvitsa*') among the princes of the Rurikids appeared not earlier than the middle of the eleventh century, and in the tenth century, authority was transferred either from the father or mother to son (from Olga to Svyatoslav, from Svyatoslav to Yaropolk, *etc*.) or from husband to wife (from Igor to Olga), or it was seized in the struggle of brothers for elimination (twice, first between the sons of Svyatoslav Igorevich, and then between the sons of Vladimir Svyatoslavich). The territory of the polity was simply divided between relatives, princes, and other persons of status (*e.g*., the warlord Sveneld). Possible institutions of 'gafol' (*resp*. '*полюдие*') and 'feeding' (*resp*. '*кормъ'* or '*кормъление*') in the tenth century are not fixed. The supposed mention of 'poliudie' in the treatise 'De administrando imperio' in the 950s is a misreading of the indication that people Rus' go from Kiev to 'towns' (Middle Greek: τὸ πολίδιον / τὸ πολείδιον > τὸ πολύδιον) on the territory of the Slavs (Shchavelev 2021b) and get food there, since in Kiev the Rus' survived on the verge of starvation and lack of cattle (Shchavelev 2020a). Similarly, speculations about the 'reforms of Princess Olga' are the result of an uncritical reading of the annalistic text. If we read it literally, it describes only the arrangement of the territories that personally belonged to Olga and her family (The Pověst Vremennych lět 2003: 376–383), but not the whole polity. On the basis of this text, there is no good reason to single out *pogosts* ('погостъ') and to consider them as special, specialized 'hotels' for the prince and his companions. It is one of the types of small settlements among many others

(‘становище’, ‘ловище’, ‘мѣсто’, ‘село’, *etc.*) of not too clear functional meaning, nothing more. Finally, the question of the extent to which the chronicle text on the activities of Princess Olga reflects the terminology of the mid-tenth century and the realities of the eleventh century remains open.

As Nikolai N. Kradin rightly states, the accumulation of empirical archaeological data has not yet led to a shift in its conceptual generalization (2003a: 68). Continuing his idea, it should be emphasized that the matter is not only in the caste archaeologists' rejection of the modern theory of the evolution of societies and polities, but also in the fact that they continue to uncritically superimpose archaeological data on the map of the ‘Primary Chronicle’, and persistently continue to adjust their interval dating to the false chronology of the Old Russian Chronicle. It is also necessary to agree with Alexei A. Romanchuk that the attribution of ‘ethnic’ labels (‘Scandinavian’, ‘Varangian’, ‘Slavonic’, *etc*.) to archaeological artefacts and reconstructed phenomena of spiritual culture (first of all, elements of funerary rites or styles of clothing and accessories) is done in an extremely simple and outdated way (Romanchuk 2023: 102–103).

Continuing the theme of methodological difficulties in the interpretation of archaeological data, I would like to address the problem of identifying the types of political systems on the basis of archaeological evidence without the use of written sources. The modern understanding of the process of *evolution of social and political systems* as *multilinear* and *with alternative variants of realization* (Bondarenko, Grinin, Korotayev 2002; 2011) dictates the inevitable conclusion that archaeology can only show the *level of complexity of society*; for example, it allows us to identify a certain *medium-scale polity*, but it cannot answer the question, ‘To which type does this polity belong?’ Thus, Timothy Earle's archaeological criteria for *chiefdoms* (2021: 47–65) are applicable to any polity or complex society that can be mobilized by some mechanisms of ‘collective action’, and do not capture the main feature of chiefdom – the presence of a *chief* and *his ruling linage*. Similarly, archaeology cannot identify the *early state* because its main criterion – the *presence of general and specialized functionaries* (Kradin 2023a: 78–81) – is virtually unrecognizable archaeologically. Finally, the conclusion that archaeological data alone cannot distinguish a *complex chiefdom* from an *early state* inevitably follows from this. And it is this last question that most often confronts the researchers of the Early Medieval East European Plain.

Since the main ideas of Romanchuk's article are largely based on linguistic evidence, I should also touch upon epistemological problems in this area. Indeed, comparative historical linguistics provides reliable reconstructions of earlier linguistic condition, for example of Old Norse or Old Common Slavonic languages. Similarly, the 'phonetic recalculation' of words in the transition from one language to another has its own regularities in the case of regular language contacts. However, regular linguistic rules and laws do not work when they come to *multilingual, multicultural societies*, where individual lexemes of the speech are recorded in foreign-language 'external' texts (Thomason 2001).

Thus, Romanchuk considers 'epoch-making' (2023: 100) the article by Sergey L. Nikolaev, who reconstructed a certain archaic 'Varangian dialect' of Old Norse on the basis of the list of ambassadors and their confidants in the treaties of Rus' princes with Byzantine emperors. I will briefly summarize my doubts, which, it seems to me, ultimately require that this hypothesis not to be used as a basis for ethnocultural reconstructions, but that we wait for its evaluation by specialists. First of all, the hypothesis of 'Varangian dialect' does not pass the experimental test. The onomasticon of these treaties studied by Elena A. Melnikova (2004), Anton Zimmerling (2012) (whom Romanchuk rightly calls 'one of the greatest Russian Germanists of our time' in his article: Romanchuk 2003: 98), and Bohdan O. Strumiński (1996) did not reveal any special dialect different from the standard Old Norse. Secondly, the linguistic reconstruction of onomastic units should be preceded by a textual reconstruction of the chronicle text in which they have reached us. In this case, it is necessary to compare the six main witnesses of the 'Primary Chronicle' (Guimon 2021: 93–100) according to a certain procedure, the original text of which is determined by the coincidence of independent readings (Gippius 2014). And in this case, it was not made by Nikolaev. Thirdly, the evolution of the text of the treaties of the Rus' princes with the Byzantines is now quite clear: their originals were written in Greek; no Church Slavic version existed; then they were copied into a Byzantine copy book (*i.e.*, a kind of 'cartularium', Greek: 'τὸ κοντάκιον'); at the beginning of the twelfth century, they were translated into Old Church Slavonic and then copied into the original 'Primary Chronicle' which was then edited and 'dispersed' into different copies. Besides, we quite understand that during the procedure of the ratification of the treaties, the list of names of Rus' elite and their ambassadors should have been pronounced by someone from the side of

Rus', and then transferred by Byzantine translators to the scribes-compilers of the treaties. I consider it incredible to expect that, after all these procedures, the onomastics of the treaties will be well preserved and that any regular linguistic signs of any special dialects will be read. Finally, I emphasize that Sergey N. Nikolaev's earlier attempt to reconstruct an allegedly ancient 'dialect of Krivichi' has been convincingly rejected (Krysko 1997).

On the basis of the above-stated, I will try to summarize my view of the process of *ethnogenesis* of Rus' and *politogenesis* of its separate local communities. In the ninth century the East European plains were integrated into the global trade-communication system, actually the World-economy, of Eurasia (Hodges and Whitehouse 1983; McCormick 2001, *cf.* Kradin 2023a: 74–75). In the tenth century, *emporia*, which were simultaneously political centres of local polities, emerged at some nodal points of this trade and communication network. It was the emergence of these new *emporia* that launched a fundamentally new round in the process of *urbanization* on the East European Plain. The resources for this growth of urban centres and their satellite settlements were provided by the long-distance trade and occasional booty. Here a very promising direction is the concept of 'Viking Diaspora', which characterizes the material and spiritual culture 'Circum-Baltoscandia' as hybrid and transnational for the communities forming within the oikumene of Western Eurasia as part of the global Eurasian space (Jesch 2015; Katona 2023; Shchavelev 2023a). Thus, the *formation of the early state* Rus' was a classic case of the transformation of a fragment of the *World-economy* into a new *World-empire* in the form of *multipolity* (Kradin 2023a: 83), which, however, was characterized by a very specific structure and complex formats of consolidation, but this is a completely separate issue, still not considered by scholars from the point of view and with the help of the methods of political anthropology.

The territory of the spread of this World-economy, which later became the core of the future World-empire of Rus', was inhabited by hybrid communities of the 'Viking diaspora', which mixed migrants from the 'Circum-Baltoscandia' macro-region and autochthonous aborigines. As Klavs Randsborg has shown, the process of spreading the 'Viking diaspora' was isomorphic, though not completely identical, to the so-called *Great Greek colonization*, which also created a network of port city-colonies in which hybrid traditions of Greek migrants and natives were formed (Randsborg 2000). So, the Viking way of life and

mode of the production (Kradin 2023a: 74; 2023b: 157–158) was not unique in history (Glørstud and Melheim 2016).

According to archaeological data, 96 relatively large settlements of the ninth century and 134 large settlements of the tenth century have been identified on the East European Plain (Makarov 2017). The full list of the ninth-century emporiums and centres of local polities is still to be compiled, but for now we can single out the archaeological complexes of *Ladoga*, the *'Rurikovo' Gorodische*, the *Izborsk*, *Vitebsk*, *Sarskoe*, and *Supruty*. Among the large political centres I will also mention the archaeological complex *Podgortsy* (its name is not known and the identification with Plesnesk is not based on anything). Potentially, all of them should or could have been centres of the formation of polities of a new type, but such research has not been conducted yet. The largest of them, *Ladoga* with the archaeological complexes of '*Rurikovo' Gorodische*, *Supruty*, and *Podgortsy*, were located on the outskirts of the areas of intensive socio-economic and political development. Ladoga in the North was a port on the southern coast of the Baltic Sea, connected with intensive Baltic Sea traffic; *Podgortsy* was the outskirts of the *complex chiefdom* of the Mojmirid dynasty, that is, the old Slavic polity of *Moravia*; *Supruty* was the outskirts of the *complex chiefdom* of the Khazars. But the basic territories of the East European Plain were inhabited in the ninth century by scattered *local societies* with rather simple social and political organization.

The explosive spread of the 'Circum-Baltoscandia' 'Viking' traditions dates from the last quarter of the ninth century to the first quarter of the tenth. In the same period there was a boom in *urbanization*, and all the major cities of the tenth – the first half of the eleventh century appeared, in which the *Old Russian archaeological culture* was formed. All of them are characterized by a similar territorial structure and the sociological reality behind it. From the point of view of archaeology, I could call the new collectives of these urban centres 'Vikings', who in the ninth–eleventh centuries underwent a total 'nomadization' in the military sphere and a complete linguistic transition from Old Norse to Old Common Slavonic, but with the preservation of a bright 'Viking' heritage. Thus, at present, I do not see any specific elements of this early urban culture of the East European Plain of the tenth century that could be considered as unique ethno-cultural markers exclusively of the Rus' collectives, which would distinguish them from other groups of inhabitants of these cities.

The reference sites of the formative period of the *Old Russian archaeological culture* should be considered as archaeological complexes, consisting of a *fortified citadel*, a *port area*, an *urban burial ground*, and *sub-centres of the second level*, not far away, which are mini-copies of the main centre (Shchavelev 2023a, 2023b). In this exemplary group of reference complexes, according to the above-mentioned features, we can include *Kiev* (Old Norse: **Sambátar* / **Sambátr* or *Kœnugarðr* / *Kœnugarðr*), the archaeological complex of *Shestovytsya* (Old Norse: **Kjarravellir*?), the archaeological complex *of Gnezdovo* (Old Norse: **Sýrnesgarðr*?) and *Ladoga* (Old Norse: *Aldeigja* or *Aldeigjuborg*), as well as 'Rurikovo' *Gorodische* (Old Norse: *Hólmgarðr*?) (here there is no burial ground and the question of the centres of the second level is open), *Novgorod* on the Volkhov (no burial ground), *Pskov* (the question about the port zone and the centres of the second level is open) and *Chernigov* (the question of the port zone is open).

The people who began to use the Old Russian Slavonic self-name '*роусь'* (or *роусичи*, *русиҷи*; *sing*. *роусинъ, русичь*) were formed in the tenth century precisely in these new urban centers and probably in a number of other smaller ones. Representatives of the Rus' in the tenth century are reliably fixed by written sources only in the Middle and Upper Dnieper area; their presence in the Il'men' and Volkhov areas remains questionable, though very probable. Groups of people called Rus' already from the first half of the ninth century are reliably attested as carriers of Old Norse and Old Common Slavonic languages (Shchavelev 2024). Thus, the ethnogenesis of the new Rus' people in the tenth century was a result of *urbanization* and the resulting *hybridization of the population* in new settlement clusters. In other words, the Rus' people formed and lived in these new emporia, where all the inhabitants were migrants, some from distant lands, some from the neighborhood. So, absolutely endogenous Rus' people did not migrate from somewhere outside. They adopted as their own name a Slavicized form of the Old Norse designation '**rōþ-s-menn*', meaning a 'professional group of rowers', which had the same semantic as the Old North '*víking*, pl. *víkingr*' belonging to the root '*vika*', 'sea mile', originally a 'distance between two shifts of rowers' (Heide 2005, 2006, 2008). But they were quite autochthonous to the East European Plain (Shchavelev 2024), so whatever the etymology of their ethnonym (*cf*. Romanchuk 2023: 99–100), it does not change the essence of their ethnogenesis.

Here it is necessary to emphasize, that the version about the arrival of the 'Rus' people' together with the legendary Prince Rurik and his brothers 'from beyond the sea' of the 'Primary Chronicle' (The Pověst Vremennych lět 2003: 101–109) is no more than a late etiological myth based on the later anachronistic motif of 'ryad' ('contact') (*cf.* Romanchuk 2023: 101). Moreover, the early version of this myth reflected in the 'Initial Compilation' and going back to the 'Oldest Tale', does not contain the motive of the arrival of 'all Rus' people'. In this proto-text Rurik comes only with his brothers and 'numerous retinue'. This is my preliminary reconstruction of the text of the 'Oldest Tale' on the basis of comparing the reading of the witnesses of the 'Primary Chronicle' with the variants of the Novgorod chronicle tradition:

> *И изъбрашася ихъ три брата с роды своими и пояша с собою дружину многу и прииде к Новугороду. И пришедъ старѣишии Рюрикъ и сѣде въ Новѣгороде… / [And three brothers with their clans volunteered from them (the Varangians) and took with them a large retinue and came to Novgorod. And the elder Rurik came and settled in Novgorod].

Thus, the oral tradition of Rus' spoke only about the inviting of the first prince Rurik of Varangian origin by the coalition of local communities. The interpolation of the mention of Rus' in this text is the literary work of the author of the 'Primary Chronicle' who transformed a legend of the *origo regis* type into a legend of the *origo gentis* type (Plassmann 2006). The whole text of this literary legend is full of anachronisms (the most vivid are Novgorod on Volkhov and Varangians before the first quarter – middle of the tenth century), with the exception, perhaps, of the arrival of the father of the Prince of Kiev Igor from the north and the obvious Old Norse origin of the authentic names of the first princes (Melnikova 2004).

In the ninth and eleventh centuries, the East European Plain became an arena of military and, apparently, economic competition between emerging and disappearing polities of different sizes, levels of organizational complexity and types. This competition itself seems to have been a catalyst for the formation of centralized political systems, the first *chiefdoms* (Skalník 2004, 2009; Earle 2021) and *consolidated communities* capable of sustained '*collective action*' (Blanton and Fargher 2008). Transnational trade and regular racketeering ('tribute') provided the elites with *capital* to invest in a *military organization*

that could be used to expropriate the capital accumulated by other collectives. The most important resource for the capitalization of these militarized trading communities was literally tons of Oriental silver *dirhams* and some other currencies from the Byzantine and Carolingian realms (Kuleshov 2021). The logic identified by Charles Tilly of building *centralized political systems*, 'concentration of capital', 'construction of the military machine', 'creation of infrastructures of tax withdrawal' is quite applicable not only *to early states* and their analogues, but also to different types of *chiefdoms* (Earle 2021) or other *dominant communities* (Tilly 1990).

I will try to make a preliminary catalogue of the major polities and their centres in the ninth and eleventh centuries. This list can, of course, be continued, but it will require an introduction to scientific turn and the comprehension of a huge array of archaeological data.

I would like to emphasize that the stories of the 'Primary Chronicle' about 'reigns' (Old Russian Church Slavonic: '*княжения*') of different Slavic communities can give nothing for political-anthropological reconstruction, except the fact that these communities probably had some traditional leaders whom the chronicler of the beginning of the twelfth century called 'princes' (resp. '*князья*'). Certainly, these 'princes' cannot be considered *chiefs* in the terminological sense. The social thesaurus of the chronicle does not consist of special social terms; for example, the Old Russian author called a *warlord* (*resp*. '*воевода*') someone who was at the head of an army, and a *prince* (*resp*. '*князь*') someone who was at the head of a nation or other large community. So, the lexemes 'княжение' and 'князь' cannot serve even nominal indication of *chiefs* and *chiefdoms*.

It is obvious that *urbanization* and the process of *formation of supra-local political structures* took place in the Volkhov area (Petrov 1996; Melnikova 2023). It was an ancient cluster of urbanization, formed as early as the late eighth and ninth centuries. It was here that a new city of Novgorod appeared on the Volkhov in the 930s, becoming a key centre in the tenth century and then be incorporated into the Rurikid Empire, becoming its key outpost in the north in the eleventh century. Here some ethno-political community under the name *Slovene* (Old Common Slavonic: *словѣне*) was formed, probably the first governor of Novgorod and (or) the first representative of the princes Rurikids in it was the person named *Gostomysl* (Old Common Slavonic: *Гостомыслъ*). The time of his board lies between the foundation of Novgorod in the 930s and the beginning of the reign in Novgorod Prince-Bastard *Vladimir Svyatoslavich*, which had begun until about

968–969. It is difficult to trace the trajectory of political transformation of this northern polity in this early period, but the *Slovene* people were the main associated partners of the Rus' in the tenth century. Two capitals, Kiev and Novgorod, ensured the control of the backbone of the emerging *early state* on the route 'from the Varangians to the Greeks and from the Greeks back' (Shchavelev 2020b: 250–336).

The large, medium-sized polity was apparently formed by Slavic-speaking people called *Sever* (Old Common Slavonic: *северъ* or *северяне*) on the left bank of the Dnieper. Its political center was a large city, now the archeological complex of *Gornal*. The type of their political system cannot be determined due to a lack of written sources. But these people had a distinct identity, their own tradition of material and spiritual culture, some kind of monetary system, and extensive trade and communication ties. It was conquered by the Rurikids only in the eleventh century (Shchavelev 2020b: 250–336; 2021c: 299–319). In the tenth century, on the right bank of the Dnieper, the people of *Drevlyane* (Old Common Slavonic: *древляне*) formed a 'principality' with the centre of Korosten' and about 20 sub-centres. It was a classical *chiefdom* headed by Prince Mal (Old Common Slavonic: *Малъ*) and his kinsmen-princes. It was destroyed in the 950s by the Kiev chief-woman Olga and her warlords (Androshchuk 2013: 65–89; Shchavelev 2020b: 250–336; 2021c: 299–319). Another polity has developed around Polotsk on the Wester Dvina, where Prince Rogvolod (Old Norse: **Rögnvaldr*), his two sons, and his daughter Rogneda (Old Norse: *Ragnheiðr*) ruled (Kezha 2021). It can be characterized as an attempt to create a *chiefdom*. This polity was conquered by the Rurikid prince Vladimir Svyatoslavich (†1015), but maintained the separate dynasty of Rogneda's descendants and autonomy within the empire of Rurikids. At the beginning of the tenth century, a *medium-scale polity* was formed around the large urban centre, the real megapolis of that time, called Sýrnesgarðr (now, the Gnezdovo archaeological complex), and it was eliminated at the beginning of the eleventh century (Shchavelev and Fetisov 2023).

Within the Rurikid polity, an alternative centre was formed and separated as a single polity: *Chernigov and its suburbs*, where, at the end of the tenth century and beginning of the eleventh century, a certain chief named Chern (**Чернъ*) ruled and was buried in a large mound, the 'Black Grave' (Kainov 2022), and then the brother of the Prince Yaroslav Vladimirovich (†1054), Mstislav Vladimirovich the Furious (†1036? or earlier), tried to create a polity separate from Kiev,

but his polity failed after his and his son Eustachius' deaths. It was a moment, when Rus' could become two different early states with two different dynasties, one centred in Kiev and Novgorod, another centred in Chernigov, and with a border along the Dnieper.

The victory in the global competition was won by the *complex chiefdom of the Rurikids* with its centre in Kiev (Shchavelev 2020a). The *complex chiefdom* of the Rurikids spent the second half of the tenth – first half of the eleventh century in global expansion. After the acceptance of Christianity by Prince Vladimir Svyatoslavich, the population of the territories subordinated to him began to transform (not only by Old Russian writers-ideologists, but also in the years of foreign Latin and Greek authors) into the *new Christian folk* (Wolfram 2001), called by the prestigious and recognizable ethnopolitical label ‘роусь’ (Shchavelev 2024).

It is precisely in this context that it is possible to trace the dynamics of its political development with a high degree of reliability (Shchavelev 2020a, 2020b). At the turn of the ninth–tenth centuries, Prince Igor and his warlord Oleg conquered Kiev, which, according to archaeological data, became an emporium in the last quarter of the ninth century. The entire urban cluster of the Middle Dnieper region, including Chernigov, as well as the major centre of the *Shestovytsya* archaeological complex, was formed at the turn of the ninth and tenth centuries, not earlier. It was not until the beginning of the tenth century that the oldest hoards of Arabian silver appeared in Kiev; a burial ground with rich burials of armed men was created; and fortifications were built (Shchavelev 2020a; 2021c: 275–286). On September 2, 911 Oleg concluded a treaty with the Byzantine Emperor Leo VI the Wise (†912) and his co-emperors. Kiev and Chernigov appeared in this treaty. The treaty of 911 manifests a certain *identity* of Rus' and the belonging of these people to the defined ‘Russian land’. The fact that in Rus', according to the treaty, there is a ‘great prince’ (in the Greek original, of course, the ‘*great archon*’) Oleg, does not say anything about what his power was: whether he was a temporary *warlord*, a *bigman* or a *mediator* of his society, or already a full-fledged *chief*. The ratio of authority between Prince Igor Rurikovich and Oleg remains a matter of conjecture. In the historical memory of the Rus' people, the first prince of Kiev was Igor, but the successful campaign to Byzantium was made by Oleg, and Oleg signed the first treaty with Byzantine emperors. But in this treaty, there was no mention of any relative of the major archon, the ambassadors only represent their leader Oleg, their ‘nation’ and their land, so it is not a *chiefdom* with a

ruled privileged lineage (I trattati dell'antica Russia con l'Impero romano d'Oriente 2011: 27–65).

Comparing the treaties of Oleg and Igor (I trattati dell'antica Russia con l'Impero romano d'Oriente 2011) with the Byzantine emperors and also the treatise 'De cerimonies' 963 (Constantine Porphyrogennnetos 2012: 511, 594–598), it is clear that it was not until the middle of the tenth century that the lineage of the ruling prince (his wife, children, nephews, and other relatives) became distinguished and privileged (Byzantine officials gave them much more money). Moreover, after the death of Prince Igor, his wife Olga ('Elga Rosena') became the full ruler of Rus', *archontissa of Russia* (Middle Greek: 'ἡ ἀρχόντισσα Ῥωσίας'). From the very beginning, this polity had the centre of Kiev and the centres of the second level (Chernigov, Vyshgorod, *etc*.). Some autonomous Slavic polities were subordinate to it. The militaristic, warlords, warriors, and the plutocratic, professional merchants, group elites are clearly distinguished. Thus, from the middle of the tenth century, a *complex chiefdom* existed (Shchavelev 2020a, 2021c, 2024).

However, no signs of an *early state*, *i.e*. of a 'special form of government of the complex societies, a machinery of power which… identified with bureaucracy' or a 'group of special functionaries' (Kradin 2023a: 77–78) can be observed until the end of the tenth century.

Only Prince Vladimir Svyatoslavich apparently tried to create a certain apparatus of functionaries following the Byzantine model from children of elite families who were devoted to 'book learning': 'He sent and began to take children from respectable families and gave them to study books. The mothers of these children weep for them, cry, as if they were dead [Послав, нача поимати у нарочитыя чади дѣти и даяти на учение кънижьное. Матери же чадъ своихъ плакаху ся по нихъ… нъ акы мьртвьцихъ плакаху ся]' (The Povĕst Vremennych lĕt. 2003: 924–925). The literacy-trained *cleric* or *functionary* of the *early state* virtually died for his family and kin and entered a completely different world of written culture and new state hierarchy. During his reign a special prince and church courts (Shchapov 1972: 99–101) appeared (Zimin 1999: 357–362). He was the first prince, who issued a ratified diploma (charter) (The Povĕst Vremennych lĕt 2003: 973–974; Guimon 2021: 143).

The actual apparatus of functionaries working on the basis of written practices could not appear before the emergence of a generation of minimally literate representatives of the elite (Goody 1996; Shchavelev 2021a). The earliest period of written culture is well

marked by the *four oldest birch-bark letters* with the interval dates 1025–1050. Their content is characteristic: a threat to a malicious debtor, a case of a false accusation of robbery, an alphabet, and an icon (http://gramoty.ru/birchbark/document/list/?requestId=&number=&conventionalDateInitialYear=1020&conventionalDateFinalYear=1050&text=&translation=). These are the main topics of writing practices: literacy training; getting used to a new god; fixing the operations with money; and legal procedures. Thus, the *early state* could not have appeared in Rus' earlier than during this period – in 1025–1050.

There are even more important milestones in the emergence of the *early state*. The Rurikid *chiefdom* was transformed into an *early state* during the period of issue of two *official legal documents*: the 'Statute of Prince Vladimir', compiled between the 990s and his death in 1015 (Shchapov 1972: 12–156; Guimon 2020: 323, 143), and the 'Russian Pravda' of Yaroslav Vladimirovich, compiled no later than in the 1030s (Zimin 1999: 31–150; Guimon 2021: 18, 35, 147). It was impossible to create such performative texts without *professional functionaries*, *i.e*., first *bureaucrats*, who acquired the art of writing practice and a special way of thinking (*cf*. Spencer 2014; Crooks, Parsons 2016; Berkel, van 2018). This first stage of the *state formation process* is symbolically completed by the *graffiti* of February 20, 1054 on the death of 'Caesar' Yaroslav Vladimirovich (http://epigrafika.ru/epigraphy/inscription/show/300). It was the semi-official written proclamation of the death of the *sovereign state ruler*.

Therefore, I do not fix the emergence of the *early state* on unreliable points of reference from retrospective 'fairy tales' of Old Russian chroniclers of the beginning of the twelfth century. For them 'their' 'Russian Princely' existed since ancient times and did not change in any way from Rurik to his descendants, their contemporary Princes, but according to the only objective criterion, *i.e*., *documents* and *written records* issued by its *governors* and *functionaries*.

Now we have an opportunity to trace the speed and schedule of increase in *complexity* of the Rurikid polity: its center Kiev appeared in the last quarter of the ninth century; the polity was founded around 900, in the 950s it already acquired all the features of a *complex chiefdom*, in the 990s to 1054 it was transformed into a typical *early state*. It was created by four generations of princes and noblemen (Shchavelev 2020b: 409–416). The first generation can be called the 'foreign conquerors', who were people born before Igor and Oleg and who came from the north and conquered Kiev, represented by Prince Igor and his wife Olga. The second generation were 'the first natives of

Kiev' and the Middle Dnieper region, represented by Prince Svyatoslav and his concubine, the slave-girl Malusha, the mother of the future ruler of Kiev, Vladimir. The third generation were the 'last pagans', the generation of Vladimir and his elderly wife Rogneda of Polotsk. Vladimir won the war for power, accepted Christianity and founded his own dynasty. The fourth generation is already the 'first generation of Christians,' that is, people who were born into Christian society and baptized at birth. This generation was represented by Vladimir's sons and his other younger relatives (Shchavelev 2020a).

So, the Rurikid polity was a typical case of the emergence of plutocratic and military *complex chiefdom* on the far limes of the Byzantine Empire on the border with nomads of the steppe and its subsequent standard transformation into an *early state*. It was a common example of *secondary politogenesis, the process* of *state formation* through the external influence of the neighboring *developed state*.

Here it is necessary to pay attention to the greatly underestimated social process of the formation of *elites* ('oligarchies') in the first urban centres of Rus' in the tenth and first half of the eleventh centuries. The main Russian cities formed their own elite, which apparently consisted of the *owners of estates* described in the chronicles as 'yards' (Old Russian: 'дворъ') and other assets, the *owners and captains of ships*, and *millionaires* who had accumulated *thousands of coins* (Shchavelev 2024). For example, in the legend 'The Founder of Kiev' the main character Kiy was a 'ferryman' on the Dnieper, he owed a river crossing infrastructure. Besides, there was a system of transport from the port to the centre of the Kiev city ('оувозъ'), which belonged to a certain man Borich, who participated in the ratification of Prince Igor's treaty (The Pověst Vremennych lět 2003: 44, 47–48, 336, 906; I trattati dell'antica Russia con l'Impero romano d'Oriente 2011: 68). Some homesteaders are mentioned by name: Olma (Old Norse: Hólmr / Hólmi), Gordyata, Vorotislav, Nikiphor, Chudin, Kosnyachko, Bryacheslav, Putyata, *etc* (Kuzmin 2000). It is possible to suppose that the Rurikid lineage was originally such a rich family, advancing to the first roles and occupying a dominant position in Kiev.

Representatives of the urban elites could have some relations with the prince of the Rurikid clan and be in his service, but they could have their own resources and militarized formations. These elites were able to carry out *collective actions* of political pressure on Prince Rurikid. The people of Novgorod ('новъгородцы' or 'люди новъгородьстии') are ready to accept the prince who is not from the Rurikid family, and directly threatened Prince Svyatoslav Igorevich with this

(The Pověst Vremennych lět 2003: 468–473). People of Kiev (‘кияне’, ‘кыяне’ or ‘люди кыевьстии’) appear as independent actors since the second half of the tenth century (The Pověst Vremennych lět 2003: 347, 359, 449, 469–473, 549, 1122–1127, 1142–1144, 1170–1171). The people of Kiev did not accept the victorious prince Mstislav Vladimirovich and supported Yaroslav Vladimirovich, who had lost the battle with him, but the people of Chernigov (‘черниговьцы’) on contrary accepted Mstislav as their ruler (The Pověst Vremennych lět 2003: 1142–1144). And in 1067, the people of Kiev overthrew Prince Izyaslav Yaroslavich and put the representative of a separate dynasty from Polotsk, Vseslav Bryachislavich, as the ruler of their city (The Pověst Vremennych lět 2003: 1362–1372). Then they unequivocally declared to the brother princes, sons of Yaroslav, that they will burn Kiev, go to Byzantium, and live there, and this statement is not pure rhetoric, but a quite real scenario of the development of events (The Pověst Vremennych lět 2003: 1383–1395).

This is a parallel process of *politogenesis*, the formation of *urban societies* at least in large cities, which were *collective political actors*. Each *community* established relations with Rurikid Princes. They could conclude a contract with them, and they could simply become dependent on any prince. In this case, the history of the urban community of Novgorod on Volkhov is unique only by the trajectory of its development, but not in its ‘republican’ vector. I should fully agree with Nikolai N. Kradin that the model of describing the Rus' as a constellation of ‘city-states’ was the most productive in previous historiography (Kradin 2023a: 68, 82), although, of course, from the point of view of modern political anthropology we may talk about *local urban societies* that had no signs of a state and probably no stable institutions, manifesting only situational collective political identity in extreme cases. Apparently, these communities of large cities (we simply do not know anything about smaller ones) can be characterized as *heterarchic societies* – collectives of men and women with full and equal rights, endowed with property and money.

During the eleventh century, a *decimal system* of population coordination was established in the cities – headed by thousand (‘тысяцькии’, ‘тысячьскии’), hundred (‘сътьникъ’, ‘сотьникъ’) and ten (‘десятникъ’, ‘десятьскыи’) men (The Pověst Vremennych lět 2003: 988, 1166–1167; Zimin 1999: 191–216). The early accounts unambiguously linked the decimal system to cities; its spread to the countryside was a much later phenomenon, apparently already post-Mongol. It is certainly not an ancient ‘Slavic’ tradition of division of

men or families, nor also a system of accounting and control of the population depending on the prince. It is most likely that its creation is the result of primary descriptions and quantification of the basic territories – key urban centres and possibly their surroundings – by the first *functionaries* (future *bureaucrats*) of the early state of Rus'.

It can be assumed that the 'owners of yards' and other assets, primarily those related to shipbuilding and port infrastructure, constituted the elite of the first *emporia*. The *chiefs* of the first medium-scale polities came from this melee. *Serving men* ('мужи') and *functionaries* of the Rurikid princes formed an *alternative hierarchical system* that controlled the 'external contour' of a *chiefdom,* later an *early state,* and also the personal assets (territorial and material) of members of the Rurikid ruling lineage. And, quite obviously, one and the same person could freely belong to both the *urban oligarchy* and the *prince's clique*, and pass from one group of elites to the other.

Another important feature of the new elite of the eleventh-century Rus': it began to consist of people who fought on horseback, i.e., *cataphracts* or *knights* (Cardini 2014). The nomads of the northern seas, the *Vikings* (Ling, Earle, Kristiansen 2018), first turned into 'river nomads' in the East European Plain (Katona 2023), and then the Rus' people adopted the steppe technologies of warfare on horseback, creating a military and political machine of heavy cavalry. The *clan of Rurikid princes*, their *warlords* and *men,* as well as the free '*owners of yards*' and '*captains of the boats*' of the second half of the tenth – eleventh centuries were equally the *ruling social group of horsemen* on whom the security of the steppe frontier depended.

As a final consideration, I would like to emphasize that the processes of *ethnogenesis* and *politogenesis* on the East European Plain in the ninth to eleventh centuries fit into the most standard models of *sociocultural* and *political anthropology*. *Long-distance trade routes* in the ninth and tenth centuries provided resources ('start-up capitals') for the *urbanization boom* in several nodes that became the *base territories of new polities*. All the tenth-century polities that can be identified and described in detail were *chiefdoms* of varying complexity. The rest, for which there is a lack of data, could theoretically be *some analogues of chiefdoms*, but this cannot be strictly proven. In these urban clusters a new *hybrid bilingual group* called Rus' with a separate *ethnic identity* was formed. A *complex chiefdom* of the Rurikids, the most successful in trade and military expansion, transformed under external influence in the first half of the eleventh century into an *early state*, which borrowed technologies of state management from the

Byzantine Empire, but also kept some traditional elements of the political practice typical for a chiefdom. The population of this early Rurikid state became a *new Christian people* called *Rus'*. All other polities lost this competition and were partly destroyed, partly incorporated into the 'Rurikid Empire'. It is hard to imagine a more standard pattern of increasing socio-political complexity (from *local communities* to *chiefdoms* and then to a *multipolity* 'empire', with an *early state* in the core) and a more typical timetable for this transformation (*about 150 years in total* and *four generations*).

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‘Little Angola’ of Latin America: The Secondary Politogenesis in the Communities of Fugitive Slaves

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ABSTRACT

The present article raises an interesting question, namely the secondary politogenesis and the re-creation of traditional African forms of social and political organization in the communities of runaway slaves (the so-called cimarrones) in Latin America in the first half of the seventeenth century. The article is devoted to the problem of revivalism (restoration) of traditional social and political structures in the communities of fugitive slaves (cimarrones) in colonial Latin America. The author studies a number of such communities in the first half of the seventeenth century and shows the link between the traditional structures and the Central African traditions of the Bantu people. I also examine the close connection of these phenomena with the development of the slave trade in the period of the union between Portugal and Habsburg Spain (1580–1640), in particular, with the Portuguese slave wars in Angola. The connection between these events and the examples of secondary politogenesis, as well as with the Bantu type of military leadership, allow the examples of such communities to be considered as unique phenomena, characteristic only of this historical period, which ended with the destruction by the Portuguese colonists of the early state of Palmares in colonial Brazil (1696).

Keywords: *maroon, Latin America, Afro-American, early state, secondary politogenesis.*

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AFRICANS IN THE NEW WORLD: THE STATE OF THE PROBLEM

The Africans came to the New World with the Spanish conquerors in a variety of statuses – soldiers, domestic servants – but the majority were imported slaves. In the cities slaves usually learned the Spanish language quickly and often bought themselves out, joining a numerous Diaspora of personally free 'negroes and mulattoes'. The slaves on the plantations, however, never had such opportunities. They used to organize rebellions and fled in large numbers, forming the communities of fugitive slaves of different size and complexity outside the 'Republic of the Spanish'.

The situation in the Luso-American and the Spanish-American worlds differed due the different proportions of the Creole, African and Indian populations, and the policies of the local authorities. Such a specific experience of the African survivalism as the fugitive slave community took different forms.

The subject of the present research is the revival of traditional African social and political patterns of organization in the communities of runaway slaves.

The phenomenon of such communities in Latin America is important for modern political anthropology as a specific form of secondary politogenesis. Politogenesis is defined as '*…a process of separation of the political dimension within a society and formation of the political subsystem as a relatively autonomous subsystem, a process of emergence of special power forms of social organization, which is connected with the concentration of power and (both external and internal) political activities and their monopolization by certain groups and strata*' (Grinin, Korotayev 2009: 93). There is also an amalgam term 'potestarity', used by Russian ethnologists from St. Petersburg, which was in fact the Soviet-era way of 'deceiving' the Marxist terminology, supported by the political system and censorship.

One of the main features that reveal the presence of a complex organization is the systematic raids that require the military organization. So, the war factor, proclaimed by Robert Carneiro as the most essential for the primary politogenesis of states and chiefdoms, seems to be the most essential in our case of the secondary politogenesis (Grinin, Korotayev 2009: 70). The 'peaceful' communities remained 'simple' – they lacked internal hierarchy and never formed unions, comparable to the chiefdoms and Early States.[1] The peaceful communities tended not only to accept the offer of surrender in exchange for the status of the 'free negro' villages, but may have even come to an

agreement with their slave masters to return to the work in the hacienda (McFarlon 1986). So we propose the term ‘raiding communities’ for those cases where secondary politogenesis took place. Their social organization is characterized by the institutionalized war leader and the division of the population into groups of warriors and exploited peasants. Such a community was capable of active politogenesis, forming a society as complex as the chiefdom and even the early state.[2]

Other factors, such as economy and exchange, did not develop – they remained agrarian communities, and in most cases did not re-establish any lineage structures due to the lack of time or the lack of female population. Nevertheless, the social dominance of the ‘raider’ warriors over the peasants and the recognition of the self-appointed ‘kings’ or queens are the most visible characteristics. That is why Henri J. M. Claessen's term the ‘Early State’ seems to be a more appropriate term for the most developed community, the ‘Republic of Palmares’ in Brazil – the restoration of the political hierarchy and division into warriors, peasants and ‘rulers’ is well enough to testify this definition as relevant for the case of the study. In some cases, we can testify the political dominance of the ‘main’ village over few local communities (Carneiro 1977: 733–34; Claessen 2006).

It is important to emphasize that all cases of the African revivalism among Latin American slaves are the cases of the secondary politogenesis (see, *e.g.*, Siim 2021). However, the Brazilian ‘mocambu’ (‘hideout’) societies are more likely to refer to non-hierarchical communities of runaway peasants, which, although very numerous, do not refer to the case. According to the sources, the military or bandit activity is the only circumstance that reveals the existence of inequality and hierarchy.

The mass emergence of fugitive communities of Africans of an evidently raiding nature falls into the period of the Portuguese *aciento* in the transatlantic slave trade, the period of the union of Spain and Portugal between 1580 and 1640. It was the union of their colonial empires – an old market for African slaves, Spanish and Luso- America, and the slave-trading Portuguese colonies in Africa. The growing Portuguese slave trade in Central Africa led to the dominance of the Bantu-speaking peoples of the Congo, Angola and Zaire in the importation of slaves. This was the most essential condition for the emergence of complex communities and the revival of types of native African social and political organization in the New World.

The phenomenon of communities of fugitive slaves was well studied, as were the problems of the cultural and social adaptation of the 'negro' population in the New World. We can point to a number of recent fundamental studies of the problem and related issues (Tardieu 2017; Newson 2007; Sweet 2003; Wheat 2009). Early works are also still relevant to the study (Villa-Vilar 1977; Schwartz 1968; Davidson 1966; Klein 1986; Boyd-Bowman 1969; Aguirre Beltran 1972). The specific role of the Bantu people has also become a subject of recent research (Ngou-Mve 1997, 2003). Other studies of the phenomenon of *marronage* deal with the late, 'peaceful' agrarian communities (see Schaffer 2005; McFarlon 1986).

A major advance has been recently made by David Wheat and his colleagues in creating the Slave-trading Voyages Database with the newly collected archival statistical data allowing tracking the changes in the provenance of slaves (Wheat 2009).

Armed slave rebellions were numerous from the earliest years of the colony, but the ethnic diversity always remained the main obstacle to the recreation of any traditional African organization within the fugitive communities. They were also short-lived – aggressive communities became the target of armed expedition and most of them were destroyed. That is the reason why all the examples prior to the aciento period do not present relevant cases.

We believe that the following factors are essential for successful attempts to revive the African patterns of social and political organization in the Americas – the dominance of a single ethnic group, the large number of fugitives, the short period, or lack of their acculturation in colonies (*bozal* negro), and a people with the military experience. It is well known that the first rebels in Haiti and Puerto Rico were *Wolof* (*'jelofe'*) warriors. These factors were very characteristic for the *aciento* period of 1580–1640, due to the coincidence of a number of historical events – the coming together of colonial empires (slave source and slave market), the outbreak of local warfare in Angola 1600–1630, inspired and prayed for by the Portuguese, and an essential influence of the Bantu social and cultural patterns as a result of their dominance in slave importation. The Brazilian experience seems to be an exception for Latin America, since it experienced the growth of rebellious quilombo-like warrior camps until the middle of the eighteenth century. It was also heavily related on the importation of Bantu slaves in the periods beyond the times of the Spanish-Portuguese Union, and their percentage was exclusively high in com-

parison with other regions of Latin America or English and French colonies. It is also characterized by 'negro' Diaspora as the main exploited part of the population, unlike Spanish America with millions of Indians. This fact even led to the decline and cessation of the slave trade in colonial Mexico even before the independents (Florentino and Amlatino 2012; Schwartz 1987).

We should focus on the importance of the correlation between these factors, which has been underestimated by researches because there are a few well-studied cases due to the lack of data on the organization of most communities.

THE ETHNIC FACTOR AND THE FORMS OF ADAPTATION OF THE POPULATION OF AFRICAN ORIGIN IN THE NEW WORLD IN THE *ACIENTO* PERIOD (1580–1640)

The importation of the African slaves for heavy labour was planned by the conquerors in their treaties with the Crown (Fortuna 1972: 143, 147–148). Portugal had a monopoly over Spain in the slave trade in Africa since the peace treaty of 1479, and the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) confirmed its exclusive rights to conquer the African continent. The geography of their slave trade quickly spread from the Guinea coast to the Congo River (Hair 1980: 120–121). During the Union with Spain (1580–1640), the transatlantic slave trade officially became the monopoly of the new 'Portuguese subjects'. This period is known as the '*aciento period*', since all trading operations had to be carried out only on the basis of official treaties with the Crown (*aciento*).

The forms of 'legal' organization of the Diaspora of African origin were identical in the colonies of the two Pyrenean countries. Negroes and Mulattos, even if they were freed, were discriminated against – they could not become members of the city *cabildo* governance or become the members of the religious orders. Nor did they have a right to bear arms, except in the militia. The *Cofradia*, the brotherhood of the local ecclesiastical cult of the saint, was the general exception. It allowed Africans to organize and legally elect their own 'judges'. 'Black *cofradias*' often became the refuge of the only African ethnic group (Zambrano 2008; Sweet 2003: 207). Often the *cofradia* would elect the self-styled 'king' who would then secretly send his illegal 'overseers' to all the 'tribesmen' in the area. This type of organization was officially recognized in Cuba as a *cabildo de naciòn* from the eighteenth century (Alexandrenkov 1998: 120). It was also known as '*reinado*' in Brazil and still existed even in the mid-nineteenth century (Ribeiro 1958: 473).

The situation on the plantations and in the countryside differed from that in the cities – the concentration of the black population was very high as was the gender imbalance – it was a male population. Rural plantations became the main source for fugitive slaves. Catechization was usually neglected or even forbidden by the masters in Spanish America, despite the demands of the Crown.

The revival of traditional African forms of organization was only possible in the independent communities of fugitives. The authorities fought against them with an 'armed hand'. They formed an essential part of the Latin American social landscape, together with the numerous diaspora of free African descendants in the cities, the 'black' militias, or the 'black' population of slave owners' plantations. Too many slaves used to escape recapture, and the places of 'black' population concentration (plantation regions and slave trading cities such as Veracruz and Cartagena-de-Las-Indias) were surrounded by settlements of runaways.

In the Spanish colonies, the escaped slaves became known as '*cimarrones*' after the first mass escape from the Hagua mines in Cuba in 1526 – the word applied to 'wild' Indians (Lopez Velasco 1971: 115). It was adopted in the English colonies in the form of *maroon*.

The ethnic composition of the imported slaves constantly changed throughout the Colonia. Prior to 1575, the ships used to arrive from 'the Guinea rivers' and San-Tome and usually brought with them up to forty languages per voyage (Wheat 2009: 219–222, 224). The situation changed with the establishment of the Portuguese colony of Luanda in Angola, which gave a new impetus to the slave trade and led to an increase in the involvement of the Bantu people. The Portuguese began to intervene or provoke local wars. Only between 1603 and 1607 did they take part in twelve wars (eight – in Kisama, four – in Mbuila). Five of them took place in 1607 (Ngou-Mve 2003: 19). Around 1613, Angola's governor, B. Baño Cordoso, formed an alliance with the local aggressors, *imbangala* ('*banguela*') against the Congo and the Mbundu's Early State, Ndongo. The *Imbangala* were better known as the 'yaga' people, as they were referred to in the Congo king's correspondence with the papacy (Miller 1972: 565–66).

During these wars the slave trade increased drastically, while the Mbundu were obliged to pay tribute in slaves. The greatest number of the slaves exported falls on the years 1617–22, when 16 local wars took place in Angola – more than 50,000 men. The struggle of Angola's national heroine, Nzinga Mbandi Ngola (baptized Anna da Sousa), daughter of the Ndongo king, Ngola Kiluangi (reigned 1581–1617),

for the restoration of the kingdom, provided many victims for the slave traders. This situation continued until the smallpox epidemic of 1630, which forced the Mbundu to leave their inhabited area (Ngou-Mve 2003: 25–26).

Such a large influx of captive Bantu into a slave market encouraged the Audiencia of Mexico in 1609 to openly protest to the King of Spain against Portuguese traders, asking for a reduction in the number of licenses granted (Ngou-Mve 2003: 19; Newson 2007: 58). The increasing importation of slaves from Angola and Congo was studied by David Wheat for Cartagena-de-Las-Indias. This city was one of the largest slave markets in the Spanish colonies for Peru, Colombia and Venezuela. In the first twenty-five years after the foundation of Luand, half of the 42 ships came from the Upper Guinea (20 ships) and the Cape of Green Island (13 ships). During the 'Spanish Peace' (1601–1616), the piracy activity was reduced to 39 ships. But in 1617–1625 only a third of them came from the rivers of Guinea, the rest came from Angola. For the period of 1573–1625, a half of the ships (199 of 436) came from Congo and Angola. Overall, Cartagena imported an estimated 73,210 people in 1573–1625 (Wheat 2009: 110, 253–55). The Brazilian slave trade also grew after the foundation of Luanda. Between 1550 and 1575, 'only' 10,000 African slaves were imported, but between 1575 and 1600 this figure rose to 40,000 (Metcalf 2005: 383).

The Crown's approach to the cultural adaptation of 'negroes' was paradoxical. The Royal Decree of 11 of May 1526 forbade the import of 'ladino' (Spanish-speaking) slaves because they 'hindered the authorities'. Only the import of the 'wild negro', the *bosal,* was allowed (Fortuna 1972: 161). The pagans were also preferred as they were more adaptable to the true Christian Doctrine.

In the cities, slaves 'enjoyed' the same conditions as free hired workers, albeit with lower payment (Harth-Terre 1961: 331–332). The 'tribal' identity was maintained through marriage to their tribesmen. Yet, this preserved ethnic identity was, in Van Normann's terms, neo-African, for it was the unity through the *country* of origin that was reflected in their new names (such as Juan 'Angola' *etc*.) (Van Norman 2005: 199). The practice of self-buying out of slavery was encouraged by the Crown and the cities experienced a fast growth of the free 'negro' and 'mulatto' population. They served as hired workers and in local militia (Boyd-Bowman 1969: 150).

THE BANTU IN THE NEW WORLD AND THE PROBLEM OF THE REVIVAL OF THE AFRICAN SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION

The mass importation of Bantu was the main reason for the emergence of the raiders communities, whose social and military organization reflected Central African patterns. It implied the rule of the military leader and a social hierarchy that includes the sacred leader (the main authority in the matters of the customary law), as well as a division of the community into raiders-warriors and peasants. The similarity of the social structures of different Bantu states was the key factor in the emergence of 'complex' Maroon communities throughout Latin America. Some new 'polities' are also characterized by the presence of political domination of the 'capital' over a number of settlements – which was not the rule for peaceful '*Palenque'* or '*mocambu'* communities without domination of military leaders.

The position of the Bantu in the slaveholding society of the New World was specific. The division between 'urban' and 'countryside' 'negro' in Latin America was in fact, already, *ethnic*. The Bantu were not welcome in the cities. For example, Peruvian 'masters' in the first half of the seventeenth century preferred 'Guinean Negroes' in the cities. The 'Angolan' Negroes were mainly found in the countryside (Newson 2007: 68). The Bantu were considered unruly, thieving and lazy in virtually all the slaveholding colonies of different nations (Lowenthal 1952: 26). The popular 'sociology' of the Spanish colonies itself was very simple – Spaniards were considered as the most capable, Indians as lazy and voluptuous, Negroes as cruel and anarchic.

The baptization of the Congolese and Angolans began back in Portuguese Africa. The Kings of 'Bacongo' were baptized in 1491 and there were a number of local Congo Christians and a bishop of local origin (since 1534) (Olderogge and Potekhin 1954a: 263; 1954b: 478). Almost all the slaves who arrived from the Congo and Angola had already been 'catechized' in some way and had some knowledge of the Doctrine – which was not the rule for the arrivals from the Guinea coast (Newson 2007: 101–103).

Upon the arrival in Cartagena-de-Las-Indias, they usually found themselves in the hands of the local Jesuit mission, which was dissatisfied with this 'humiliation' of catechization. In the early seventeenth century, it was the mission of Alonso Sandoval, who left a description of the slave trade in the Spanish Colonies.[3] The mission had to rely on the team of 'negro'-translators, each of whom spoke a number of lan-

guages. They used *kikongo*, spoken in the lower Congo basin, to communicate with the new arrivals from Congo and Angola. It became known as the language of Angola (Wheat 2009: 270). For Brazil, the local Bantu *lingua franca* was that of the Mbundu (Sweet 2003: 250). The number of 'Angolans' encouraged the Peruvian Jesuits to publish the vocabulary of the 'Angolan language' in Lima in 1630 in a number of 1500 copies. The slave owners sabotaged their efforts, insisting that learning Spanish would be enough for their slaves. So the Peruvian Jesuits left the idea of learning and teaching 'Angolan' language to the missionaries (Wheat 2009: 110, 253–55). Unlike Brazilian, Portuguese and Italian missionaries, Spanish missionaries only worked among the Indian population. That is the reason why the only Brazilian Jesuits were experts in the spiritual world of the 'negro slaves' that remained virtually 'undiscovered' by the Spanish American missionaries (Ribeiro 1958: 460).

THE FORTIFIED SETTLEMENTS AND THE PROBLEM OF THE ORIGIN OF THE CIMARRONS' SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE ACIENTO PERIOD

The regular settlements of fugitive slaves in Spanish America were called *palenque* (Spanish word for 'fence'). Nevertheless, Leon Marques, a visitor to Cartagena in 1601, applied the word 'fortress' to this type of settlement (Wheat 2009: 141). The original pattern was probably a regular warrior camp surrounded by a wooden palisade. It is also highly probable that during the constant warfare in Angola, every settlement in the early seventeenth century was fortified.

The main social institution that attracted the researches in connection with the question of 're-africanization' of fugitive slaves in Americas was the *quilombo* – a fortified warrior camp of the Angolan *imbangala*. Joseph C. Miller, before the analysis of the oral tradition of the 1960s, believed that their expansion began as a result of the establishment or seizure of control over the warrior training camps in the polyethnic confederation of Lunda, neighbors for the Mbunda and Ngola (Miller 1972: 565).

The quilombo was a regularly organized warrior settlement-camp, surrounded by a double wooden fence with the 'pretoria' of the military leader in the center (Miller 1972: 566). *Imbangala* (port. '*banguela*', '*benguela*') was first mentioned by the Portuguese in the 1560s. The English sailor Edward Battel, a prisoner of the Imbangala, stated that the first *quilombo* camp was founded by Elembe, the ancestor of Calanda, with whom he travelled in 1600–1601. Miller identi-

fied them with the Cota Calanda Imbe of the Lunda confederation and the Kulembe of the late tradition (Miller 1972: 564).

According to Alonso Sandoval's Bantu informants, the *imbangala* restored and replenished their numbers by capturing the youth of the enemy, and nothing else – they were cut off from lineage structures or local communities and forbidden to have families. They were also known as 'drunkards and cannibals' (Ngou-Mve 2003: 19). The Italian missionary Antonio Cavazzi noted that they obeyed only their military leaders (Cavazzi 1687: 205–208). It is precisely these people who never fall into the hands of slave owners – at that time they were 'allies' of the Portuguese.

The acceptance of *imbangala* rites by the kingdoms of Ndongo and Matamba (the main victims of the Portuguese) was connected with the activity of Nzinga Mbanga, the famous daughter of the king of Ndongo, Ngola's Kiluangy (ruled 1581–1617). After the union of Ndongo and Matamba in 1622, Nzinga married an imbangala (yaga) leader, Cangola, and founded a *quilombo*, accepting other 'yaga' rites (Cavazzi 1687: 208). Ngou-Mve noted that the acceptance of yaga rites was not limited to Angola – many 'authentic' settlements of their 'heirs', proud of their origins (toponyms ending in *ba-jag, yak'a*), can be found in Gabon and Congo (Brazzavile) (Ngou-Mve 2003: 27).

THE BANTU OF NEW SPAIN. THE 'KINGDOM' OF THE YANGA

In 1560–1580, the *cimarrone* gangs terrified Mexico from Guadalajara to Zacatecas, joining the Chichimec Indians (Ngou-Mve 2003: 30). After armed repression, the center of the new rebellions moved to Veracruz, the major center of the slave trade and plantations (Davidson 1966: 244–46).

It was here, in the depths of the Veracruz and Oaxaca wilderness, that the *palenque* of 'king Yanga' was founded. It may have happened 30 years before the clash with the governor's forces in 1610. The 'kingdom' counted more than one settlement. The main settlement had 60 houses for about 90 adult male Africans and 24 women – blacks and Indians. This was undoubtedly the result of the disproportionate number of males imported as slaves (Davidson 1966: 240). The slave owners' demands to import more women were never met because of the polygamy of the indigenous Africans. There was a strict division of labour among the Yanga's subjects – some of them only farmed, while others participated in raiding (Davidson 1966: 249–50).

The treats of a Bantu culture are reflected in the military customs of this *palenque*, like the use of drums for long-distance communication – the 'jungle telegraph', used even by commoners in the Congo or Angola. Ngou-Mve considered that the fact that an 'Angolan', Francisco de la Matosa, was involved as a military leader was good enough to confirm a Bantu origin of the social pattern of the Yanga kingdom (Ngou Mve 1997: 38–44).

Such war-adapted fugitives were able to reorganize and coordinate their actions. In Colombia, the main center of slave trade, the *palenque* Limon, Polini and Sinaguare existed during the aciento period. They had a labor division based on social inequality among their members – the cimarrones of Limon hunted people for labor force to turn them into enforced laborers (Wheat 2009: 184–185). Some of them, after working as farmers, later became the members of the raiding parties. In 1634, three *palenques* joined forces, chose to proclaim 'a black woman Eleonora' as their queen, and retreated inland. The new 'kingdom' had a large number of people in its communities. During the attack on the main settlement, 313 captives were taken, while other survivors fled (Rodriguez 1979: 168–170). However, there is no clear evidence of the Bantu influence.

THE REPUBLIC OF PALMARES: 'LITTLE ANGOLA' (ANGOLA YANGA)

The most spectacular case of African revivalism in fugitive communities is the early state of Palmares in colonial Brazil. When Portugal joined Spain, it made new enemies – the Dutch started to seize the former Portuguese colonies. In 1637 they captured Luanda and in 1641 they occupied Pernambuco in Brazil. They did not intervene in the organization of the slave trade, but the invasion provided many opportunities for slaves to escape (Greenfield 1969).

The main occupation of the Portuguese in Brazil in the sixteenth–seventeenth centuries was sugar planting. The colonies also depended on the importation of African slaves. In the famous words of the Portuguese diplomat at the time of the Dutch wars, Father Domingo Vieyra, '*…there is no Pernambuco without Negroes, and there are no Negroes without Angola*' (Boxer 1948: 510). The flows of the Atlantic Ocean made the Brazilian colonies the most convenient stop for the Angolan slave ships. The proportion of the slaves from Congo and Angola was extremely high, reaching 90 per cent by the 1680s (Mercie 1984; Sweet 2003).

The legal self-organization, as in Spanish America, was only allowed for the black population within the *cofradias*, which had been established since 1552. The Indians, Africans, and Europeans used to establish *cofradias* only for their ethnic group (Mulvey 1982: 41–42).[4]

It was during the wars for control of Pernambuco that reports began to appear of the 'Republic of Palmares' – the largest and only regularly organized African polity ever created in the New World. It was a full-fledged early state influenced by Central African patterns. The word 'Republic' was then used to refer to any organized communities as distinct from a 'kingdom' or feudal possession.

During the late wars against the Portuguese up to 1676, Palmares was already a complex community. It had a 'royal' capital, Macaco, and eight subject settlements, stretching to the north and north-west from the Portuguese settlements of Pernambuco. It was already an early state under the rule of 'king Zumbi', a sacred leader with the title *nganga a zumbi*. This title is of Bantu origin and used to be given to the ritual specialists, able to pacify angry ancestral spirits or the spirits of the 'forgotten' dead who had not received sacrifices (Sweet 2003: 154). His 'royal' settlement (modern Sierra de Barriga) is said to have taken its name from 'the assassination of this animal', *i.e.* the ritual sacrifice of monkey. The population of the 'republic' called it Angola Janga – 'Little Angola' (Anderson 1996: 559). There was also a royal etiquette – kneeling and clapping before the king (Anderson 1996: 553–554). The king never allowed the appearance of 'sorcerers' (who were feared by the Africans). The royal settlement, however, had a Catholic chapel and the priest of the most 'ladino' members; and three statues of Catholic saints (Jesus, Our Lady and Snt. Blas). The methods of population control were simple and very 'African' – warriors hunted down and killed their own runaways (Anderson 1996: 553).

Palmares had nine settlements – Zambi, Acotirene, Tabokas, Dambrabanga, Subupira, the 'royal' enclave of Macaco, Osenga, Amaro and Andaloquituxe. The population is estimated at 20,000 people (Orser and Funari 2001: 68). Macaco, under the direct rule of the king, had 1,500 houses. Subupira, on the Cachingu River, was designated as a military training camp under the king's brother, 'Ghana Zona', and had 800 houses (Anderson 1996: 553). It was used to train young warriors and was the only closest analogue to the *Quilombo* camp. Only four settlements were governed by '*cabo'*, the military chief – Osehga, Daprabanga, *etc*. Others were governed by royal relatives – 'Acotirene', which was also the name of the king's mother, Andaloticuxe – his

nephew, *etc*. The royal lineage was the key element in the political organization. Nevertheless, ethnic diversity influenced the government pattern – a king's son-in-law, 'Ganamuissa', was called 'Chief of all the people from Angola', that means there were others 'groups' (Lara 2010: 9). It is quite possible that there was interaction with other cultural groups – ceramic materials from the Macaco ruins in Sierra da Barriga were represented by the polished losal pottery, as well as European and Indian types (Orser and Funari 2001: 67).

'The Negroes from the Congo and Angola' of Palmares were particularly feared by their king, which explains the origin of his power (Anderson 1996: 554). According to Robert Nelson Anderson and Stuart Schwartz, all the reports of the commanders of the military expeditions point to the *imbangala* ethnos as the prototype of Palmares. But this is not correct – Yaga's neighbors in Africa only accepted its military organization. James Sweet emphasizes that all Bantu warriors used to break all ties with the lineage organization after joining the military camp (Sweet 2003: 50). The 'king' title '*nganga a nzumbi'* had no meaning for the lineageless *imbangala* (Sweet 2003: 154).

It remains uncertain when Palmares was formed as an early state – Silvia Lara and others believe that it was in the process of being formed as a typical African state. Fugitive communities in this area appeared no later than in 1606. It is likely that most of the inhabitants of Palmares were escaped slaves from the time of the Dutch conquest in 1641, or their descendants.

Since Miller's 1961 publication on *imbangala*, there was a tendency to claim that almost every Maroon settlement is a *quilombo* camp of the *imbangala* type (see Schwartz 1987; Ngou-Mve 2003: 20). But the Portuguese 'negro slaves' used to come from four different kingdoms (Congo, Loango, Ndongo and Matamba) and Palmares had only one warrior camp, ruled by the king's brother, 'Gana Zona'. He was not the supreme military leader – it was another person, the king's nephew, Zumbi, who was canonized as the Brazilian national hero in 1978. When the king surrendered to the Portuguese, Zumbi managed to capture and poison him in what may have been an African-style ritual regicide (Anderson 1996: 559). In 1694 the expedition of the *bandeirants* took the capital of Palmares, Macaco. Three hundred defenders were killed and 400 were taken prisoners. Zumbi, who had the reputation of being 'immortal', was ambushed and killed on 20 November 1695.

* * *

It seems the phenomenon of the recovery of traditional African social structures in Latin America was in fact limited to the period of the Portuguese wars in Angola, from 1575 to the 1630s. It was during this period that the number of equestrian societies was recorded. Unlike the fugitive communities, which chose to accept the authorities' offer to surrender and become a settlement of ‘free negroes’, they resisted any attempt to subjugate them.

We can confirm that the slaves transported to Latin America during this period were mostly of the Bantu origin. However, there are no clear types of organization – in most cases we can report some characteristic ‘African’ features. In most cases, their spoken language remains an open question. They had social inequality based on occupation divisions, recognized military and religious leaders, and in some cases – a complex territorial structure. But their mixed origins and short existence did not allow them to evolve – only Palmares remains the evidently ‘African’ type of a typical emerging early state, with a separate military organization and a sacred king, clearly of theAngolan type.

The ‘negro’ refuge communities of Latin America, that followed the Bantu militarized pattern, first recreated a military organization with the domination of the warriors over the agriculture population. Its essential feature – the military leadership represented by an ‘Angolan’. They were aggressors against the European and Indian populations.

With the end of the Portuguese monopoly in the Spanish colonies, the *asento* concessions fell into the hands of the ‘Italian subjects’ of the Spanish crown, who entrusted the transportation to French and English merchants, who used to operate in the Gulf of Guinea, who bought Mandingo. The Bantu continued to be transported via the contraband routes from Brazil. This meant a change in the cultural patterns of the black population of Americas.

The most important legacy of the Maroon communities is the new settlements of ‘free negroes’ on the map of Latin America. Some of them, like Cuijla in Mexico, managed to preserve their traditional material culture.

The irony is that the only ‘Negro’ state that exists today, that was ever created by the rebel ‘negro slaves’, the Republic of Haiti, never relied on the revival of any ‘African patterns’ of political organization. It gained its independence by accepting the bourgeois constitutional form of state organization. The fugitive raiding communities disappeared in the fight against the colonial authorities, or surrendered for the status of ‘free village’ and their inhabitants were acculturated.

The most successful example of the newly-emerged Bantu-type state in the New World, the early state of Palmares, still serves on the agenda of national cultural policy in one of the leading modern Latin American states, the Republic of Brazil. It became the official symbol of 'black Brazil'. Its last warlord, Zumbi, was proclaimed a 'national hero' in 1978 and the day of his death, 20 November, is celebrated as 'Black Conscience Day' ('Zumbi Day') (Anderson 1996: 560; Olser, Funari 2001: 69).

In conclusion, we can confirm that all cases tend to be cases of secondary politogenesis, regardless of whether they refer to the emerging Early State (as Palmares) or the chiefdom-like (composed of several villages without the complexity of a developed hierarchy). All these societies already had a Bantu pattern of social organization as a prototype (see Grinin 2009: 115).

Nevertheless, in most cases the separation of military and civil authorities was not always a sign of a specific 'African' pattern in the organization of the community of escaped slaves. The colonial organization of the Spanish and Portuguese societies also served in most cases as a pattern for the fugitive community, which rather depended of the degree of 'ladinization' (Spanish or Luso-speaking) of the organizers (McFarlon 1986: 135–146). We therefore do not share the enthusiasm of Stuart Schwartz, who interprets the presence of the military leader as a sign of a Bantu-*quilombo* warrior camp pattern. Communities before 1575 had a more 'mixed' ethnic population, a fact confirmed by Wheat's statistics on slave importation. This made any real revival of an African pattern impossible…

Fig. 1. 'The Mulattos of Esmeralda' – famous Ecuadorian maroons, surrendered their settlement to the Spanish Crown in exchange for nobility and the position of governors. Sanches Galque, Quito, 1599. Madrid. Prado Museum.

The 'ladinization' of the 'negro' escaped slaves implied another way of resistance – even if it was not 'peaceful', it usually copied colonial patterns, implying also an alliance with the local encomienda Indians.[5] In most cases, the sources do not allow revealing the presence or the ethnic pattern of revived African structures, as with most of the 'late' (18th century) Brazilian communities. 'Negro ladino' slaves could revive colonial patterns that also recognized the division between military ('capitan') and 'secular' ('gobernador') authorities. It was a major misunderstanding for any enthusiast of the theory of the revival of specific *imbangala* 'quilombo' camps for any period after the wars in Angola in the early seventeenth century. For it was certainly not a pattern for the eighteenth century, when the *imbangala* migrated far from the neighborhood of their Portuguese ex-'allies' and became 'victims', not slave hunters, in the slave trade. Case studies show that by this time they accounted for only 12 per cent of the Brazilian slaves. C. Miller's article on *imbangala* was a 'temptation' for the unsupported and intensified 'comparisons' (Miller 1961; Schwartz 1978; Ramos 1988: 56).

The only period of real revival of African patterns of political and social structures in Latin America relates to a period of intense warfare in Angola in 1575–1630 and the union of the Portuguese and Spanish colonial empires. This was a period of dominance of the Bantu refugees in the importation of slaves to the Luso and Spanish Americas. That is why the example of the emergence of the early state of Palmares was never repeated.

NOTES

[1] See, for example, the work of McFarlon (McFarlon 1986).

[2] The neo-evolutionary term, proposed in the 1970s by Henri M. Claessen and Peter Skalnik for the first early states. The theory of early state was formulated as a response to the inadequacy of the existing Marxist and neo-evolutionary terms (Claessen 2006).

[3] Sandoval, Alonso de. De instauranda Áephiopum salute. 'Un tratado sobre la esclavitud'. Madrid. 1987.

[4] This was not the case in Spanish America (Zambrano 2008).

[5] Like the 'negro Miguel' mutiny in early Venezuela (1553 a.d.) (Oviedo y Baños 2004: 156–160).

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Ethno-Cultural Associations as Shadow States: The Case of Ijebu Province in Western Nigeria, 1900–1960

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ABSTRACT

Existing scholarly works on ethno-cultural associations (ECAs) in Nigeria have done little to provide a robust historical perspective on their role in community development in British colonies in Africa. Thus, this paper is an attempt to fill the gap in the body of knowledge on ethno-cultural associations in colonial Africa with specific reference to Ijebu Province in Western Nigeria. The study is aimed at providing a critical historical discourse on the social, economic and political roles of ethno-cultural associations in colonial Ijebu Province of Western Nigeria.

The study uses both primary and secondary sources. While archival materials and oral interviews provide the primary data in this discourse, books, journal articles and newspaper reports are examined as secondary data. The study found out that the efforts made by the ECAs in colonial Ijebuland through several strategies brought about meaningful development at the community level. We also found out that the ECAs represented indigenous organizational structures developed by the Ijebu people and functioned as community-wide forums for problem identification and prioritization, mobilization of social and financial resources and implementation of development projects at the community level in colonial Ijebu Province of Western Nigeria. The study concludes, among other things, that the ECAs were more or less shadow states and that their efforts must be seen against

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the background of the failure of the colonial state and the Ijebu Native Administration between 1900 and 1960.

Keywords: *ethno-cultural associations, colonial state, shadow state, community development.*

INTRODUCTION

The concept of the shadow state gained prominence more than three decades ago, following the theoretical analyses pioneered by Jennifer Wolch (1990: 16), who explained the emergence and implications of the term. Based on the theoretical framework propounded by Wolch, the concept of the shadow state articulates the increasing importance of the voluntary sector in the operation of the welfare state in Europe and the United States (Trudeau 2008: 670). In line with Wolch's theorization, the concept of the shadow state draws attention to the welfare intervention role of voluntary institutions even in the presence of the 'conventional state' which has a statutory responsibility to address the citizens' welfare issues. Thus, the conceptual denotation of the term 'shadow state' as deployed in this paper follows an unorthodox interpretation of what constitutes a conventional 'state'. In the context of this paper, we consider the ECAs which are voluntary institutions as a kind of 'unorthodox government' that has played the role of an orthodox government in modern society.

In pre-colonial African societies, a number of community-based associations and cultural groups existed at different levels of operation. Such community-based groups were of diverse origins and forms and were directed at the transformation and development of various aspects of community life (Taylor 1990). They were an intricate part of the performance and efforts of the community leadership or traditional authorities. In fact, community associations existed in traditional African communities and played specific roles (Oluremi 2003: 32). These groups took care of religious, social and economic issues in the community (Kwando 2002: 19).

Associations and communal groups were not an exclusive attribute of African society. They were found in other parts of the world at different times and their existence in Europe dates back to medieval times. There were two main types of associations that were membership-based in pre-colonial African society. One was economic-focused and the other founded on age. Appiagyei-Atua contends that these groups cut across kinship lines. The age-based associations dominated the political life of most traditional African communities and were

a popular concept in the universal segmented and the ritually stratified segmented systems (Kwando 2002: 21). Examples include the Poro and Sande societies which were exclusive men and women clubs, respectively in the pre-colonial Akan community on the Gold Coast. The third type was economic in nature and was devoted to promoting the economic interests of its members, mainly in the areas of agriculture, hunting and fishing. For example, Ashanti farmers had what they called *Nnoboa* groups. In the same vein, these associations emerged and developed in different Nigerian societies. For instance, age-group societies occupied a prominent position in the political, social and economic life of Igbo communities.

Just like the ECAs, community development is a long-standing social activity in African society (Rambaree 2013: 32; Williams 1978: 16). Even before the advent of the colonial administration, people at different times in history had organized themselves into groups and used community resources to provide physical improvements and functional facilities in their respective localities. Significantly, the concept of community development in Nigeria lies deep in the past. Historical records indicate that prior to the advent of colonialism, various communities in what later culminated into the present day Nigeria nation mobilized their resources with the aim of developing their localities or communities. Indeed, the pre-colonial era in Nigeria witnessed a community development approach that emphasized self-help to improve the health and welfare of the community.

In lieu of this, this paper examines the role of ethno-cultural associations in the socio-economic and educational landscapes of colonial Ijebu province from 1900 up to 1960. This paper is structured into three segments or sections. The first section is the introduction, which provides the historical background of ECAs at the global and local levels. The second section provides the conceptual framework for the key concepts in this study by operationalizing the meanings of ethno-cultural associations and community development. The third section critically examines the role of ECAs in promoting the educational development of colonial Ijebu communities. The fourth section of this paper provides a robust historical analysis of the socio-economic impact of the ECAs in colonial Ijebu communities. The fifth section is the conclusion.

THE ROLE OF ETHNO-CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS IN THE EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF IJEBU COMMUNITIES, 1900–1960

It must be stated unequivocally that the history of education in Ijebuland is incomplete without an attempt to establish the role played by communal associations in its developmental process. Put differently, any historical account or analysis of the development of education in Ijebu province under colonial rule that fails to acknowledge the voluntary efforts made by communal associations and religious institutions is deficient and inadequate, at least in view of the various findings in the course of this study. Of course, education is an integral component of the community development process as it is a major template for launching capacity-building and human capital development. Indeed, our findings indicate that education played a very significant role in improving the wellbeing of the communities in Provincial Ijebuland, as it represented a major instrument of economic and social change through which communities experienced transformation. However, the social, economic and political transformation experienced by the Ijebu communities during our period of study was made possible by the commendable efforts of indigenous ECAs. Indeed, the period between 1945 and 1960 marked the era of educational growth and development in the Ijebu communities for it was an era of unprecedented proliferation of educational institutions, particularly post-primary schools. For the first time, community associations began to emphasize and appreciate the value of secondary school education.

But the role of ECAs in educational development in colonial Ijebu province can be properly understood and appreciated within the context of colonial administrative policy on education in the province. The administrative policy of the provincial government on education was such as to reflect the exploitative instincts of that institution (the British colonial government). The colonial state did not regard education as a priority in the same way as the people, and therefore did not propose a comprehensive education policy that would satisfy the hopes and aspirations of community members. Based on available records, colonial political officers (except P. A. Talbot) in the province were not interested in education as they discouraged the establishment of more post-primary educational institutions. In fact, the Provincial Resident in Ijebuland in 1937 was so hostile to the growth of the only secondary school in the province – Ijebu-Ode Grammar School

in the 1930s – that he had to be called to order by the Secretary of the Southern Provinces (NAI/IjeProf 1276: 4). Perhaps, the economic implications of establishing more post-primary institutions, coupled with the political situation and sub-ethnic politics that characterized Ijebuland during this period, contributed to the inhabitant's indifference and lukewarm disposition towards the establishment of more secondary schools (NAI/IjeProf 1276: 4). Of course, in the 1930s, primary educational institutions were already accessible to most communities in Ijebuland. As a matter of fact, by 1944, statistics revealed the great success of the Ijebu in the area of primary education, with more than 25 per cent of the children in the division having access to primary school education (NAI/IjeProf J.640: 8). However, this was largely due to the efforts of Christian agencies or missions.

Fig. 1. Epe Grammar School founded in 1954
(The EDU raised part of the funds used in the construction of this secondary school in 1954)

Source: author's fieldwork, 2017.

The bottom line, however, is that while there were many primary schools in the province during the period of our study, the only post-primary education was the Ijebu-Ode Grammar School, which was located in the town of Ijebu-ode (Ayandele 1992: 132) The implica-

tion of this was that even those who desired to access post-primary education outside the capital could only do so by travelling many kilometers to the town before they could access post-primary education in the province. This situation was considered unpleasant by many Ijebus, particularly those outside Ijebu-Ode town and some prominent members of community associations who had developed an insatiable appetite for western education.

To this end, some indigenous ECAs felt concerned that the lack of post-primary educational institutions was an indication of educational inequality between Ijebu-Ode and other communities such as Remo, Ijebu-Igbo and Epe. Indeed, these community associations argued that their communities were being marginalized in terms of the development of the educational landscape and that the lack of access to post-primary education by communities outside of Ijebu Ode would create differences in the educational success of community members and ultimately suppress social and economic mobility. Thus, through series of correspondences and meetings, these associations continued to put pressure on the colonial political officers in the province to consider the establishment of post-primary institutions in their communities. However, the efforts of the ECAs and community leadership did not yield positive results, as the colonial government argued that the province was relatively saturated with mission schools and therefore did not deserve to more institutions in terms of government schools (NAI/IjeProf 1102: 15). Thus, realizing that the colonial government was more or less a heaven that would only help those who helped themselves first, these associations had no choice but to take action by taking pragmatic steps to meet the educational needs of community members.

One major ECA that demonstrated this strident voice for the establishment of a post-primary institution in the colonial Ijebu Province was the Epe Descendant Union (Ijebu Ode Branch). From 1940 to 1950, the Epe Descendant Union was engaged in various efforts at convincing the colonial officials in charge of the administration of the province to provide the community with a post-primary educational institution. The agitations for the establishment of secondary school in Epe was not only championed by the union but also supported by the leadership of the community. According to Chief Olufowobi who was one of the pioneer members of EDU and a resident of Ijebu Ode, the series of demands made to the colonial officer in charge of the admin-

istration of Epe district did not yield results until 1954, when the first post-primary institution was established in Epeland. The newly established secondary school was named Epe Grammar School. Indeed, the EDU as an association of Epe indigenes made tremendous efforts to establish the school that produced a new set of educated elites. It should be stressed that while the colonial government eventually supported the establishment of the school, the EDU did not relent in making financial or monetary contribution to the construction of the school that year. As a matter of fact, the association contributed £15 to support the laying of the foundation of Epe Grammar School in 1954. The money raised by the association was contributed by its members. Undoubtedly, Epe Grammar School, which still exists today, has produced men and women of great caliber who have raised the development level of the community in so many ways.

Apart from the EDU, the Old Boys Union of Remo (OBUR) led the struggle and agitation for the establishment of a post-primary school in Remoland. The OBUR was an umbrella organization of Remo indigenes and became an associational platform that worked hard for the educational advancement of Remoland. In the 1940s, the OBUR submitted several request to the government calling for the establishment of a secondary school. It should be stressed that the efforts of this body and other community members were politically motivated. In other words, the agitation for the establishment of a secondary educational institution for Remo was part of the group's secessionist agenda. Perhaps, the OBUR was a subsidiary of the Remo Union (RU). The point of emphasis here is that Remo was not far from the Ijebu Ode Grammar School and so the Remo indigenes could gain access to the school in Ijebu-Ode, but still insisted on having a separate post-primary school for their community. However, the colonial government refused to grant this request, citing lack of funds. Despite the initial lukewarm attitude of the government towards its establishment, Remo Secondary School came into being in October 1945. It should be noted that the approval for the establishment of this great institution should not be considered as a product of the efforts of the OBUR alone; community members and one W.F. Mellor, a white missionary, made tremendous contributions towards the establishment of the school.

Fig. 2. Remo Secondary School, Sagamu founded in 1945

Source: author's fieldwork, 2017.

Another ECA in Ijebu Province whose contribution to the educational development of its community can never be overemphasized was the Ijebu-Igbo Patriotic Society (IPS). The IPS became a formidable associational platform in Ijebu-Igbo, not only for the autonomy of that entity, but also for its educational growth and development. Like the EDU and OBUR, the IPS adopted diplomacy in its effort to provide the community with a functional post-primary educational institution. Of course, the expected did happen when the colonial government rejected the bid to establish a government secondary school in the community. This lukewarm attitude of the colonial state towards the educational plight of the community members and the IPS was based on the logic of proximity between Ijebu-Ode and Ijebu Igbo. Their line of argument was that Ijebu Igbo was not far from Ijebu Ode and therefore those interested in secondary education should patronize the government school in Ijebu-Ode (NAI/IjeProf 2538: 7). This position was conveyed to the community by the Senior Education officer on 3rd July, 1942, in response to the series of demands for the establishment of this institution (NAI/IjeProf 2538: 6). The Senior Education officer stated further: 'I do not think there is a case for a secondary school for this area…' As far as the IPS and community members were concerned, this was nothing but a callous excuse to deny Ijebu-Igbo people of access to secondary education. Thus, the

IPS motivated community members to make voluntary contributions towards the realization of this dream. Apart from the IPS's financial input to this project, community members were asked to contribute two shillings, and this collective effort yielded result in 1949 when the birth of Orimolusi College was registered. Thus, like the RSS, Orimolusi College emerged as another politically fashioned post-primary educational institution, as its development was not unconnected with the struggle of the IPS and other stakeholders for the autonomy of Ijebu-Igbo. In fact, it was through the efforts of Ijebu-Igbo Patriotic Society (IPS) that Molusi College rose to prominence in terms of infrastructure and human resources. This remarkable feat achieved by the IPS in the development of Molusi College (MC) attracted a kind of eulogy from an Education Inspector in the province in 1951. The inspector said:

> The community school has made rapid strides in the last year, and in many ways is a credit to its sponsors and the principal… consolidation, step by step, should precede further development, and it is essential that the initial drive behind the start of the school should not be allowed to slacken. It is, however, rare in this country to find such an amount of actual work being done... (NAI/IjeProf 2538: 11)

THE ROLE OF ETHNO-CULTURAL ASSOCIATIONS IN SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF IJEBU COMMUNITIES, 1900–1960

From the surviving records, the score card of the ECAs in terms of socio-economic development of their communities is not just readily readable but also commendable. But before we attempt an interrogation of the developmental efforts made by the ECAs towards the social and economic progress of their communities during the colonial period, it is pertinent to x-ray the colonial government's score card in the rural development agenda. This will enhance our understanding of the role of these indigenous organizations in the community development process. It is disheartening and regrettable to observe that in the area of government provision of amenities in colonial Ijebu province, Ijebu Ode being an urban area was favoured more than the rural Ijebu communities such as Ikenne, Imodi, Ishiwo, Epe, Ijebu-Ife, Ijebu-Igbo, Oru, Ago-Iwoye among others. In colonial Ijebu province, the beneficiaries of government expenditure on education, health, water supply, electricity, and road construction were mainly urban dwellers of Ijebu-Ode. This suggests that the percentage of colonial government development ex-

penditure designed for the benefit of rural communities was significantly low. Put differently, the colonial government allocated more funds to the development of Ijebu Ode as the capital, while little or no attention was given to the development of rural communities. Despite the importance and potentialities of the rural Ijebu communities in terms of their financial contribution (taxation) to the Ijebu Native Administration treasury, these communities were undoubtedly shortchanged in terms of government expenditure on infrastructural amenities.

The net effect of the above analysis is that the rural communities in colonial Ijebuland were greatly neglected in various spheres of development. They lacked the basic infrastructural needs for decent communal existence; they were deprived and exploited, and hence community development in the province had remained a mirage, at least considering the lukewarm attitude of the colonial state towards it (Ayandele 1992: 134). The bottom line, however, is that the communities resorted to a self-help approach to community development and it was within the framework of this volunteerism that the ECAs set up development projects that would improve the social and economic lot of the community members. Thus, since the Colonial Office did not see the need to undertake reasonable development projects in the communities outside of Ijebu-Ode, the ECAs assumed that role and became the 'real state' as far as development projects were concerned.

To this end, markets constituted one major socio-economic facility built or provided by the ECAs in the study area. In fact, the ECAs built so many markets that facilitated economic activities and social development in colonial Ijebu province. A prominent example of this was the *Oja Itale* built in Ijebu Ishiwo through the efforts of the Ishiwo Progressive Union (IPU). This market was situated on six acres of land and comprised several stalls built of bamboo and roofed with palm fronds and banana leaves. The presence of *Oja Itale* in Ijebu Ishiwo quickly turned it into an emporium of trade and the commercial nerve centre of the villages around the eastern side of Ijebu Ode. Being aware of the compelling need to increase the transaction profile and economic activities of the Ishiwo community, the IPU had expanded both *Oja Itale* by building more shops and road networks within the market area to facilitate buying and selling. People from neighbouring villages like Igara, Ladenusi and Oke Moyin came to this market on every market day.

The significance of this market to Ishiwo and those three communities cannot be overstated, as it played a very vital role in the economic life of the people. As a business institution, *Oja Itale* had pro-

vided a great deal of economic opportunity and social security to Ishiwo women, who made up the bulk of the traders. *Oja Itale* was also essential in the chain of commodity distribution, strengthening the economic base of an Ishiwo village and also sustaining the tax base of the Local Authority. Thus, *Oja Itale* was central to the socio-economic development of the Ishiwo community. The strategic socio-economic benefits that the people derived from this market became possible due to the efforts made by the IPU, which established it. Mojoda market and Egiri markets in the waterside areas of Ijebuland were also established through the efforts of community associations.

In addition to building community market stalls, some the ECAs were actively involved in the clearing and construction of footpaths and feeder roads, which also had tremendous socio-economic benefits for communities in the province. Recognizing the immense benefits of road infrastructure underpinned the ECA's huge voluntary efforts in developing the feeder road network. Realising that rural roads formed the basis for transformation and communication between neighbouring towns and villages, some community associations made it a point of duty to construct footpaths and feeder roads in their communities. Indeed, the contributions of these feeder roads and bridges to the socio-economic development of the Ijebu communities during our period of study cannot be overlooked as they helped to facilitate more efficient distribution of goods and services from different locations. The construction of feeder roads by these associations fostered inter-community and inter-group relations. For instance, the IPU was highly instrumental in the construction of the feeder road linking Ijebu-Ishiwo with the villages of Mojoda and Itamapako. The road built by the IPU helped to promote inter-group relations between Ishiwo and the people of Itamapako and Mojoda. The IPU was also responsible for the clearing the bush along the feeder road that connected Ijebu Ishiwo with Ejinrin market in the eastern part of Ijebuland. This effort was also of immense socio-economic importance as far as the development of the village was concerned.

The role of *Egbe Omo Ijebu Ode* in the infrastructural development of the city should also be mentioned here. *Egbe Omo Ijebu Ode* was another indigenous institution that was also actively involved in the construction of drainage systems and feeder roads in the Ijebu-Ode area. For instance, Odo Ikala (Ikala canal) in Oyingbo area of the town was filled with sand by this association. This canal was a major threat

and obstruction to the movement of people, goods and services in the Oyigbo area. Through the efforts of this association, this community project was carried out with ease. Through collaborative effort with the Ijebu Native Administration, the *Egbe* spearheaded the construction of the road that was adjacent of Ijalupe in Itaajana area of Ijebu Ode. The route that linked Remo with Ijebu-Ode was also constructed, at least in pre-modern times, by some associations in Ogere and Iperu communities. Some of the ECAs were also instrumental in the construction and repair of traditional palaces and community halls. This was the case of *Egbe Omo Ijebu Ode* in the 1950s.

In general, the ECAs were able to identify projects, allocate resources, and implement community development projects. Their identification process may not have met the criteria of a development scheme at the community level, but given the high demand for assistance, the identified project represented an important step in community improvement. Put differently, our findings indicate that there were essentially three very important aspects of capacity building among ethnocultural associations which included their ability to identify projects, allocate resources and plan for the implementation of such projects in their communities. From all indications, the ECAs allocated resources under specific circumstances and generally implemented community projects with the assistance of local intermediaries. They did not only focus on supporting the infrastructural and social objectives of the community, but also engaged in wealth generation projects that helped in building either an economic infrastructure or an economic base for the communities. Even the key members of the migrant associations interviewed (*i.e*., the Ijebu-Ode branch of the EDU and the Ibadan branch of *Egbe Omo Ijebu-Ode*) noted that their efforts involved helping their hometowns with a variety of projects that reflected a philanthropic interest in strengthening their social and economic base in the community. These projects include support for the community (or town beautification), offering basic assistance in health and education, and constructing and improving public infrastructure. The contribution of these donations is measured not only in terms of the amount raised, but in its proportion to the community's needs and to other social and public expenditures.

Indeed, the impact of these associations on their communities was varied and significant. As far these associations were concerned, the key to development was to improve the quality of life in a community or

a society, which was achieved through the provision of social and/or collective goods. Within this context, ECAs had a direct impact on the community by providing goods that benefitted the collective needs in health, education and economic infrastructure of community members. In particular, the infrastructural activities promoted by ECAs had a positive socio-economic impact on neglected and marginalized communities by expanding access to services to the 'underserved populations'.

Still on the social impact of ECAs on communities in colonial Ijebu Province, these institutions served as instruments of social control and social order of the society in some Ijebu communities. Of course, social order is an essential component of any meaningful development and some of these indigenous institutions played this role. In clear terms, these associations in some cases substituted for traditional agencies of social control and social order, as they had regulations that guided the moral behaviour of members in communities. Not only were positive injunctions for friendly, fraternal and communal conduct embodied in the constitution by which members agreed to bind themselves; many ECAs had rules that proscribed particular misdemeanors and what they regarded as antisocial behavioral tendencies and conducts. In this respect, the frequent inclusion of sexual offenses, such as the seduction of the wife or the daughter of a fellow member, is very significant. Some ECAs also set moral standards in an attempt to control the personal conduct of their members in a number of ways.

The role of ECAs in colonial Ijebu province was not limited to the ones discussed above. From social perspective, these organizations performed other social roles that helped their communities to maintain unity and oneness. The involvement of some of these associations in cultural and social events, especially festivals had tremendous socio-economic benefits on community development process. Among the innumerable festivals that were facilitated by indigenous ECAs in colonial Ijebuland and some of which are still celebrated today include: *Obirinjuwa, Obanta, Magbo and Isemo, Odun Sere, Odun Obeju, Odun Imuni-si-ona, Odun Igbe, Odun Igbesu Osu, Odun Erinna, Odun Ejibi, Odun Ogun, Odun Ijasa, Odun Oro, Odun Agemo, Eluku and Okosi.* Others are: *Agbo, Kayo-kayo* and *Ebi* festivals.

Of all the festivals, this study focused (through participatory observation) on the role of ECAs in organizing and coordinating the *Okosi* festival in water-side community of Iwopin. Okosi was and still is a prominent festival celebrated by the water-side communities of

Ijebu, especially Iwopin. The festival was and still is held annually with the aim of appeasing the gods and goddesses of the river and community members from all kinds of water-related misfortunes. It is meant to propitiate the river gods and goddesses and to protect against misfortunes, accidents and mishaps on water (Seriki 2011: 57). According to our findings, Okosi was institutionalized as community festival in Iwopin community in the 1930s. As a socio-cultural event in Iwopin community, Okosi is organized annually by community associations which were formed in the 1930s. These associations were called *Egbe Okosi*. *Egbe Okosi* played a pivotal role in funding, organizing and coordinating this important festival. There were different *Egbe Okosi* in the colonial Ijebu province. For instance, in the water-side area of Ijebu province, particularly Iwopin, *Egbe Arobadade Egbe Tobalase, Egbe Oju Ina Egbe Atobatele,* and *Egbe Abobagunte* organized the *Okosi* festival.

Fig. 3. *Okosi Festival* organized by the *Egbe Okoshi*

Source: author's fieldwork, 2017 (I personally attended this cultural event at the water-side community in Ijebuland where I was told that *Egbe Arobadade, Egbe Tobalase, Egbe Oju Ina Egbe Atobatele,* and *Egbe Abobagunte* were the organizers of the festival. It should be noted that the origin of this festival could be traced to colonial times).

Fig. 4. *Imale* (also known as *Ajo*) *festival* organized by the *Egbe*
Source: author's fieldwork, 2017.

The bottom line is that the socio-economic importance of the various festivals organized by these ECAs in the colonial Ijebu province cannot be denied. The festivals had over time proved to be veritable agents of social mobilization, unity and development in Ijebu communities (Seriki 2011: 34). Moreover, these festivals served as catalysts for commercial activities, as their celebration attracted people from far and wide, who ultimately got involved in the fanfare and merrymaking. For instance, the *Okosi* festival enhanced fundamental economic progress through its tourism potential. Thus, through the instrumentality of festivals, the ECAs contributed to the social and economic development of communities in colonial Ijebuland. In addition, the *Egbe Ojugba* in Ijebu-ode funded and organized *Ojude Oba* festivals, which also impacted positively on the community development process (Margeret, 2016). Through the patriotic efforts of the *Egbe Ojugba,* the *Ojude Oba* festival has brought about healthy rivalry, competition, unity, loyalty, development, religious harmony, socio-cultural cohesion, tolerance, beauty, glamour, glitz and fashion to Ijebu-ode. Indeed, social cohesion and integration were also promoted by these

associations through their support for festivals. This had enabled virtues, values and roles that built bridges across class, social, cultural and identity divides among Ijebu communities. They facilitated the development of common sentiments, bonds and attachments and fostered social cohesion, communal solidarity and unity among the Ijebu people.

CONCLUSION

The research findings provide ample historical evidence of the crucial role played by ethno-cultural associations in the areas of educational, cultural, social and economic development of communities in Ijebuland between 1900 and 1960. Our findings indicate that ethno-cultural associations (ECAs) have a comparatively long history in Ijebuland, going back over 100 years. We found out that the ECAs were instrumental agents in bringing the trappings of development and modernity to communities in colonial Ijebu province. In most of the communities studied, the ECAs not only entrenched sustainable development in the educational, social and economic life of their communities, but also promoted the cultural values. As seen in our analysis above, these indigenous institutions developed a number of socio-economic ideas and projects that had a tremendous positive impact on community development in colonial Ijebu province.

It is pertinent to note that in some cases where ECAs were dominated by the educated elite, they became instruments of the elite class rather than organizations concerned with the welfare of community members and development. But apart from those formed by Ijebu citizens, migrant ECAs also emerged in response to certain social and economic forces. In this case, such migrant ECAs acted as a means of maintaining an indigenous sense of cultural identity with the place of origin. It should also be noted that the strength of the ECAs was a result of the weakness or failure of the colonial state and its institutions in the Ijebu Province of Western Nigeria. To a very large extent, the failure and lukewarm attitude of the colonial government towards meeting the developmental needs of the hinterland communities acted as a kind of impetus for the activities of these associations. The development deficits that could not be addressed by the colonial government propelled participation of these associations in certain community-based interventions. In addition, the structural problem created by the state, which gave the Awaujale the status of ‘sole authority’ over other traditional rulers in Ijebu Province acted as a catalyst for the emergence of some of these ECAs. This was because some of the elites who were

instrumental in the emergence of these ECAs felt that they needed to form a formidable platform to correct the political and structural imbalances created by the colonial state.

In terms of the interactions between these associations and the colonial state, it could be said that the two were related in a number of ways. The interactions of the associations with the state took different dimensions. First, in some cases, the associations interacted with the state by acting as the voice of the people to the colonial authorities, constantly communicating the plights of the people. They wrote petitions and letters of protest to the state on issues related to taxation, marginalization of their communities in terms of the siting of development projects, the overbearing influence of the Awujale and the high-handedness of some colonial officials. In terms of their impact on indigenous culture, the ECAs had a tremendous influence on indigenous culture. They were promoters of traditional and cultural festivals as they mobilized collective resources to organize cultural festivals.

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Markets in Africa. The Example of Sapon Traditional Market: An Evolution of Cultural Values in the Spatial Planning of Oke-Ona, Abeokuta

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ABSTRACT

Traditional markets are not merely places of trade; they play a crucial role in the cultural and economic fabric of African societies, serving as vibrant hubs for commerce, social interactions, and cultural exchange. Furthermore, they embody historical significance, community identity, and planning, especially in urban settings. In Abeokuta, towns such as Oke-Ona have traditional markets as integral parts of their spatial planning patterns, distinguishing them from modern urban structures. This study focuses on the Sapon market in Oke-Ona, Abeokuta, with the aim of identifying the cultural values that shape its spatial patterns. This study employs an inductive qualitative approach, using spatial analysis and other analytical methods, to explore the relationship between the traditional market and the urban layout of Oke-Ona. Using descriptive qualitative methods and in-depth interviews, this study highlights how the spatial values of the traditional space of Egba-Oke-Ona inform the market morphology. The findings reveal that: (1) The Sapon market is a historical element of Abeokuta's spatial layout and a crucial component of Oke-Ona town. (2) Oke-Ona is a traditional Yoruba town with a belief system that emphasises the harmony between the universe and human endeavours. It follows a tripod model in which the palace represents governance, the market represents economic activity, and the religious centre represents spiritual life. (3) The integration of the traditional market into the urban environment reflects the Sapon concept, illustrating its significance within both Oke-Ona and the larger Abeokuta urban areas. Despite the morphological changes since the establishment of the market, particularly in terms of the palace square and the size of the city, traditional values remain the primary drivers of these transitions.

Keywords: *Abeokuta, cultural values, spatial morphology, spatial planning, traditional markets.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The geographical location of the traditional market holds significant importance in the establishment of urban centres. Embedded within the urban framework, traditional markets play a multifaceted role. Markets provide affordable food and essential goods, particularly for low-income consumers, and act as critical entry points for smallholder farmers and street vendors (Davies *et al.* 2022). They foster economic development by creating employment opportunities, especially for

women, and by supporting local economies through informal trade networks (Omeihe and Omeihe 2023; Cook *et al.* 2024). These markets serve as vital cultural spaces that reflect local heritage and community activities, preserving unique traditions amidst modern economic pressures, while facilitating social interactions and community bonding, thereby reinforcing cultural identity and continuity within rapidly urbanizing environments (Saharuddina *et al.* 2022; Cook *et al.* 2024).

These characteristic roles exhibited by markets foster intimacy and connections between traders and consumers (Rahadi 2012). The existence of traditional markets is intertwined with social advantages, such as cultural norms, belief systems, and economic transactions, which enhance interconnectedness and dependability among market participants (Andriani and Ali 2013). Dewey (1962) argued that within traditional market landscapes, a symbiotic relationship exists between commercial practices, societal norms, and economic structures. The conceptualisation of markets within contemporary settings, as exemplified by Dongdaemun in Korea, functions not only as a commercial hub, but also as an embodiment of the organizational structures among vendors and the social hierarchy that shape the interactions of market participants, which evolve to form a robust social fabric (Kim *et al*. 2004). Socio-economic activities and spatial configurations dictate the operational dynamics that determine patterns of movement. The proximity of residential areas to the city centre emerges as a pivotal element influencing the ease of access to various amenities and spaces that facilitate communal engagements (NÆss and Jensen 2004). Empirical evidence underscores the integrative role of traditional markets as integral components of cultural landscapes and communal spaces within urban environments where residents maintain and nurture social ties (Ekomadyo 2012). Several scholars have expounded on the pivotal role played by traditional markets as central nodes for local exchange of goods and services, which subsequently catalyze diverse activities within urban confines (Sirait 2006).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. History and Role of Markets in Africa

2.1.1. Historical Development of Markets in Africa

The historical development of markets in Africa is a compelling narrative that spans from ancient times through the colonial period and in the post-colonial era, reflecting profound shifts in African societies.

These markets, integral to the continent's socio-economic fabric, have evolved from simple barter systems to complex trade networks, adapting to the changing demands of their environment.

10. Pre-Colonial Era. In the pre-colonial era, African markets were pivotal to the continent's extensive trade networks, linking diverse communities across vast distances. These markets were often strategically located at crossroads, near rivers, or along major trade routes, facilitating the exchange of goods, ideas, and cultures. For instance, the Swahili coastal markets, such as those at Kilwa and Zanzibar, were crucial in connecting Africa with the Arab world and Asia. These markets traded in gold, ivory, and slaves, among other goods, thus playing a significant role in global trade long before European colonization (Nyamnjoh 2003).

Similarly, the markets of West Africa, notably those along the trans-Saharan trade routes, were central to the economic and cultural life of cities like Timbuktu and Gao. These markets were not only commercial hubs but also centres of learning and cultural exchange, attracting scholars, traders, and travellers from all over the world (Hiskett 1994). The Hausa market towns of Kano and Katsina also exemplified the sophistication of pre-colonial African trade systems, where textiles, grains, and livestock were exchanged on a large scale (Aviat and Coeurdacier 2007).

2. Colonial Influence. The advent of colonialism brought significant disruption to African markets. Colonial powers imposed new economic systems and restructured the existing market practices to serve their interests. Indigenous markets that thrived under traditional systems faced competition from European imports and were subject to colonial regulations that often undermined their operations. For instance, in Nigeria, the British colonial administration restructured the markets in Lagos to better integrate them into the global economy, often at the expense of local traders (Dike 1956).

Colonial policies also led to the development of new market centres in urban areas, primarily designed to serve to the needs of colonial administrators and expatriates. These changes sometimes marginalise traditional markets, forcing them to adapt by incorporating new goods and practices. Despite these challenges, many markets remain resilient and continue to serve as vital economic and cultural centres. Markets such as Kejetia in Kumasi, Ghana, and Kurmi in Kano, Nigeria, managed to survive and even thrive during this period, maintaining their significance in the face of colonial pressures (Ranger and Hobsbawm 1984).

3. Post-Colonial Developments. At the end of colonial rule, many African countries sought to revitalise their economies by promoting local markets and indigenous economic practices. Markets that had been suppressed or marginalised during the colonial period, such as the Kumasi Central Market in Ghana and the Oshodi Market in Nigeria, experienced a revival. These markets have adapted to the new economic realities of independent African states and have become central to both rural and urban economies (Ahluwalia 2003).

However, the post-colonial period has also brought new challenges, including rapid urbanisation, economic liberalisation, and globalisation. Markets must evolve to meet the demands of modern economies while retaining their cultural significance. For instance, in East Africa, Maasai markets, which traditionally operated on a barter system, have adapted by incorporating cash transactions and modern goods, reflecting broader changes in the region's economy and culture (Kinyanjui 2019). These markets remain integral to African societies, providing a space where tradition and modernity intersect.

2.1.2. Role of Markets in African Societies

Markets in Africa play multiple roles and are deeply embedded in the socio-economic and cultural fabric of their communities. These roles can be broadly categorised into economic, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions.

1. Economic Roles. Markets are crucial to the economic landscape of many African societies, serving as the primary venues for the exchange of goods and services, especially in regions with underdeveloped formal retail infrastructure. Small-scale traders, many of whom are women, dominate these markets and rely on market activities as their main source of income. For instance, the Makola Market in Accra, Ghana, has long been a hub for the distribution of goods from rural areas to urban centres, providing a livelihood for thousands of traders (Pellow 1985). Similarly, the Dantokpa Market in Cotonou, Benin, serves as a regional trading hub, facilitating the flow of goods across borders and contributing significantly to the local economy (Meagher 1995).

Beyond the immediate exchange of goods, these markets support local agricultural production by providing a reliable outlet for farmers' production, thereby contributing to food security and rural development. Operating largely within the informal sector, these markets are critical for poverty alleviation, as they provide employment opportunities in areas with limited access to formal employment (Chant 2011).

2. Social and Cultural Roles. Markets are not just economic spaces but also vibrant centres of social and cultural life. They are places where people from diverse backgrounds come together, facilitating social interactions and strengthening community bonds. For example, the Ile-Ife Market in Osun, Nigeria, is deeply embedded in the cultural and religious fabric of the Yoruba people. It serves as a space where cultural rituals are performed and traditional knowledge is passed down through generations (Adepegba 1991).

Moreover, markets like Ogunjimi in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, also play an important role in sustaining cultural heritage. This market is renowned for its role in preserving the cultural practices of the Akan people, where traditional music, dance, and storytelling thrive (Arko-Mensah and Agyeiwaah 2024). Markets also foster community ties and cultural expression amidst the challenges of urbanisation, as seen in the Zongo Lane Market in Accra, Ghana, and the Jabi Lake Market in Abuja, Nigeria (Yankson and Bertrand 2012; Ajonye *et al*. 2016; Baidoo *et al.* 2024).

3. Environmental and Urban Planning Roles. Markets contribute to environmental sustainability by promoting the sale of locally produced goods, which reduces the carbon footprint associated with long-distance transportation, and supports the sustainable use of natural resources. Rural markets often emphasise seasonal and organic products, which are less resource intensive than mass-produced alternatives (Daneel 2011). Additionally, these markets are platforms for the exchange of indigenous knowledge on environmental conservation, with vendors sharing traditional practices related to sustainable farming and resource management (Fairhead and Leach 1996).

The role of markets in urban planning and development is increasingly recognised as African cities grapple with modernisation challenges. Markets such as the Maasai Market in Nairobi, Kenya, have become cultural landmarks and tourist attractions, showcasing the fusion of traditional and modern elements (Kamau 2015). However, the integration of these markets into modern urban landscapes presents challenges, including the need to balance market preservation with urban growth. Markets such as Oshodi in Lagos, Nigeria, have had to adapt to the pressures of urbanisation by expanding their physical infrastructure and incorporating digital technologies to remain competitive (Ikioda 2013).

African markets are dynamic institutions that have continuously adapted to the changing economic, social, and cultural landscapes of their societies. Although markets across the continent share common

roles as economic and cultural hubs, their specific functions and structures vary widely, reflecting the diverse historical, social, and economic contexts in which they operate. African markets continue to evolve from the traditional layout of the Souk Semmarine in Marrakech, Morocco, to the modern business practices of the Jumia Market in Nairobi, balancing tradition with the demands of modern commerce. These markets remain vital to the continent's identity, embodying the resilience and adaptability of African societies.

2.2. Markets in the Traditional Economy of Nigeria

The presence of markets is a crucial feature of the traditional Nigerian economy, which functions as a venue for the transaction of goods between buyers and sellers. In sub-Saharan African societies, markets are prevalent for the sale of goods on a daily or periodic basis. Particularly in Nigeria, some of the agricultural produce of rural farmers is consumed locally, while the rest is traded in markets. It is often unfeasible for families in these societies to meet their agricultural needs independently. Consequently, surplus production is necessary to exchange goods that cannot be produced. Purwanto *et al.* (2021) delineated the market of traditional economy as a place exclusively for commercial transactions, also serving as a legal and communication hub. Ayittey (2006) characterised a market as an environment conducive to facilitating exchange. He postulated that regular exchange would lead to the emergence of a marketplace. Thus, the establishment of a marketplace is considered a natural process. In Nigeria, similar to other African countries, markets are categorised into two main types: local village markets and expansive markets that act as hubs for long-distance trade between regions (Oluwabamide 2003).

Rural markets in Nigeria are commonly located in open clearings. These markets cater to the needs of local producers, consumers, and traders while also attracting long-distance traders. While some rural markets operate daily, others function weekly, depending on the trade volume. The predominant goods traded in Nigerian rural communities include food items such as yam, cassava, plantain, salt, palm oil, banana, kola nuts, beans, and livestock such as goats, fowls, dried and smoked fish, and dogs (Onwuejeogwu 1975). Various types of fruit are sold in these marketplaces. The establishment of a market in many rural areas of Nigeria typically involves two key steps. The initial step entails gathering a consortium of traders on a regular basis, usually weekly, in an open area with some form of shelter. Initially, an individual entrepreneur may be tasked with clearing a designated open

space. Should the market attract attendees from neighbouring communities, the village leader would then be summoned to formally sanction the operation of the market.

Rural markets in Nigeria are characterized by periodicity, as noted by Oluwabamide (2003). Market days were rotated among groups of villages, with the Yoruba following a 5-day cycle. Conversely, Ibo's rural markets adhere to a 4-day cycle or their multiples. This cycle system serves two purposes. According to Ayittey (2006), this arrangement responds to situations when the volume of goods for exchange is insufficient for daily trading. It also facilitates interactions between villages, stabilizes prices in neighbouring markets and redistributes supply. In Nigeria's rural markets, vendors are categorized based on the types of products they offer for sale. For instance, sellers of yams are positioned in a specific area of the market to encourage competition. This segregation extends to other commodities allowing customers to easily locate their desired goods, select from a variety of products, and purchase at competitive prices because of the need for traders to outdo each other, as highlighted by Falola (1985) and referred to by Ayittey (2006). Certain Nigerian communities, particularly those within the Yoruba markets, are situated close to the palace of the Oba (King). These markets serve as sites for various rituals as documented by Fadipẹ *et al*. (1970). During traditional ceremonies, specific locations within the market are designated as sacrificial sites. It is believed that the Oba communicates with the spiritual realm during his nighty market visits. Every Yoruba community has an Oba market alongside other marketplaces.

2.3. The Traditional Market as a Component of Urban Design

The market represents a fiscal entity capable of bestowing value and prosperity upon human existence (Toni 2013). Its existence as a platform for the aggregation and distribution of production output has imbued significance in hastening the operational framework, mindset, and range of product types. In essence, markets serve as indicators of shifts in the production, consumption, and circulation of commodities. Certain traditional markets reflect rural lifestyle patterns and are intrinsically linked to the occupational characteristics of the local community (Sunoko 2002). These traditional markets expand and evolve as hubs for the trade of goods and services are traded within a particular region, and subsequently stimulate diverse activities within an urban setting.

These activities include not only the exchange of goods and services or transactions, but also the sharing of information and knowledge (Ekomadyo 2012). This is in line with Geertz's assertion that a 'market' embodies an economic foundation and a way of life, encapsulating different facets of a particular society, including socio-cultural dimensions (Geertz 1963). Traditional markets serve not only as venues for commercial transactions, but also as embodiments of life philosophies and socio-cultural interactions (Pamardhi 1997). They reveal the societal fabric, characterised by the dominance of the social economy within the environment in which markets originate (Hayami 1987). According to Bromley (1978), traditional markets in Asian countries are situated in both rural and urban areas.

2.4. Traditional Marketplaces in the Urban Economic Structure

Traditional markets are perceived as a governance framework consisting of cohesive and interconnected proficient components, thus forming a complex unity that sustains each other. Within this context, the market structure encompasses various elements such as rotation, production, distribution, transport, and transactions, as stated by Nastiti (1995). Traditional markets are intertwined with numerous challenges that include financial and operational systems. Traders in traditional markets encounter many obstacles, including issues related to the delivery of goods, the provision of services, and the settlement of payments, whether with producers or consumers. Moreover, time and climate challenges are also prevalent. During such periods, merchants address these challenges by fostering relationships with intermediaries, consumers (who are also sellers), and sellers, including producers, distributors, and market authorities, as well as 'goods carriers'. Furthermore, merchants persistently exert effort and cultivate frugal habits, while also engaging in religious enhancement within the merchant community, as highlighted by Sutami (2012).

2.5. The Scope of the Traditional Market Service

The market system typically culminates in a primary central settlement or other focal point, which ultimately facilitates the networking of markets. A market is a designated space or a specific area, with or without structures, used as a venue for commercial transactions. Sellers and buyers of goods gather in specific places at predetermined times and intervals (Jano 2006). Traditional urban markets have evolved into communal spaces, serving as places where members of society gather and cultivate social bonds (Ekomadyo 2012). Within

the realm of traditional markets, different roles are delineated, including vendors who are responsible for transporting goods between markets, those who handle sales to rural areas, individuals who manage wholesale transactions, and others who specialize in the sale of items, such as textiles, baskets, livestock, or grains (Geertz 1963). Traditional markets also uphold the social benefits engendered by the long-standing business ethos within these markets, serving as the fundamental code of conduct for vendors in their daily commercial endeavours through the preservation of values and norms such as honesty, reliability, cooperation between vendors and customers, and cooperation among vendors within traditional markets (Laksono 2009). Through advancements, traditional markets extend their reach to encompass a wider area pivotal hub for the exchange of goods and services on a regional scale, fostering growth and prompting diverse activities within urban centres (Sirait 2006).

3. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative naturalistic approach in its research methodology. This particular method is utilised to meet research needs which aim to identify unique characteristics or attributes that are not commonly found in research findings. The research involved a systematic examination of the behaviour and engagement of buyers and sellers within their environment, specifically in the Traditional Market. Additionally, the study focused on assessing the spatial capacity of the traditional market to facilitate these activities. Situated in Oke-Ona town, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria, this research focused specifically on the Sapon Market as an integral traditional urban element of Oke-Ona. The study began with the data collection phase, which involved the extraction of information through various means such as observation, structured and unstructured interviews, and content analysis, as outlined by Creswell and Creswell (2022).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1. History of Sapon Market in Oke-Ona Town

The people of Oke-Ona migrated to Ago-Oko in 1830, seeking refuge from the Oyo Empire and the Dahomey War.

The traditional square of Osinle held considerable power for the community and was used for various social and cultural activities, including festivals and events. At the same time, the Sapon market played a crucial role in economic endeavours. Chief Eboda Jimoh, known as the Apena of Oke-Ona, recognized Jagba in the Sapon mar-

ket as the primary recreational centre from which Oke-Ona town originated. Originally situated just behind the Osinle palace building, this was the place where people used to spend their leisure time in diverse social and cultural activities. Presently, it has been transformed into a residential zone. The Sapon market functioned as a gathering spot where individuals, particularly unmarried men, came to indulge in the delicious bean porridge. This historically rich area remains the prominent commercial hub of Abeokuta city, linking Ijaiye, Ago-Oba, Itoku, Lafenwa, Isale Igbein, and Ake roads. It is currently crossed by an overhead bridge connecting these roads.

Despite the changes, Igbo traders and Yoruba women continue to display their merchandise daily. In 2017, the Sapon market was renamed Kemta Oloko market. The traditional square of Osinle, situated in Ago-Oko, serves as the primary palace in Oke-Ona, revolving around three central focal points: Osinle's palace square, the Sapon market, and the Motor Park, which has been repurposed as an Access Bank, surrounded by various commercial structures as shown in the Nvivo analysis flow in Figure 1.

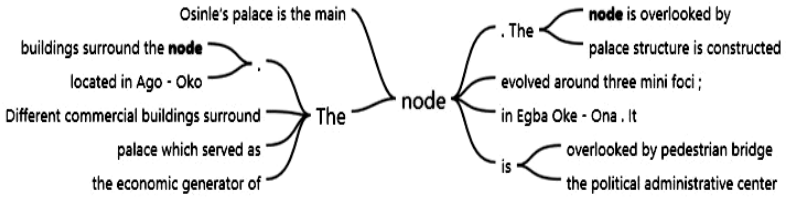

Fig. 1. Nvivo word tree analysis summarises Osinle's palace character

Source: authors' analysis.

4.2. Structure of the Town of Oke Ona

Several cultural factors played a significant role in shaping the morphology of this square, such as topography, orientation, vegetation, political dynamics, socio-economic conditions, historical influences, and mythical origins. In addition, social gatherings, security measures, and defensive strategies were also contributing factors. The distinctive nucleated settlement layout, characteristic of the compact Yoruba Agbo-Ile system is evident in this square. The architectural structures were carefully planned in adherence to the Yoruba tradition of a radial settlement design, centred around three focal points: the Palace (for

social and religious activities), the Market, and transit routes. These key elements defined the settlement arrangement of the Oke-Ona community.

Historically, this traditional square served as a hub for administrative, social, religious, and economic affairs, embodying the Ebi philosophy. The organic development of the settlement can be observed primarily around the Osinle palace, crossroads paths, and 'T' junctions. In the Oke-Ona area, this is exemplified by the popular saying 'Sapon lo re', indicating the preference of bachelors to prepare an economical meal, especially potage beans, to show their wealth, as narrated by an elderly woman named Janet Olawuyi. The market place was aptly named Sapon lo re, reflecting local traditions. The topographical features of the area consist of low-lying terrain interspersed with hills. The strategic location of the palace square in the centre indicates its pivotal role, around which various activities revolved. This square symbolizes the locus of power and authority, while the market stands as the economic epicentre of the community.

The Sapon market, identified with Oke-Ona, is recognized for its diverse functions. The traditional square not only embodies historical and religious significance, but also contributes to the tourism sector, whereas the Sapon market plays a pivotal role in the economic activities of the locality. However, the historical essence of the square has been somewhat overshadowed in recent times by the construction of the flyover. The settlement layout of Oke-Ona is characterized by a nucleated pattern, with the royal palace situated at its core. The association of Sapon market with Oke-Ona is primarily due to its versatile nature as a market space. Oke-Ona boasts of its proficiency in the production of tie and dye fabrics, particularly the famous Adire.

The palace, the market, and the Access Bank (a car park) are the three foci that illustrate the development of Oke-Ona (see Figure 2 and Figure 3). Every urban fabric moves towards the direction of the traditional.

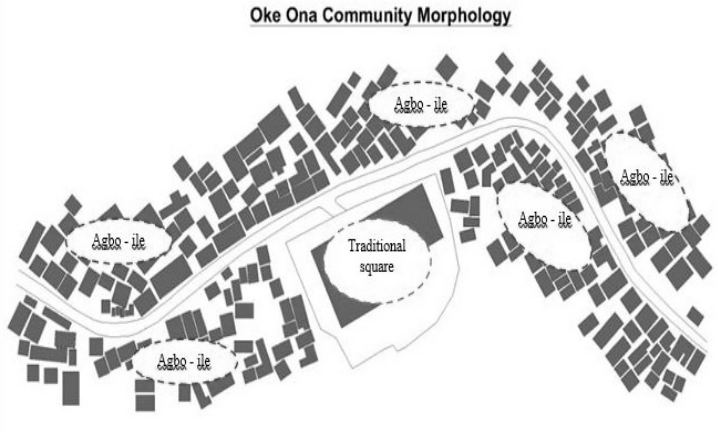

Fig. 2. Oke-Ona Traditional Square Morphology

Source: authors' sketch.

Fig. 3. Nvivo analysis in word cloud showing Sapon Market square

Source: authors' analysis.

4.3. Environmental Planning in Oke-Ona

On the western side of the palace building, one can find several vendor stalls, a recently constructed shopping complex, a branch of Access Bank, and a newly built bridge. To the right of the square edifice,

there are secured shops designated for selling goods within the marketplace known as Sapon. Surrounding the square are a number of residential buildings comprising contemporary dwellings and traditional edifices, in addition to various financial institutions and the local post office. The Afomika stream, a site where the annual worship of the Obatala deity takes place, is conveniently situated at a short distance from the square building.

4.4 The Traditional Square of Oke-Ona

Osinle's Palace, the principal residence of the Alake of Oke-Ona Egba situated in Ago-Oko, historically anchored the Oke-Ona area as a confluence of political power, economic activity at Sapon market, and transportation routes central to Abeokuta's development. The traditional square functioned as a hub for political and administrative activities, while the market played a crucial role as the primary economic hub for the traditional square. Recently, a pedestrian bridge has been constructed over the traditional square.

5. CONCLUSION

The Sapon Traditional Market in Oke-Ona, Abeokuta, has played an important role in the evolution of the community and its urban fabric over time. Economically, it serves as a major hub, supporting local livelihoods and facilitating the trade of diverse goods. Culturally, it acts as a vibrant space where traditional practices and values are upheld, fostering social bonds and preserving Yoruba traditions. Socially, the market promotes community cohesion and integration, serving as a platform for interaction and information exchange. Additionally, in the context of urban development, the Sapon Market plays a crucial role in balancing modernization with the preservation of cultural heritage. While Sapon Market played roles similar to those of other traditional markets, several conclusions were drawn from this study regarding the underlying cultural values and spatial organization of Sapon Market.

First, the establishment of the market is deeply rooted in the astral-constitutional values of traditional Yoruba architecture. The authority of the palace plays a crucial role in maintaining these values, which persist in the clear delineation between sacred and secular spaces. This is particularly evident in the architectural layout of the market and the spatial arrangement of the stalls and kiosks.

Second, traditional market spatial patterns are strongly influenced by astral principles, with the location of shrines determined by the sacred/profane divide. This principle extends to smaller spatial configurations, such as the organization of individual stalls and kiosks within the market.

Finally, political and cultural factors have a significant impact on the geographical and spatial morphology of the market. Political considerations often dictate changes in the location and size of the market, while cultural shifts influence the relocation of shrines to better conform to cosmological principles.

The interplay of these cultural, political, and astral principles continues to shape the spatial dynamics of the Sapon Market, reflecting the enduring influence of traditional Yoruba architectural values.

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The Feasibility of Matching the Taliban's Sharia-Based Order with Davis's Theory of the Sacred Society

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ABSTRACT

The Taliban[*]*, in its two governments (1996–2001 and after August 2021), tried to establish an order based on religious laws and principles. The main question in this regard is whether or not this order is based on any theoretical framework. Apparently, among the various existing theories, the Taliban's Sharia-based order is more akin to Davis's theory of the 'sacred society'. Hence, by drawing on a theoretical framework the principal elements of which are proposed by Davis, this article seeks to assess the Sharia-based order of the Taliban and its social aftermaths and to compare them with Davis's sacred society. The second question to answer is whether the Taliban's intended order accords with Davis's sacred society. The results show that, in their second term of governance, the Taliban strived to conduct actions deemed 'abnormal' by the international community with greater caution and gentleness, but they continue to pursue the same goals and methods as during their first regime. This involves opposing modern norms and values accepted by the international community. Research findings suggest that, while the characteristics described by Davis for his traditional and reactive sacred society largely match those of the society under the Taliban rule in both periods of their governance, there are notable differences in detail.*

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1. INTRODUCTION

Talibanism is a politico-ideological movement that emerged as a reaction to the inability of the Mujahideen government, led by Burhanuddin Rabbani, to establish a widely accepted political system. After capturing Kabul in 1996, the Taliban seized the power from the Mujahideen warlords in Afghanistan. Their motto was to 'enforce Islamic Sharia and to stamp out corruption and sins'. In their rule, they showed a very strict facet of Islamic Sharia, rooted in their specific religious interpretations and Pashtun tribal traditions. Their state was short-lived, overthrown by the US invasion of Afghanistan in 2001.

Twenty years later, however, in August 2021, they managed to return to power by recapturing Kabul and ousting the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Throughout both regimes, the Taliban aimed to establish a centralized and authoritarian system referred to as the 'Islamic Emirate[*],' characterized by a Sharia-based order.

During their second tenure, the Taliban returned to power twenty years after their first rule. During this interim period, the administrations of Hamid Karzai and Ashraf Ghani, backed by the U.S. and its allies, implemented economic, political, and cultural reforms, achieving notable successes in areas such as the establishment of modern state organizations, elections, freedom of the press and women's rights, more than ever before in the country's history. Despite these advances, their governments ultimately failed and collapsed, demonstrating the challenges a traditional society like Afghanistan faces in establishing and expanding modern institutions.

Given the above considerations, there appears to have been little significant change in the Taliban's goals and methods in their second term compared to their first term. The same inflexibility observed during their first rule persists. However, based on their previous experience of governance, rather than from an ideological stance, the Taliban recognize the need to engage cautiously and meticulously with Afghan society and its citizens in order to gain the international support and legitimacy crucial to their survival.

This study aims to clarify whether the Taliban's Sharia-based rule in their first and second governments can be interpreted under Davis's definition of the sacred society. Accordingly, the primary question of this study is whether this rule fits Charles Davis's definition.

The importance of addressing this question lies in the need for the international community to understand whether the Taliban's Sharia-based order can adapt to international norms and values and embrace modern civilization, or whether it will persist in its opposition to them. If the latter continues, the Islamic Emirate is likely to face significant challenges and lose the chance for international recognition and membership in the global community. Thus, this research serves as a test to evaluate the critical issue of the struggle between 'tradition and modernity' and the 'socialization of modern renewal versus the Taliban's Sharia-based order'. Ignoring the outcome of this struggle is not an option for any individual, state, organization, or institution.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study is descriptive-analytical and adopts a comparative qualitative approach. Although comparative studies are various in forms, this study is based on the 'Pattern Matching' method first coined by Donald Campbell in 1970. The method relates the data to the theory, and the hypothesis is that there is one pre-existent theoretical pattern about an important given problem or event. In other words, there is a theory or a set of theories about a given problem or event that suggest and predict patterns. Considering the facts, it is then assessed whether the problem or event in question fits this theoretical pattern, or whether the problem or event has occurred in accordance with this pattern. On the basis of this method, one can determine whether the problem or event follows or matches the expected pattern (Chalabi 2007: 21–22). In this respect, the main goal of the research is to determine whether Davis's theory of the sacred society matches the Sharia-based rule of the Taliban in the two periods of their power in Afghanistan and whether it has such a capability.

3. THE BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

There are several studies conducted on the sacred society, religious rule and chaotic conditions in Afghanistan. The latter subject addresses the attitudes and behavior of the Taliban. However, no research has been conducted using the approach of this study. So far, only a few researchers have employed Davis's theory of the sacred society. For example, Zakeri (2020) in an article entitled 'The Sacred and the Moral in Post-revolutionary Society: Desacralized Sacred', Mohadessi (2019) in the book *God and Street*, Zahed (2015) in the book *Existence and the Sacred Thing*, Shariati and Zakeri (2015) in an article entitled 'The Status of Religion in Iran: Desacralized Sacred', Aref

Hosseini (2008) in the book *The Sacred Utopia: A Criticism of the Four Patterns of Utopia set by Western Thinkers Compared with the Islamic Utopia of Mahdi*, and Mohammadi (1998) in the book *Following the Sacred, in Love with the Secular: An Introduction to the Sociology of Religion* in Iran have tried to analyze the process of secularization in Iran with all its ups and downs. Each, in their own way, has attempted to determine the relationships between the secular and the sacred things in Iran, especially after the Islamic Revolution. While these attempts are in some ways consistent with Davis's theory of the sacred society, they depart from his generalizing theory by being specific to Iran.

On the other hand, many research works have been conducted on the traditional Afghan society and the Taliban with a particular outlook about the situation. In his article 'Afghanistan: The Shifting Religious Order and Islamic Democracy', Anwar Ouassini (2018) assesses the relationship between the religious system and the newly-formed democratic organizations in Afghanistan. He argues that the legitimation of the political sphere by the Islamic religious order reveals that the Islamic authority and legitimacy given to political institutions is shaped by political interests, not by a religious doctrine. In their research entitled 'The Effect of Religious Restrictions on Forced Migration', Kolbe and Henne (2014) evaluate thirteen countries, including Afghanistan, which are responsible for the most forced migrations. They believe that Afghanistan has suffered the most from religious violence. In their article entitled 'Did Secularism Fail? The Rise of Religion in Turkish Politics', Taydas *et al.* (2012) compared the Iranian and Afghan societies and stated that Afghanistan adopted a more moderate attitude toward a religious state in the post-1995 era. The rulers in this country were willing to incorporate religion into the public and social domains, but they did not believe in a state-based religion as a proper one. In the article 'Religion, State, and Democracy: Analyzing Two Dimensions of Church-State Arrangements', Michael Driessen (2010) believes that in Islamic countries, especially in Afghanistan, the empowerment of religious authority can pave the way for dangerous Taliban policies and expose the society to a sacred form of violence.

What distinguishes this study from the existing works is that it a) matches the Sharia-based order of the Taliban, in both governments, with the theoretical pattern of the sacred society proposed by Davis, b) analyzes the changes in modern Afghanistan, c) analyzes the

differences in Afghanistan over time, and d) expresses the reason for the change in the political and social behavior of the Taliban.

4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Religiously speaking, societies can be divided into three types with respect to the way they organize their social order. They include sacred, secular, and pluralist societies. Among them, a sacred society, which can be either traditional or reactive, is greatly uniformed. According to Charles Davis, such societies, as opposed to secular ones, consider social order as a superhuman entity which is devoid of the rationalistic dimensions of man (Mohaddesi 2019: 50–53). In their view, the social order has a transcendental origin, *i.e*., they see social order and its rules as God-given, far from being a human construct, remaining intact and flawless over time (Mohadessi 2007: 78). The legitimacy of the rulers in such societies depends heavily on their animosity towards non-religious societies. The relationship between these two societies is not an easy one. They either coexist in a state of mutual ignorance or isolation, or recourse to war and violence to compel conversion or submission (Davis 1994: 122). Hence, a sacred society is a religious society that emphasizes religion and religious authority in its various layers. Even the political power is viewed from a religious and sacred perspective because it is considered to be ordained by God. Therefore, the absolute obedience to the authorities in such societies is not a civil obligation but a religious duty, which shows the degree of faith and sincerity of individuals (Firahi 2003: 21 and 25). Furthermore, in such societies, the socio-political order originates from the transcendental. Therefore, the absoluteness of the transcendental is transferred to something that is limited or finite. Challenging such a system has hazardous consequences, and the guardians of this system are beyond criticism. Normally, the violators of these rules are deemed as outsiders and satanic (Mohaddesi 2007: 90).

Davis continues to say that there are two types of sacred society. The first is a ‘traditional sacred society’ in which modernity and its features are not to be found; hence, it can continue to exist as long as it is intact from the effects of modernity. In such a society, the direct and pervasive influence of religion as a superhuman or sacred entity is evident. That is why it is monolithic and accepted in its entirety by the people, whose management does not require repression and extreme violence (Mojtabaiee 1973). The other type of sacred is a ‘reactive sacred society’ formed to oppose modernity (Davis 1994: 123). Through its particular understanding of religion, this society considers the so-

cial and political order to come from God. To be more precise, God is enslaved by certain religious institutes to consecrate a particular social and political order (Mohaddesi 2007: 93). To resist disintegrating and relativistic processes, such a society begins to monopolize the social rule. However, since it faces many obstacles in achieving its goals, it gradually leads to strictness and violence at different social levels. According to Davis, it is basically impossible to sustain a traditional sacred society in the modern age because unity is one of its primary characteristics. Globalization and the revolution in communication through the development of media and virtual networks have led to the dissolution of traditional borders and the independence of large and small societies. Consequently, the restoration of unity in a society in which people's presuppositions have been changed by modernity and they have come to rationalization is always accompanied by violence.

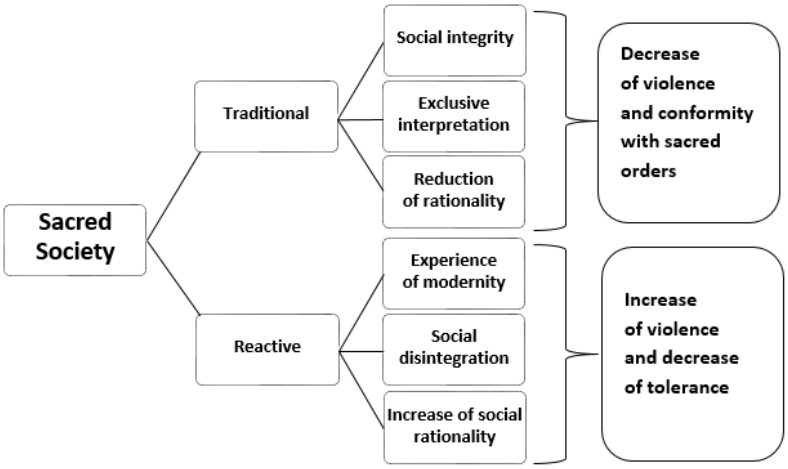

Fig. 1. Davis's conceptual model of a sacred society

According to the above model, in a sacred society and system, contrary to a secular society, the belief in the transcendental and sacred origin of political rule consecrates all the laws. It is precisely for this reason that any opposition to the rulers of such a society is forbidden (Firahi 2003: 25–27). This society is not receptive to pluralism, and the monolithic political order is based on violence and submission rather than on dialogue and compromise (Mohaddesi 2007: 78).

After the dimensions of Davis's theoretical pattern are specified, it is time to compare the Taliban's sacred society and Sharia-based order with these dimensions to detect whether or not they fit together.

5. DAVIS'S SACRED SOCIETY AND SOCIAL ORDER IN BOTH TALIBAN GOVERNMENTS

According to Davis's theory, which classifies sacred societies into traditional and reactive forms, this study analyzes the Taliban rule in both of its governments, the first from December 1, 1996 to 2001 and the second since August 2021.

5.1. Davis's Traditional Sacred Society and the Taliban Order

In the name of religion and their own interpretation of it, the Taliban started to set up and implement particular plans and programs the ultimate aim of which was to bring Afghanistan under Sharia law. In this vein, their attempt to reconstruct the Afghan society can be described as a Sharia-based order. The ideological foundations of the Taliban system stem from four primary factors, including a) Deobandi thought, b) Islamic Sharia modeled on the practices of the Rashidun Caliphs, c) Pashtunwali tribal beliefs, and d) Wahhabism (Badakhshan and Keshavarz Shokri 2023; Tajik and Sharifi 2009: 41–42; Rashid 2000: 219–305; Ahmadi 1998: 27; Shahraki 2021: 74). Now, it is time to see whether this order fits Davis's traditional sacred society. The fit will be assessed in terms of the four main features of Davis's theory, including social integrity, exclusive interpretation of Islam, reduction of rationality, and reduction of violence.

5.1.1. Social integrity

The Taliban came to power at a time when Afghanistan was still a traditional society with very few features of modernity. Given that a premodern society is integrated and that people's life-worlds tend rather to be the same (Burger *et al.* 2002: 73), the Taliban faced an ethnically diverse society but almost a unified one in terms of culture and intelligence during their first rule in the 1990s, when socialization process and socializing organizations were not very different. They encountered scattered and partisan ethnic identities, with Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras, and Uzbeks being the most influential groups. The Taliban recruited their followers primarily from the Pashtun tribes on both sides of the Durand Line in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the largest ethnic group and the founders of Afghanistan (Qureshi 1996: 99; Sungur 2016: 441). As a result, they emerged with a more cohesive and powerful tribal

structure compared to other ethnic groups (Sajjadi 2001: 54; Najafi 2010: 43; Arzagani 2012: 60; Bakhshi and Nourmohammadi 2023: 53). Ethnically, the population is about 55–60 per cent Pashtun, so they are ardent supporters of the Taliban, who come from the same ethnic group. Due to their well-known identity, based on a distinct tribal system and language, the Taliban have a significant influence on the other Afghan ethnic groups (Tajik and Sharifi 2008: 41–42; Vatanyar 2023: 438).

These ethnic disparities, especially the unequal distribution of power, have contributed significantly to socio-political problems such as ethnic conflicts, stalled state-nation building processes and exacerbated political crises. These factors are potential or actual obstacles to social integration (Norouzi, Lavasani, and Nazifi 2023: 270; Rotberg 2009; Maizland 2021: 4). However, despite these ethnic challenges, the Taliban faced a society marked by backwardness, tradition, prejudice, and resistance to modernity and renewal, with similar socialization processes and institutions. In such a society, national identity, patriotism, and a preference for national interests over ethnic considerations had not yet emerged among the general populace (Sardarnia and Hosseini 2014: 52; Edwards 2010: 967).

While ethnicity is a fundamental framework for both cohesion and division within Afghanistan's traditional society, the role of religion as a unifying factor among different ethnic groups should not be overlooked. Unlike ethnicity, religion seeks solidarity and identity beyond the narrow confines of family, tribe, sect or nationality, extending to the broader ‘Ummah’. The Taliban leveraged religious sentiments to foster unity among the masses and promise a return to security (Fazli 2022: 115–116). According to the statistics, 70–80 per cent of Afghans lived in the rural areas before 1964. There was a traditional, rational and intellectual system with less complexity than in modern times. Furthermore, Islam as the religion of 99 per cent of the people and Sunnism as the religious sect of about 80–89 per cent of the society were more conducive to unity (Kramer 2021: 3). Weak links between urban and rural areas, and between Afghan villages and the outside world, strengthened the Taliban's power. The relatively deep ties between rural inhabitants and religious forces, along with the influence of religious leaders as guides to worldly and spiritual salvation, provided the Taliban with an opportunity to attract the masses and foster unity among them (Maizland 2021: 4).

Based on these factors, what Davis calls ‘social integrity’ as one of the characteristics of a sacred society holds true about the first Taliban's government in Afghanistan as its primary characteristic.

5.1.2. The exclusive interpretation of Islam

In his definition of a traditional sacred society, Davis holds that this society, unlike a secular society, sees the social order of divine ordinance as being well away from human agency (Davis 1994: 122). This situation was also present in Afghanistan during the first period of the Taliban rule. According to the Taliban, there is only one way to bring order to society, and that is through adherence to their interpretation of Islamic Sharia. Their primary objective was the revival of the Caliphate within the political structure of Islam in the form of the ‘Islamic Emirate’ (Bakhshi and Nourmohammadi 2023: 45–44). They even referred to their state as an Islamic state. Gradually, in practice, religion became a tool at the service of the Taliban; in other words, religion turned into an ‘ideological tool of the state’. In fact, the state-based religion is the direct output of a religious state. From this perspective, the Taliban believe that the legitimacy of such a state will be undermined when the unfaithful forces take power (Mohaddesi 2007: 88; Glinski 2020: 3). Such an attitude toward Islam in this state defines people as merely passive and submissive agents. It is the state and religious leaders that have the right to interpret and impose divine orders, and people have no right to ever cooperate or participate in the power and decision-making processes. The Taliban considered their state as a divinely ordained to change the Afghan society. Hence, the relation between the sacred thing and the power structure allows the ruling individuals and groups to impose their own tastes, attitudes and hegemony on the society, creating a socially unified atmosphere (Maley 1998; Badakhshan and Keshavarz Shokri 2023: 304; Hossein Khani 2011: 215–216).

Thus, the society that the Taliban governed by during their first period of rule was exclusive and served the Taliban's interests, much like Davis's concept of a sacred traditional society. Their interpretation of Islam was among the most primitive, brutal, and anti-intellectual. They had an inflexible interpretation of Islam that was not forward-looking or aimed at societal development, but rather regressive and reliant on violence. Therefore, violence, rigidity, and extremism were the three prominent characteristics of the Taliban (Baker 2021: 8; Matinuddin 1999: 78; Yousefzai, Sinaei, and Rafat 2023: 202).

The Taliban sought to eradicate all signs of a modern state from the society they governed. Through the imposition of strict and exclusive laws and decrees, they also organized various political and social affairs based on their interpretation of Islam. The Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, who was introduced as the 'Commander of the Faithful', based his governance on Sharia, the traditions of the Prophet (PBUH), and the Rashidun Caliphs, and considered the primary mission of the Taliban to be the implementation and promotion of Islamic Sharia in society (Badakhshan and Keshavarz Shokri 2023: 304–305; Roy 2008: 62; Fazli 2022: 122). Although the group modeled its decision-making on the Pashtun tribal council (Jirga), with its growing power, all the decisions were made solely by Mullah Omar. As a result of his individual decisions and instant orders, the ugly face of the Taliban, which was supposed to establish an Islamic state, was exposed (Fazli 2022: 115; Badakhshan and Keshavarz Shokri 2023: 304–305; Hossein Khani 2011: 215–216). The statements by Mullah Ahmad Wakil, the Taliban's spokesman at that time, about Mullah Omar clearly reveal his authority and discretion:

> Decisions are based on the beliefs of the Commander of the Faithful. We do not need consultation; we believe that our actions are based on the tradition (rules and actions of the Prophet Muhammad). We follow the beliefs of the Emir. Here, we do not have a president, but we have the Commander of the Faithful. Mullah Omar holds the highest position, and the government cannot make decisions without his approval. The principle of public elections is against Sharia, and that is why it is avoided (Roy 2008: 23).

This aligns with Davis's theoretical pattern of the monolithic nature of traditional sacred societies.

5.1.3. The reduction of rationality

In Davis's theoretical pattern, the third criterion for a traditional sacred society is the reduction of rationality. Basically, in premodern societies, the high level of social integrity and the unified meaning-making order across different segments form a common lifeworld in which emotion overcomes reason (Burger *et al.* 2002: 74). According to Davis, the individuals in traditional sacred societies are believed to be incompetent to solve problems related to human life and destiny; salvation does not depend on individual's will, but it is transcendental

and supernatural. The return to a transcendental origin is necessary and right (Davis 1994: 125).

One of the consequences of the Taliban's rise to power in 1996 was extremism, superficiality, dogmatism, and the suspension of rationality in individual, social, and political matters. During the first period of the Taliban rule, they fought and opposed all norms of the international community, manifestations and symbols of modernity, development, and nation-building processes (Yousefzai, Sinaei, and Rafat 2023: 202–203 and 207–208; Shahraki 2021: 71 and 77–79). Instead of relying on the principle of equality and recognizing reasonable civil rights, this group operated on the basis of ethnic and tribal socialization. Despite the Taliban's claim to follow and be loyal to Islamic Sharia, in practice, they adhered more to the traditions and laws of the Pashtun tribe. They strived for the superiority of their tribal and ethnic group, claiming, for instance, that the tribe of the Muslim Caliph must be the superior tribe (Fazli 2022: 117–118; Vatanyar 2023: 438; Mojdeh 2003: 33).

Apart from the Taliban's irrational and illogical considerations on ethnic issues, their reliance on and adherence to religion was also entirely outside the realm of rationality and wisdom. Their fundamentalist views were incompatible with any form of modern rationality. They were and are fanatics with a very superficial and literal understanding of the religion. Their opposition to the teaching of experimental and natural sciences like chemistry and physics and replacing them with religious sciences to provide a basis for individuals' happiness and salvation, the preference of the madrasas over schools, the resort to violence and inflexibility, the pursuit of intense sectarian hostilities, especially against Afghan Shiites, the strong opposition to Western civilization, the regression to pre-modern times, the rigid interpretation of religious concepts, self-righteousness, and the excommunication of other Islamic sects and denominations are only a small part of their violence, ignorance, and alienation from rationality (Yousefzai, Sinaei, and Rafat 2023: 193; Ahmadi 1998: 27; Shahraki 2021: 193; Sardarnia and Hosseini, 2014: 59; Emami 1999: 90; Bakhshayeshi Ardestani and Mirlotfi 2011: 34; Rashid 2000: 75; Amini and Arifani 2021: 66).

The worst part of this scenario is the Taliban's attitude and behavior towards Afghan women. They believe that women symbolize the honor and dignity of men and, therefore, must be protected (Bakhshi and Nourmohammadi 2023: 48; Morshedizad 2001: 44). With this mindset, during the first period of the Taliban rule, women were de-

prived of all individual and social rights and freedoms. Girls were confined to their homes and banned from education. Women were not allowed to leave the house, travel without a male guardian, work in public or private institutions, drive a car, buy and sell goods, walk around the city, or participate in political, social, and economic activities. They were only allowed to attend funerals, visit the sick, and make urgent purchases. They also had to wear a burqa (Bakhshi and Nourmohammadi 2023: 42–48 and 56; Rasouli 2016: 339–360; Kashani, 1998: 58; Abbaszadeh Marzbali and Taleshi Kelti 2022; Maghsoudi and Ghalladhar 2011: 180; Harrison 2022). Notably, of the 33 decrees issued by the Taliban's Department of Promotion of Virtue in 1996, 14 were specific to women, and 17 were common to both men and women (Tajik and Sharifi 2009: 42).

The restrictions and deprivations imposed on women are highlighted in the book *Al-Emarah al-Islamiyah wa Nizamha*, considered as the constitution and manifesto of the Taliban movement, written by Abdul Hakim Haqqani. It explicitly states that politics and governance are exclusively for men and that women have no right to enter these domains under any circumstances (Abdul Hakim Haqqani, 1443 AH/2022 AD [N.d.]). Men were not spared from certain restrictions either. For example, they were required to wear turbans, keep their hair short, grow beards, wear shalwar kameez, pray in congregation and avoid individual prayer. According to the Taliban's sacred orders, their state strongly opposed radio, television, music, painting, sculpture and other arts for all men and women. The historic Buddhas of Bamiyan were destroyed as Afghanistan's cultural heritage. They only acknowledged cricket as a legitimate sport in the country (Clements 2003: 2019; Bankiyan Tabrizi and Naderi Chalav 2023: 31; Marsden 2000: 60, 62, and 75).

The Taliban deemed their irrational actions, such as mutilations, lashings, deprivation women of many human rights and freedoms, particularly education, torture of opponents, destruction of ancient artifacts and statues, to be in compliance with Muhammadan Sharia (Pollowitz 2014: 6). However, according to many rational thinkers worldwide, these actions are completely incompatible with reason.

5.1.4. The reduction of violence

As mentioned above, according to Davis, in an integrative and culturally uniformed traditional sacred society, every individual accepts the social order there, and public relations stem from a transcendental will. Hence, there is no space for questioning; everyone should con-

form to the religious laws as interpreted by the religious elites and not be deceived by modern rationality. According to Davis, a result of the dominance of this form of traditional sacred society is the reduction of violence.

The experimental studies of the first Taliban government suggest that this theoretical element by Davis, i.e. the reduction of violence, has nothing to do with that rule of theirs; rather, it was quite different in the case of Afghanistan. The fact is that the Taliban's violence was more noticeable at that time compared to the present (Maley 2001: 14). A distinguishing characteristic of the Taliban during this period is 'violence' and 'inflexibility' (Sarafraz 2011: 111–115; Bakhshi and Nourmohammadi 2023: 45; Yousefzai, Sinaei, and Rafat 2023: 202). The assassination, torture, and murder of opponents by the Islamic Emirate were so excessive that the only countries which formally recognized it were Pakistan, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia (Shaffer 2006: 283; Badakhshan and Keshavarz Shokri 2023: 303). Thus, the Taliban gradually increased the discontent of people, especially the non-Pashtun ethnic groups. This was due to their reductionist religious attitudes, inflexible mindset, violent methods to achieve their goals, which they saw as complying with those of the Prophet, glorification of war as a symbol of power, and rejection of peaceful methods such as persuasion, dialogue, and negotiation (Yousefzai, Sinaei, and Rafat 2023: 202). The Taliban turned blind eyes to consecutive UN resolutions and expelled many foreigners from Afghanistan. Homosexuals and adulterers were stoned to death, and the hands of thieves were amputated. People were dragged out of their shops for mass prayers in the mosques. They treated people according to tribal laws. They would not negotiate with the Akhavans, Jamaatis and Maududis (Clements 2003: 219).

According to reports by the international human rights organizations, the Taliban killed thousands of Afghans during their first government in 1996. One example is the massacre of thousands of Hazaras in Mazar-i-Sharif in a few days in August 1998, which was considered genocide. According to Human Rights Watch reports, after Mazar-e Sharif fell into the hands of the Taliban, their leader declared that Shia Hazaras were infidels and worthy of killing and looting. The mass killing of those people in such provinces as Sar-e Pol and Bamiyan from 1999 to 2001 is an example of religious violence (Giustozzi 2009: 249).

5.2. Davis's Reactive Sacred Society and the Taliban's Rule

With the fall of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in 2021, the second period of the Taliban's Islamic Emirate began. During the Republic era, efforts were made to democratize and modernize Afghanistan with the support of Western governments, particularly the United States. These efforts included rebuilding and reinforcing the police and the army, holding presidential and parliamentary elections, reviving the modern administrative and tax systems, enhancing infrastructures and the institutional foundations of the government and civil society, reducing poverty, taking serious steps against terrorists, and boosting economic and social conditions. Efforts were also aimed at creating governmental institutions, gaining international recognition (Sardarnia and Hosseini 2014: 48), promoting human rights, especially women's rights, facilitating their participation in political, social, and cultural spheres, ensuring various freedoms and enabling their employment in government and private sectors (Hosseini 2023: 289–388; Kazem 2005: 507–517; Bakhshi and Nourmohammadi 2023: 49–51). Many women were appointed as judges, and some even entered the parliament (Snow and Benford 2000: 85). However, these efforts did not achieve significant and tangible results. Several reasons can be cited for this failure, the most important of which include:

- These measures were limited to specific sectors and groups within Afghan society, resulting in the persistence of unfavorable conditions during the Republic, especially for women. These included a lack of legal protection, imprisonment of girls and women for fleeing their homes (Human Rights Watch 2012: 288–293), and divisions within the military and security forces. All this led to dissatisfaction (Moghaddas 2021: 60–61), widespread corruption, arbitrary and ethnic-based appointments and dismissals, embezzlement of public funds, lawlessness, and nepotism (Bakhshi and Nourmohammadi 2023: 54).
- The lack of a consistent war strategy against the Taliban, the centralization and monopolization of power in the presidential palace (Schroden 2021: 21), the inability of the central government to establish order, security and justice, ethnic and tribal diversity overshadowing national unity, ethnic conflicts and the lack of a cohesive national identity (Yousefzai, Sinaei, and Rafat 2023: 196; Sardarnia and Hosseini 2014: 50–53), internal governmental disputes leading to a crisis of authority, and a lack of consensus on national interests (Marzbani and Amiri 2023: 162; Gazerani, Athari Allaf, and Arian Manesh 2022: 130–135).

- These numerous challenges and obstacles reflect the fragility of the state and the significant decline in its power during the Republic era. In reality, the Karzai and Ghani administrations could not effectively address the challenges posed by traditional forces (Moghim 2023: 541–542), because neither had national roots, but sprang from a confederation of tribes. As a result, behind all the formal developments, the principle of ethnic and tribal identity, solidarity and corresponding loyalties prevailed (Salehi Amiri 2010: 82–83; Sardarnia and Hosseini 2014: 53).
- Considering the above points, it can be seen that the society over which the Taliban rule during their second period in power is not fundamentally different from the society of their first rule or even the republican era. Thus, it cannot be definitively said that the contemporary Afghan society has moved beyond the traditional sacred society envisaged by Charles Davis. Once again, different ethnic groups, primarily lacking a participatory political culture, are striving to assert their tribal dominance, thereby creating a fertile ground for ethnic conflicts (Sardarnia and Hosseini 2014: 53). In other words, ethnic differences, along with the gap between modern and sacred orders have led to disruption and chaos (Joscelyn 2021: 15).
- Hence, this study also seeks to identify whether the Taliban's Sharia-based rule in modern Afghanistan is consistent with the elements of Davis's traditional reactive society, including, social disintegration, Afghans' experience of modernity, the growth of social rationality, and the increase in violence.

5.2.1. The disruption of social integration

According to Davis, when a traditional sacred society is exposed to modernity and its elements, integrity and unity among its members give way to disintegration and separation, and the absolutist view of the origin of social order gives way to cultural relativism. Thus, despite planned efforts to sustain integrity and monopolized social order, cultural disruption, relativism and pluralism are bound to occur (Davis 1994: 123). Historical and experimental evidence shows that Davis's recent claim is testified with respect to the Afghan society, in its entirety, under the second Taliban rule.

With the Taliban's return to political power, social and political integration has been disrupted. Conflicts and clashes of interests exist between different ethnic groups and social forces, as well as between government officials and agents themselves. The Pashtun ethnic group has a more cohesive tribal structure than other ethnic groups, and is

more powerful due to its dominance in leadership and key government positions, seeking to impose its dominance over other tribes and ethnicities (Bakhshi and Nourmohammadi 2023: 53–54; Maizland 2021: 4). This situation plays a significant role in creating fragmentation, division, and tension in the society, threatening the national unity. The Taliban's ethnic and sectarian revenge exacerbates this (Sardarnia and Hosseini 2014: 51–52; Rotberg 2009: 58).

The above problem is not limited to the social system and its forces; it also extends to government officials and agents. During the first period of the Taliban rule, there was more integration and unity among them than during the second period. In the early years of the movement, Mullah Omar managed to present himself as a charismatic and enigmatic savior, but his leadership style later led to opposition against him (Bahrami 2023; Bankiyan Tabrizi and Naderi Chalav 2023: 35; Qandil 2022). In the second period, internal differences among the Taliban have become apparent. For instance, in February 2022, some of the most prominent Taliban leaders criticized the country's direction. For example, Sirajuddin Haqqani, the interior minister and leader of the Haqqani network, stated that the Taliban's monopoly on power was tarnishing their entire system. Mohammad Yaqoob, the defense minister and son of Mullah Omar, advised the Taliban to meet the people's demands. Abbas Stanikzai repeatedly voiced his opposition to the ban on girls' education. Meanwhile, Hibatullah Akhundzada issued decrees banning Taliban officials from polygamy, yet they continued to practice it, disregarding his orders. Furthermore, Taliban forces ignored Akhundzada's general amnesty order and continued extrajudicial killings (Qandil 2022). Akhundzada tried to suppress his opponents by appointing trusted allies and supporters from Kandahar to government positions and even moving his decision-making center from Kandahar to Kabul (Mahmoudi 2020: 218).

Consequently, figures like Haqqani, Mohammad Yaqoob Mujahid, and Abdul Ghani Baradar, the deputy prime minister for economic affairs, are more pragmatic compared to other leaders like Akhundzada and advocate for balanced international relations. Some Taliban members, including Mujahid and Baradar, despite being part of the Kandahari Taliban, oppose Akhundzada's policies. Haqqani is mainly based in southeastern and eastern Afghanistan, but Akhundzada governs Afghanistan with the support of a small circle of religious leaders and his supporters in Kandahar. Haqqani places key relatives in government positions (Bahrami 2023; Qandil 2022). Baradar led the peace negotiations with the United States and holds weaker positions

than the other Taliban branches. Military leadership belongs to Mohammad Yaqoob, and the Haqqani network is under Haqqani's control (Bahrami 2023). After Mullah Omar's death in 2013, the Taliban fragmented into different factions. The political branch led by Baradar pursued negotiations, while the military branch, led by Akhundzada, aimed to revive the Islamic Emirate through military operations (Mahmoudi 2020: 218).

Certainly, the challenges facing the Taliban are not limited to internal conflicts. Currently, they face several opponents, both outside and inside Afghanistan. The external opponents are based in countries such as Turkey, Tajikistan, and European nations. Internally, there are non-Afghan extremist groups like Tahrik-e Taliban in Pakistan, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Ansarullah in Tajikistan, the East Turkistan Islamic Movement, and particularly ISIS of Khorasan.* The Taliban lack the serious resolve to combat these groups. They have been fighting alongside these groups for years, sharing familial and kinship ties. They fear that a serious confrontation with these groups could have a negative impact on their own troops. Consequently, they lack the necessary capacity to control the terrorist groups present on the Afghan soil (Bathaee, Shafiei Sarvestani, and Esmaeili 2023: 157; Bahrami 2023; Vatanyar 2023: 446; Hosseini 2018: 199). Although the Taliban pledged to sever ties with al-Qaeda* as part of the Doha Agreement with the United States, in practice, they have not strictly adhered to this commitment. The assassination of Ayman al-Zawahiri, the leader and mastermind of al-Qaeda by American drones near the Taliban palace indicates that the Taliban have violated this agreement (Vatanyar 2023: 447).

Therefore, one of the factors threatening the Taliban's governance is their internal conflicts and power struggles. They currently face a crisis of order and security (Sardarnia and Hosseini 2014: 54). This situation has led to the reinforcement of Salafi-Jihadi groups in Afghanistan and has provided an opportunity for terrorist groups to operate freely in the country (Lafraie 2009: 104–105).

However, Davis's perspective that ‘the confrontation of a sacred traditional society with modernity and its manifestations leads to cultural relativism replacing the absolutism of the general source of social order’ does not apply to the Taliban-ruled society in its second term. Despite two decades of the republic governance and efforts to build a new state-nation relationship, the attempts have essentially failed. As a result, the society under the current Taliban rule does not differ significantly from the traditional society under the first Taliban

regime. Neither have the perspectives and positions of the Afghan people on various social, political, cultural and economic issues changed to embrace modernity and democracy, nor have the nature and methods of Taliban governance evolved to accept political development and transformation. On the one hand, people are grappling with ignorance, poverty and inequality. On the other hand, political leaders are entangled in power struggles, ethnic biases, and extremist ideologies. Therefore, the diversity and plurality in such a society is primarily ethnic and tribal rather than cultural (Edwards 2010: 967; Rotberg 2009: 58; Roy 1993: 73; Mojdeh 2003: 33). Cultural relativism, the emergence of skepticism towards traditional values and the adoption of a participatory political culture occur in a society where people have achieved sufficient intellectual and political maturity and where government officials see themselves as the people's servants, not their guardians.

5.2.2. The experience of modernity by Afghans

According to Davis, when modernity succeeds in making inroads into a traditional sacred society, influencing people's thoughts and actions, and making them doubt their anti-modern reactions, there will be a change in the society. Hence, as modernity spreads, with the ease of communication and universal technology, one can expect a new social order whose prominent characteristics are social disruptions and differences (Davis 1994: 123). This situation does not apply to the society under the Taliban in their second era. Despite some fundamental changes that occurred during the republic period, the current Afghan society remains traditional, closed, and undemocratic. Taliban officials still oppose modern values, new civilities, democracy and its requirements; instead, they advocate regression, Salafism, fundamentalism, and a rigid dogmatic interpretation of religion marked by violence and strictness, piety and a sacred view of historical achievements (Yousafzai, Sinaei, and Rafat 2023: 201; Fazli 2022: 111–112). The socialization of the Taliban is oriented towards local channels, on one hand, and religious channels, on the other. Thus, their perspective on matters is both subnational, or ethnic, and transnational because it is based on traditional moral and religious values that are not accepted by the international community. In the Taliban's traditional governance, international norms and values are considered illegitimate and, therefore, not taught to their followers. This Taliban approach implies an anti-social or anti-international community stance for the Afghan nation. The Taliban view their domestic policies as independent and different

from the international community. Similarly, they attempt to internalize local-religious norms and values, keeping the Afghan nation away from the influences of modern identity and civility. Additionally, state-building is pursued through coercion, force, and policies of exclusion and suppression (Yousafzai, Sinaei, and Rafat 2023: 203–201; Marsden 2000: 110–109). Furthermore, as in their first period of rule, the Taliban disregard human rights, especially the rights and freedoms of women and ethnic minorities, and continue the same violent, harsh, and prejudiced treatment as before, and there is no sign of democracy in their governance (Tohidi and Qasemishahi 2022: 699).

All the aforementioned considerations not only highlight the 'abnormal' internal and external behavior of the Taliban but also suggest that they will remain unrecognized by the rest of the world if they avoid accepting international norms and values or engaging in international socialization (Yousafzai, Sinaei, and Rafat 2023: 193 and 207–208). These abnormalities have led some to describe the current state of the Taliban as neither a full-fledged government nor a complete movement, but rather a liminal state between a government and a movement (*Ibid*.: 194). During their first period of rule, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates recognized the Taliban, but, in the current period, no country or global organization has recognized their government. Only dialogues with their representatives have taken place, or their representatives have participated in some global conferences (Ansari 2002: 153; Savari *et al.* 2022: 96; Azizi 2021: 7). Countries like China, Russia, Iran, Turkey, and Turkmenistan have handed over the Afghan embassy to the Taliban representatives without officially recognizing their government (Tohidi and Qasemishahi 2022: 695–696).

It should be noted that although the overall nature and governance style of the Taliban in the new period has not changed significantly compared to the first period, some minor and secondary changes can be observed. For example, the Taliban have realized that if they continue to pursue their goals and ideals as violently and overtly as before, the pressure and obstacles on the part of the international community will persist, posing a serious threat to the maintenance of their government. Therefore, they may gradually seek to change their behaviors and policies, even if only superficially. They may reduce violence (Mahmoudi 2020: 214). In any case, given that more than 20 years have passed since their first rule, and that unintended changes have occurred both in the Afghan society and globally during this relatively long period, they are trying to manage the society with more

caution and fear. At present, parts of the Afghan population, especially women, are dissatisfied and protest against the Taliban's policies. The most dissatisfied individuals are likely to be those affected by the reforms that took place during the republican period. Despite the failure of the state-building and democratization process in Afghanistan during the republican era, some positive effects of those reforms, albeit minor, have permeated contemporary society and parts of the Afghan population. Therefore, it cannot be completely denied that the reforms during the republic did not have a positive impact on the current Afghan society in areas such as political institutions, political participation, political parties, minority rights, various freedoms, women's rights, and education (Sajjadi 2009: 164; Sharifi and Adamou 2018: 3).

5.2.3. Increase of social rationality

According to Davis, in a reactive sacred society, social order and the meaningfulness of social life do not depend on rational discussion which leads to a negotiation among discrepant opinions. Therefore, it is possible to express different opinions and achieve fairly rational results (Davis 1994). This feature of Davis's theory partially matches Afghanistan under the second Taliban rule. In contemporary Afghan society, there are signs of change in thoughts and attitudes among some sections of the population exposed to the manifestations of modernity, including mass media and virtual networks. These individuals have come to understand that they should question the Taliban leaders' claim that their aim to establish the Islamic Emirate is nothing more than the implementation of Sharia law. They should also consider the possibility that the Taliban have turned religion into a tool for governance. Considering that the Taliban viewed the Islamic republic government under Karzai and Ashraf Ghani as a secular government which promoted corruption and immorality and served the United States (Bakhshi and Nourmohammadi 2023: 54–53; Maizland 2021: 4), people ask themselves whether the Taliban are now subject to criticism for their governance? Achieving such an understanding, which means recognizing the true nature of the Taliban's religious government, can be seen as a sign of growing social rationality (Sajjadi 2009: 11–10). Therefore, from the perspective of these segments, although the Taliban claim to be committed to implementing Sharia rules and acting in accordance with religious interests, they may have to overlook some religious norms when necessary, for example, in the pursuit of power (The Visual Journalism Team 2021: 2).

However, beyond this group, the majority of the society still lacks intellectual and cultural maturity and is unable to act beyond the confines of local and ethnic considerations. The thinking of the majority of the Afghan population is influenced by a traditional and archaic society interwoven with various customs and tribal traditions, making it difficult to identify a single framework for defining the identity of the Afghan people. Such a population lacks the instrumental rationality to prioritize national interests over ethnic considerations and national patriotism (Fazli 2022: 115; Marsden 2000: 93; Roy 1993: 73). This situation also applies to the Taliban leaders and their governmental officials. Although a combination of internal and external factors necessitates that the Taliban reflect more critically on their self-serving and so-called official interpretations of religion and recognize that such an approach to religion has rendered religious values and norms invalid and made them unacceptable to part of the current Afghan generation (Hassan 2021: 25), they continue to resist and persist in pursuing their irrational goals and ideals. They are also ensnared by ethnic considerations and insist on the superiority of the Pashtun ethnicity over others, thus attempting to impose their tribal inclinations, intertwined with religious considerations, on the people of Afghanistan (Bakhshi and Nourmohammadi 2023: 55; Fazli 2022: 116; Mojdeh 2003: 33).

5.2.4. The increase of violence

To delineate his theoretical pattern, Davis says that, after the permeation of modernity into the reactive sacred society, disintegration occurs, and cultural relativism appears in consequence. This change makes political leaders try to artificially restore integrity and monopolize social order. Since they fail to do so and people do not care about the rulers' attempts, it makes violence and pressure the only choice for the state. In this way, the minimum amount of tolerance that exists in the traditional sacred society disappears in the reactive sacred society (Davis 1994: 122).

In modern Afghanistan, which is considered as a reactive sacred society according to Davis's pattern, historical and experimental evidence shows that the situation somewhat validates Davis's view, because the violence employed by the second Taliban government is no less than that in their first government. Thus, tyranny and obscurantism have been revived by the Taliban once again. Despite international opposition, the Taliban continue on a path that is incompatible with the accepted international norms. Violence and rigidity remain as

the prominent features of Taliban governance, stemming from the traditional Pashtun culture (Shahraki 2021: 74; Bakhshayeshi and Mirlotfi 2011: 34; Vatanyar 2023: 439). While they claim that their government is established based on Islamic Sharia law, modelled on the Rashidun Caliphs, and outwardly emphasize principles such as equality, brotherhood, opposition to all forms of tribal and linguistic prejudices, and the protection of the lives, property, security and peace of Afghan Muslims, the Taliban's policies and practices have contradicted these tenets. Consequently, this relative tolerance has been violated, and violence has replaced it (Fazli 2022: 125–126). Enumerating the acts of violence committed by the Taliban would be a long list beyond the scope of this paper. Just a few examples of the Taliban's violent and irrational behaviors in their new rule include banning the publication of materials in any language other than Pashto on their official radio and newspaper 'Sharia', harassing, restricting and even killing of ethnic minorities, especially Shias in Mazar-e Sharif and the other Hazara areas (Fazli 2022: 125), strong opposition to modern societal development, modern civility and other manifestations of modernity (Amini and Arifani 2021: 306; Shahraki 2021: 75; Yousefzai, Sinaei, and Rafat 2023; Norouzi, Lavasani, and Nazifi 2023: 270), forcing men to grow beards, wear turbans, cut their hair short and wear traditional attire (Bankiyan Tabrizi and Naderi Chalav 2023: 31), requiring women to wear hijab and burqas, banning them from education, leaving the house, traveling and taking government or non-government jobs, and advising them to completely obey their husbands (Vatanyar 2023: 441; Habibi 2021: 127; Hosseini 2023: 389; Bathaee, Shafiei Sarvestani, and Esmaeili 2023: 160 and 173), and violent and inhumane treatment of women and misogyny (Bakhshi and Nourmohammadi 2023: 42 and 57–55; Taheri 2022: 95; Saeedi 2021; Hosseini 2023: 388–384; Mohammadi 1998: 68). The emergence of some discontent in the Afghan society and the flight of some elites from the country have compelled the Taliban be more cautious and reflective in their violent and strict actions, especially because the Taliban leaders know that confronting universities, closing or postponing education, and dealing with faculty members and students have very negative impacts not only on domestic opinion, but also on the views of other nations, governments, and international organizations towards them (Ali and Landay 2021: 36). This can increase the pressure on their newly-established government by human rights activists, women's rights defenders, political figures, journalists and social network users and, as a result, disrupt the order of the reactive sacred society (Semple 2015).

So the Taliban have somehow come to the realization that Afghans expect them to show a more lenient behavior and to reconsider their attitudes towards different layers of the society, especially their opponents and women. If they put violence aside and, instead, choose proper words and deeds, they can gain legitimacy and a stronger stance in competitive processes such as elections. There is no need for violence, war and terror to rule. Although the Taliban lack such a capacity (Nada 2021), there is evidence that they have shown more patience from the beginning of their new term in power and have tried to project a new image of themselves as changeable beings. The result of the discussions above is more or less consistent with Davis's theory of violence in a reactive sacred society.

6. CONCLUSION

This study sought to answer the question 'whether or not the Taliban's intended rule in both of their governments matches Davis's theory of the sacred society'. What Davis calls a sacred society is a society in which social order is of a divine nature. Since it is not man-made, it is unquestionable. According to Davis, such a society comes in two forms. The first is a traditional sacred society which is integrative, monolithic, rigid, and anti-rational. The output of such a society is the reduction of violence and the observance of laws. The second is a reactive sacred society, which is a disintegrated society marked with relativism and cultural diversity, as well as increased rationality due to the permeation and influence of modernity. Since the state tries to restore integrity and monopolize the social order, it ends up with increased violence and absence of any form of easy-going behavior.

The results show that the Sharia-based rule intended by the Taliban in their previous and current governments in Afghanistan (the first from 1996 to 2001 and the second from 2021 onwards) matches Davis's theory in general, but not in detail. The society ruled by the Taliban in the first period corresponded to Davis's traditional sacred society, because its divine ordinance corresponded to the characteristics of a traditional sacred society mentioned by Davis, such as social integrity, stricture, counter-rationalism, and monopoly, especially in the case of religious interpretations. The only exception is violence. Davis believes that violence is reduced in a traditional sacred society because of its unified nature. However, historical and experimental evidence shows that violence increased in the traditional sacred society of Afghanistan during the first Taliban rule, as the Taliban employed increasing terror and threat to achieve their goals.

The Afghan society in the second period of Taliban rule resembles a ‘reactive sacred society’ as Davis describes it, and at the same time has some differences. The similarity lies in the Taliban leaders' goal of opposing modern civilization, the manifestations of modernity, and internationally accepted norms, which were the legacy of two decades of republican governance, manifested in such elements as democracy, rationalism, equality, freedom, elections, parliament, respect for human rights and women's rights. According to Davis, the Afghan society under the Taliban rule can be deemed as a reactive sacred society, in which the rulers are afraid of the penetration and expansion of modernity. Hence, they try their best to prevent it. Also, as Davis notes, the reactive sacred society ruled by the Taliban has traces of social fragmentation and division. Contrary to what Davis says, this fragmentation is not due to relativism, cultural diversity, or application of instrumental rationality, but rather it originates from ethnic, linguistic and tribal prejudices.

On the other hand, what distinguishes this society from Davis's reactive sacred society is that such a society, according to Davis, resorts to increasing and extensive violence because of its contact with modernity and the government's attempt to re-establish divine social order and restore unity. Despite resorting to violence during their second term in power and in comparison to their first term, the Taliban have acted more cautiously and meticulously overall. Therefore, if the level of their violence has not decreased in this period compared to the previous one, it has not increased either. While the Taliban aim to restore the absolute divine and sacred origin of the social order and maintain the unity and exclusivity in today's Afghan society, which may be transformed by the encroachment of modernity, they have realized that they will not be recognized by states and global organizations as long as they continue to use the current violent and irrational methods to pursue their goals and insist on continuing their abnormal behavior, which is in no way acceptable to the international community. This will make the serious challenges they face now more severe and complex. The Taliban's behavior indicates that they are unpredictable, so we will have to wait and see what happens in practice in the future.

The above considerations and views on the first Taliban government lead to the truth that Davis's theoretical framework does not completely match the reality of the so-called sacred societies. In a sense, his theory and the reality of the societies that he studies are different. In his book entitled Religion and the Making of Society: Es-

says in Social Theology, Davis mentions the post-revolutionary Iran as the best example of a sacred society, though, here again, there is not a complete match between theory and practice. Therefore, it can be concluded that what Davis identifies as the characteristics of a reactive and traditional sacred society only partially matches the societies known by the same name in history, and not more than that.

NOTE

* The organization is banned on the territory of the Russian Federation.

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An Accidental Deity: A New Religious Icon for the Modern Age

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ABSTRACT

This article describes a religious belief, based on folklore but arising within Hindu culture, that has evolved over the last three decades in the Indian state of Rajasthan. It describes how this belief is spreading in North-West India and has moved closer to traditional Hindu customs. The study involves qualitative research, participant observation, and dialogue with devotees and observers who visit the Om Banna shrine. It assesses this adaptive process in a holistic way – from the intersection of anthropology, comparative religion, and folklore. With insights into how people develop new beliefs as a way to accommodate to a changing world, the paper provides a window into modernity and the spiritual-emotional needs of humanity.

Keywords: *modernity, adaptation, religion, spirituality, Hinduism, Om Banna, deity, India, tradition, anthropology, social psychology, globalization.*

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INTRODUCTION

Religious expressions are 'manifestations of more than their singular, historical context; they are embodiments of the ongoing, human activity of world fashioning' (Paden 1998: 161). All gods, rituals, myths and sacred times reflect a thematic history, contextualized to global and local history. Religion, therefore, 'is not about facts but a matter of meanings' (Smith 1991: 9). This paper presents the evolving beliefs of people resulting in new icons of worship and rituals in the twenty-first century, ones that are better suited to the needs of the time.

The temple for Om Banna and his 350cc Enfield Bullet motorcycle, popularly known as the *Bullet Baba Shrine*, is located close to the city of Jodhpur on National Highway 62 in Rajasthan, India. The shrine and its legend are closely linked to the changing socio-economy of the region, which is well-known for its heritage tourism and hospitality industry. Handicraft products are part of a growing export market, bringing in new incomes, external goods, and non-local lifestyles. Lying within the sphere of the *Bishnoi* religious community – famous for its ecological beliefs about peace, health, and preservation of life – ethno-ecotourism has become integral to the local economy in the last decade (Upadhaya *et al*. 2022).

For Ramji Chotaram, a young man, whose family runs a family home-stay, the 'past few years are the best years we've seen, with increasing tourism and interest in local culture, craft, and heritage, including our food.' He describes how city-people from across India and abroad now enjoy more rustic pleasures as a new kind of travel experience. This life, once looked down upon, has now become a refuge from the fast-moving problems of modernity and technology. It was Ramji who introduced us to the Bullet Baba Shrine and its deity [*devata*], near the village of Chotila. The shrine is devoted to a motorcycle and its owner.[1]

The shrine is a reminder of how human emotion transformed a contemporary person into a being of veneration in less than four decades, as well as how an important technological part of his being – his motorcycle – also attained apotheosis. It forces us to wonder how the need for a superior being as a safety net evolved from the emotional dependency of humans (Rodrigue 2022). So, from 2015 to 2017 and in 2023, we undertook/conducted a study to better understand this new spiritual space and to place it in a framework of local, regional, and global society. Its aim was not to establish a precise chain of events or

their validity, but it was more to consider the meaning and implications of the socio-cultural phenomenon.[2]

THE LEGEND AND THE LANDSCAPE

Culturally, this region is home to the Rajput community, known for their martial culture. The Rajput clans have ruled for centuries in the Kingdoms of Mewar, Udaipur and other princely states in North-West India. Om Singh Rathore was the only son of the Rajput Ranbanka Rathore family from Chotila. Known locally as Om Banna, he was just married with a child on the way (*banna* means a newlywed man in the Mewari language). On a cold night in December 1988, on his way from Bangdi (the village of his in-laws) to home, he lost control of his motorcycle, hit a jal tree (*Salvadora oleiodes*), fell into a ditch, and died.[3]

The accident was reported to the authorities in the early morning by travellers, who took his motorcycle to the police station. Officers arrived at the scene later that morning to conduct their investigation. Then the mystery began. The motorbike went missing that evening from the police station and, after a search, it was found at the accident site. Suspecting a prank, the police emptied its fuel tank and locked-up the motorcycle. But it disappeared again and was found in the same ditch at dawn. This was repeated over for several days.[4]

Local people began to spiritualize the events. They came to believe that the motorcycle was blessed with magical powers and that Om Banna's spirit was embodied in it. The faithful describe incidents of an unknown man helping accident victims along the highway and even taking them to the hospital. When asked, this mysterious guardian turns out to look like Om Banna or an indistinct being who vanishes once the injured have reached safety.

Om Banna's family was reportedly unaware of his accident until the next day. He had been close to his grandmother, and, on the night of his mishap, she saw him in her dreams – in pain and seeking help. Later, Om Banna would appear in her dreams as their *Kuldevi* [family deity], an avatar of Nagneshi Mata, who is revered by the Rathore Rajput community (Harlan 1992). These dreams inspired his grandmother to have a memorial built on the spot where he died. Om Banna's son was born after his death and he was the high priest of the temple in 2015.

The Om Banna / Bullet Baba Shrine is laid out as a temple complex along National Highway 62. It sets away from habitations, with the nearest village two kilometres away. The temple lies perpendicular to the main road, between a local *chowky* [police station] and *dharamsala* [pilgrim rest house]. The rest house also serves as an office for the temple-family-trust and manages the complex.[5] The temple has not changed much, but the rest house has grown as have the number of shops around the temple and on the other side of the road.

Today, four jal trees form the precinct of worship as visitors enter the sacred complex. The jal east of the temple entrance (the site of the accident in 1988) is the first object of reverence to which devotees pray. It is a pious spot for rituals, especially for married women, as they tie a sacred thread or bangles on the tree and its enclosure. The women who sell these gifts sit near the tree and share information with newcomers about events and the rituals to be followed.

A couple of roughly-built steps and a pathway conduct visitors to the main complex, which is surrounded by bamboo mesh. This path is adorned with bells and ritual gongs. On the north side of the entrance is a square, thatched enclosure that houses the *havanaagni* [sacred fire], which burns permanently. This structure serves as a *mandapa* [portico] to the main sanctum.

The *chabutra* [sacred platform] of the main shrine contains images of the *devta* [deity] – Om Banna. He is depicted in four forms: 1) A sculpted bust-effigy, 2) A traditional hero-stone funerary motif – as a warrior on a horse with a raised sword in one hand and a javelin in the other, 3) A hero on a horse, and 4) A life-size framed photograph. The temple's priest reports that the photograph was taken only months before Om Banna's death. In it, he wears a traditional turban and suit (Figure 1).

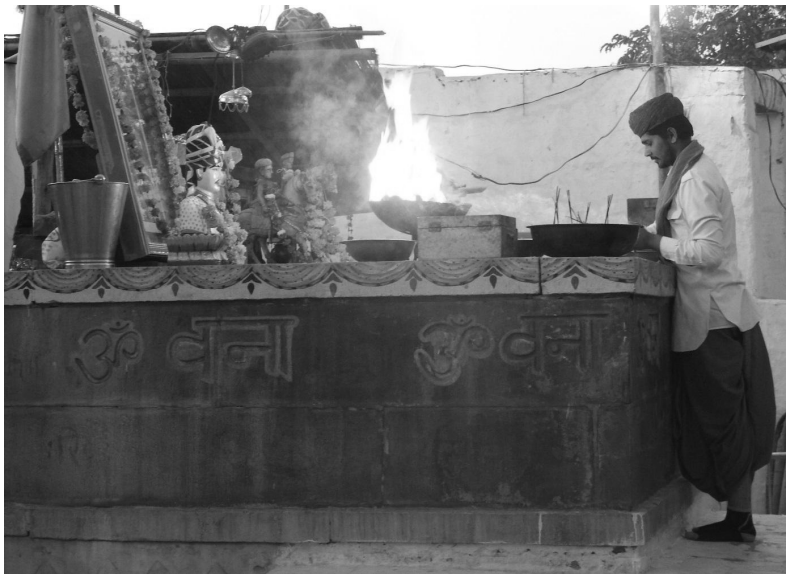

Fig. 1. Fire altar with attending priest.
On the left are effigies and images of Om Banna.
Photo by Shweta Sinha Deshpande, 2015.

These images are visual reminders of this deity's human form and his close association with modern life. The idols depict him in traditional symbology of the Rajputs, as a warrior. The devotees believe Om Banna resides in these idols and that they protect those who believe. East of the main shrine is an enclosed glass case containing the motorcycle. Decorated with the offerings of devotees and believers, the motorbike is as significant as Om Banna himself. Nearby villagers say they hear the bike start-up every day.

Both sides of the highway form part of the larger religious complex. The shrine lies on one side of the road, while kiosks and stalls on both sides cater to the ritual needs of devotees by selling flowers, incense and sweets that can be offered at the shrine, as well as deified images of the young martyr (Figure 2). In one version of the accident, Om Banna was travelling with a friend who survived and reported it to the police. In 2015, the son of this friend ran a photo stall by the temple, where he photo-shopped prints of a deified Om Banna with those of devotees.

Fig. 2. Shops selling offerings and souvenirs outside the Om Banna Temple. Photo by Shweta Sinha Deshpande, 2015.

The stalls also sell souvenirs, from key chains, photo frames and magnets to pendants, bracelets and writing pens, all with the embossed image of Om Banna and his motorbike. There are many audio-visual materials, from folk songs in praise of Om Banna to pious *bhajans* [hymns] sung by local vocalists in honour of the deity. Popular religious movies have been produced to commemorate Om Banna's life and are sold on DVDs. These objects aid worship of Om Banna for devotees who live at a distance from the sacred space. Most of the vendors, if not all, belong to the same village as Om Banna himself.

While many opinions exist, what cannot be denied is the deification of Om Banna and his transformation from a mere mortal to a god-figure or *avatar* [incarnation] within the prevalent belief system. A regular retinue of staff works on temple upkeep, along with those who play ceremonial drums and sing devotional songs. Local people, out of their belief in and respect for the shrine, also work as volunteers.

One of the vendors compared Om Banna and his motorcycle to the concepts of a *devta* [Deity or God] and their *vahana* [vehicle], a motif that appears in many Indian belief systems. This shopkeeper had been a young boy when the accident took place, and, as he ex-

plained, religion in every era brought its gods to Earth to take care of the problems of the time. So, for him, Om Banna is a relevant deity, an avatar for the modern age, and his vehicle is modern – a motorcycle.[6] Om Banna and his motorcycle are thus seen as twin deities within Hindu folklore.[7]

Known as the Protector or Patron Saint of the Highway, Om Banna and his motorcycle are especially revered by drivers of buses and trucks that carry people, manufactured products and agricultural produce on National Highway 62. Those who cannot stop, blow their horn thrice in acknowledgment of the divine presence at the site. Locals as well as the police believe that road accidents have been reduced since the shrine was built.

Brijesh Singh Rathore, a member of the temple committee, described the growth of worship and increase of divine interventions attributed to Om Banna. Visitors have swelled to thousands each week. Om Banna is not just the *Protector of the Highway* anymore but a deity to whom people look – when they come with a pure heart. He is said to have appeared to hundreds of people all over India while on their journeys, but prominently near Pali.[8]

Brijesh also reports how other shrines for Om Banna are under construction in Udaipur (Rajasthan) and Andhra Pradesh.[9] Over the last eight years, the number of shrines across Rajasthan have increased to twenty-one, according to *Google Maps*, while local people identify more. These lie along highways and connecting roads, illustrating the spiritual safety network that Om Banna has come to offer.

In less than three decades, the narrative of a road accident in Rajasthan, involving a young man, a motorcycle and a tree, has transformed into an icon worshipped across India. Religion is often perceived as a conservative force that does not change, but the fact is that religion changes and has always changed in response to local and global needs (Eller 2007).

THE LANDSCAPE AND SOCIETY

Rajasthan is the largest state of India in size and seventh in population. Although landlocked, it has transportation links with north and south Indian states, including maritime ports (India Brand Equity Foundation 2016; Purohit 2013). It also shares a long international border with Pakistan. India's largest producer of cement, Rajasthan engages in much mining and mineral production. Its rich socio-cultural heritage attracts tourists from around the world, with almost 35 million visitors in 2015 and 108 million in 2022 (Tripathy 2023).

This growth has brought mobility, serving as a busy corridor for people, goods, and ideas.

Map 1. The State of Rajasthan (dark grey) in India.
Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons

The Om Banna temple is located on National Highway 62, which connects the historic metropolis of Jodhpur to the industrial city of Pali, then onwards to Haryana, the national capital of New Delhi, and the population centres of India. So, it is not surprising that such an active web of roadways has produced a new set of deities (a motorcycle and its rider) to address qualms about speed and mobility – a deity seen as better equipped to help travellers than earlier gods.

Devotees from nearby villages believe that a visit to the shrine is important before embarking on a long journey, as the twin deities ensure safety and success in their endeavours. Women often accompany their husbands to tie a ritual thread with bangles on the jal tree or at the enclosure for the sacred fire and pray for their spouse's safety. Among most Hindu households, bangles signify a woman's marital status and the practice is endowed with rich symbolic meaning.

Local people sing songs to worship Om Banna, including *aarti* [ceremonial songs of praise]. A religious *mela* [festival] and *yatra* [procession] is organised every year, at the time of Diwali (autumn),

with a Ferris wheel, food stalls, and other attractions. There has been increasing coverage of this activity at the Om Banna Temple by local and national media. Home-grown audio / visual creativity has also spread on the internet. A recent Google Search brought up over eleven million results, including images, personal blogs, devotional songs, religious and biographical films, and event coverage.

Travelling is feared to contain many unknown dangers, so its perils have evolved – from a lack of knowledge about road changes to anxiety about speed and mobility. There exist traditions in other cultures of having a patron saint of travellers, such as St. Christopher, or the practice of *imam zamin*, where a traveller is put under the protection of *Imam*.[10] These contextualise the legend of the Om Banna to show how religious needs remain the same but finer details adapt with time. The evolution of Cargo Cults, Revitalization Movements and New Religious Movements since the early twentieth century indicate how religion operates as one of the many forces shaping a globalised and globally conflicted world (Beckford and Demerath 2007: 1).

PEOPLE, FAITH AND THEIR BELIEFS

The shrine today is a ceremonial, spiritual and commercial space that caters to many different groups of people, from devotees and tourists to motorcycle enthusiasts. The fatal accident has significance, not just for the people of the area but for many across the country. This is the result of tourism, mobility for employment, and social media. Interactions with taxi drivers and shopkeepers, devotees and tourists strengthen the idea that most people, whether they believe in Om Banna's godly status or not, were not ready to risk their future by not paying respect to the shrine and its deities. This element of fear and reverence adds to the legend.

Vinod, a driver who took our students to visit cultural sites in the region, revered a framed photograph of Om Banna with flowers and incense sticks in his taxi. He believed praying to this avatar to be the most important ritual before starting his day's work. [11] In hindsight, it is interesting to note we contributed to the narrative of the legend with him. On the return journey from one of our excursions with the students, we did not take time to honour Om Banna and his motorcycle, and then a kilometre past the temple, the car got a flat tyre! Vinod said it was because we did not stop at the shrine.

Baljeet Singh, a Sikh driver from Udaipur, a regular visitor and follower of Om Banna, does not feel that it clashed with Sikhism, as the latter has strong ties with Hinduism. He also emphasised that Om

Banna had more to do with occupation and location than religion – 'he is a deity of the highway' … in particular NH 62 – so Baljeet does not think it does any harm to honk three times whenever he passes.[12]

In contrast, Ashish, a driver in his early thirties from Delhi, did not follow the tradition himself, but he did drive tourists to the temple and narrated the story of Om Banna to sightseers with great reverence.[13] Ashish and others have contributed to the expansion of the belief in Om Banna beyond the local space. Some of these visitors we interviewed included:

• A family visiting with their grandmother who had been critically ill. With a blessing from the shrine, she was able to walk and paid her respects to Om Banna.

• A young woman received her appointment as a government school-teacher and wanted to thank the deity for his blessing; while a young man had come to seek blessings because he was to appear for the state-police exams.

• A mother and daughter came to seek blessings for a government-job appointment immediately after the interview, and, while at the shrine, received news of their selection.

• Two sisters came to ask for support to give them courage and strength to help work out difficulties in the married family-life of their older sister.

Many young couples visit with their families, and brides tie a sacred thread and coloured bangles on the jal-tree to protect them and seek blessings for their married lives. Among these visitors was a young couple, who had married against the wishes of their families and hoped to reconcile with their kin. There are numerous answers as to why people put their faith in Om Banna. One man said he is a devotee because his prayer for a motorbike came true. Another believed his wishes for a marriage became reality after he visited the shrine.

A woman said she believed in Om Banna because of all the other people who believe in the deity and go to his temple – 'they all cannot be irrational.' Beyond faith, others come due to the temple's popularity and legendary power. Martha, an English tourist in her late fifties, was visiting the shrine as a sightseer. She focused on the divine embodied in myths and legends surrounding all religions and believed these stories impact the flow of belief through society.

**Fig. 3. Visitors at the Om Banna Temple.
The jal tree on the right is wrapped in ribbons
and adorned with bangles as offerings.
Photo by Shweta Sinha Deshpande, 2015.**

Pravesh and Saloni, an educated and married couple in their early thirties from Gujarat, were traveling across the state of Rajasthan on their own Royal Enfield motorbike. They were visiting because of how the temple was related to the Enfield, which they adored. For Pravin, a fourteen-year-old boy, it was a shop and business that he ran with his father to earn a living, not a belief in Om Banna that was important. Possibly, a reason for him being so outspoken, apart from his age, was that he is not native to Chotila village.

The emergence of Om Banna as a deity was a product of his time, a result of anxiety from new infrastructure that was emerging forty years ago – with the building of new roads, a need for more safety at higher speeds, and the tragedy of dear ones lost due to accidents. Such issues were emotionally addressed through the worship of Om Banna. His realm of influence since then has expanded to include other kinds of support expected of all spiritual deities.

RITUAL ANALYSIS

The Om Banna Temple is marked by stark homeliness, but it is endowed with symbols and meanings that richly draw on Hinduism (as perceived today) as well as from the folk traditions of Rajasthan: bells tied to the entrance, orange flags, sacred fire, and music played through an audio system or by local singers to the beat of a *nagara* [drum]. All these traditional symbols invite devotees to participate and contribute in their own ways to the prescribed ritual. Devotees revisit the shrine to offer gratitude and untie the sacred thread, once a wish is fulfilled. The thread is either offered to the fire or carried home.[14]

The faithful and visitors alike follow a set path of first making an offering at the Om Banna shrine on the platform, where the priest mediates prayers and bestows a portion back to the donor (after it is blessed). The path then leads to the encased shrine for the motorcycle, where prayers are offered and donations made to the charity box, while others touch or kiss the case with reverence. There is a path around the shrine for followers to sit, pray and meditate, or to circumambulate both shrines. Many engage in silent contemplation.

Closely emotive in the Hindu form of popular worship, one can see people of all ages, genders and classes engage with the shrines in a modern, cosmopolitan form of worship. Anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973) emphasised the on-going tension between culture, social systems and individuals, and this concept is visible in the new worship of Om Banna.

A devotee can purchase traditional offerings for a Hindu *puja* [ceremonial worship] at the temple: flowers, *kumkum* /*sindoor* [vermillion], incense, *kalava / mauli* [red-yellow ritual thread] and sweets. New offerings have been incorporated too. The most unique is alcohol, as whisky (not country liquor) is sprinkled around the deity. This reflects drinking in a different light, where drunk-driving has been transformed into a religious statement. Within the Indian context, consumption of alcohol as part of a ritual is associated with 'limited' (lesser) deities and only then at special festivals (Pattanaik 2014).

Some stories refer to Om Banna being drunk when the accident happened. According to informants, drinking is a recurring problem in affluent Rajput households, where men are at a loss for productive jobs and suffer from a lack of initiative. This gender-based anomie has been locally attributed to problems of modernity. Alcohol is part of the popular, cultural space, so it is not surprising that it is part of the symbolic offering at the shrine.

There are few other spaces where alcohol appears on the Indian sacred landscape (Sengupta 2006). Globally, a wide variety of traditional mind-altering substances, like cannabis and peyote, have close association with sacred ritual (Schultes and Hofmann 1979). At the Om Banna Shrine, we see the blended ritual that Geertz described (1973), incorporating old and new traditions.

A changing, political economy has led to the demise of local and rural enterprises, with large corporations absorbing local producers. This urban control of industry, tourism and trade has led the rural gentry to grow financially through property sales, but it has removed them from day-to-day business. For men in traditional, upper-class households, this has for many led to a loss of prestige, agency, and self-motivation – they have money but little power.[15]

Religion has more often than not been associated with worldly and other-worldly fears, issues that are basic to both individual and social stability, and well-being. The Indian *socioscape* has been significantly influenced by global mores and aspirations (Sivakumar 2000). These new customs and desires create fears about the pace of life and the need for mobility, which, in turn, build new fears about life and prosperity for oneself and loved ones.

UNDERSTANDING RELIGION AND RITUAL IN INDIA

Religion provides evidence of socialization and acculturation. It helps fulfil many individual psychological and emotional needs – from comfort, hope and love to relief from fear and despair. It explains causes for rules, reasons for social control in this life and in the afterlife (beyond birth and death), needs for cultural institutions like marriage, language, technology and politics, and why there is sickness and misfortune. Religion works as a social glue for the integration of individuals into a social unit with a particular identity and culture. This fundamental role of religion as a social mediator is highly visible in India.

Almost 80 per cent of India's residents practice a variety of Hinduism, which is a relatively modern configuration of Vedic religion that is ascribed to the second millennium BCE. The spiritual realm of the Upanishads dates to the mid-first millennium BCE and Brahmanical Hinduism to the mid-first century CE. Like most other beliefs, it is not just a matter of facts but of meanings – a corpus of traditions, practices, sacred literature and art that have evolved over the last five millennia, as a result of interactions with the cultures and peoples of Asia and Europe (Smith 1991: 10; Smart 1998). It represents diverse and

plural belief systems that were gradually codified into what is today considered Hinduism.

For religious scholar Ninian Smart, the 'grammar' of Indian religion appears in its many sets of Gods, yoga (self-training), *puja* (worship), sacrifice and mythology synthesised in the earliest religious texts of the Hindus, such as the *Rig Veda*. Interwoven with the philosophical doctrines of *samsara* (the cycle of life), *dharma* (duty), *karma* (action) and *moksa* (liberation) – along with the Upanishadic philosophy of the *brahman* (the sacred / divine power), and the *atman* (the eternal self) – Hinduism continues to guide an Indian way of life.

The Islamic influence and the ensuing Sufi and Bhakti traditions mark the medieval era, followed by the colonial influence and rise of socio-religious reform movements like the Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj … among others. In many ways, Vivekannad's Vedanta philosophy, with its positive approach towards change and modernisation of attitudes, set a path for modern Indian Hinduism that evaluates the principles of caste and excessive ritualism with a focus on spirituality, among others. A dynamic system of beliefs that has evolved over time, the Hindu religion continues to develop and incorporate new traditions. This is true today, as we can see with Om Banna.

The Om Banna Temple is in the sacred context of Rajasthan's spiritual landscape. Hero stones are an ancient Indian tradition and are believed to be an abode of deities, while the *chhatri* is a medieval domed-pavilion, especially seen in Mughal architecture. These artefacts are a 'potent means of commemorating historical Rajput folk deities who serve a variety of social functions among the living … bestow prestige on their ancestors and wider *jati*, and positively intercede in the lives of their devotees' (Bose 2015).

While royal Rajput families have quasi-divine status, a non-royal may be deified too. Typically, a *vir* [martial hero] is worshipped as a *devta* [deity] or *sati* [virtuous woman] and embody the Rajput *dharma* [cosmic order], which, although gender-specific, expresses commitment to self-sacrifice. Deified Rajputs are *lok devtas* [folk gods], accessible to devotees and having the capacity to grant them boons and remove obstacles. Thus, a 'warrior memorial becomes the physical locus of their devotional cults' (Bose 2015: 18–19). The *vir* reside in the *virgati* [the heaven for heroes] and in memorial / religious spaces created by devotees.

Indian religious belief has a long history of assimilating new ideas in support of changing conditions, especially seen in medieval and modern times with Islamic and Western influences (Farquhar in Sharma

1986). Some of these traditions achieved prominence since Independence, such as those of Sai Baba, the Siddha Yoga Movement, and the International Society for Krishna Consciousness. Historian and statesman Kavalam Panikkar (1963) identifies such movements as varieties of reformation that have contributed to significant changes in society.

Scholar of religion Arvind Sharma (1986) sees many responses to rapid social change in India that lead to a rise in new religious movements – in the wake of events like English colonialism, increased communication, and technological change. The mushrooming of beliefs, faiths and communities seem to express social aspirations, protest and identity by many Indians. Indeed, modern India has been described as 'a guru factory,' with its many *babas*, *swamis*, *bapus*, *ammas*, and *bhagats* (Qiu 1999).

In their modern forms, such revitalization movements merge new realities with the comforting mores of older sacred systems. Construction of a new religion does not usually happen, but instead there is adjustment of existing philosophy and faith, adapting society to the needs of a changed socio-cultural environment. There is a need to be close to the roots of constructed cultural identities, though it frequently does not reflect fundamentalist attitudes. The meta-narrative in beliefs continues as a lived reality (Lyon 2000; Heelas 1998).

Sociologist Martin Riesebrodt emphasises the need to understand religion in terms of its actions and interactions, which connect to other social systems (Riesebrodt 2003). Intensification of such interconnectedness has reduced the isolation of *little traditions*, and so local and urban ways of life now coexist in a global continuum (Redfield 1956; Asad 1993). The worship of Om Banna can be seen as an 'extrapolation of culture,' which anthropologist Jack Eller (2007: 9–10) describes:

> [R]eligious being(s) and / or force(s) are almost universally 'social,' with the qualities of 'persons' or at least 'agents' of some sort. … humans see themselves, in a religious context, as occupying a certain kind of relationship with being(s) and / or force(s) which we can rightly and only call a social relationship. It is a relationship of communication, intention, reciprocity, respect, avoidance, control, *etc.* … they can be approached and influenced. … They are the nonhuman: the dead ancestors, or 'spirits' of plants or animals or natural objects (the sun and the moon), or natural forces (the wind and the rain), or 'gods,' or impersonal supernatural forces like mana or chi. Yet they interact with us. They are social, because they are part of society. … Indeed,

> religion makes part or all (depending on the tradition) of the nonhuman world human – participants in the norms and values and meanings of culture.

This social process is clearly sketched out in the case of Om Banna and his motorcycle. It is a reality where the greater Hindu gods have given way to icons closer to the current realities of life. We see similar historical instances of this process that have appeared elsewhere in the world. The indigenous North American Ghost Dance and its spiritual offshoots, for example, were a pan-tribal revitalization movement that was also associated with the disruption of traditional lifeways, as with infiltration of Euramerican transportation systems (railways) into tribal lands (Ruuska 2011; Mooney 1973).

Likewise, the ritualization of Om Banna ceremonies has incorporated modern vehicles into the tradition of the *yatra* [procession], in which his effigy is taken out to devotees in a decorated jeep instead of a *ratha* [chariot]. For the *prasad* [food offering], it is not just traditional Indian sweets but a cake especially made for his birth celebrations. This merger of tradition and modernity reflects the changing aesthetics of Om Banna's middle-class followers, which is also visible in new, unpretentious shrines across Rajasthan.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

People do not usually make conscious choices about the ideals of modernity or the process of globalization, but they inadvertently move in these directions as a result of outside influences that they, more often than not, have no power to control or withhold (Arweck 1993; Spickard 2007). The quiet and calm of traditional life has been jolted with novel experiences and aspirations, often bringing apprehension of the unknown.

Today, a young man from a small town needs a well-paying, socially acceptable career as a police officer or an IT professional. Local farmers must ensure that their produce reaches the market and gets the best price, since they hope for their children to go to college. Local vendors have to provide clients with consumables that the mediascape promotes, if they expect to sustain a small business. Young married women need to manage their careers while ensuring that their marriage can sustain the tension between individuality and tradition, along with the aspirations for a romantic modern life. The elderly know they can live a few more years, only if they get medication or surgery in a hospital. Many truck, bus and cab drivers need to get their goods and

passengers to the next destination before sundown. There is a sense of constant mobility, flow and change across people's experiences.

New uncertainties must be pacified with newly conceived powers that may be able to support and protect an individual, family, and community. Just as fear has persisted with the increase of knowledge, many rituals, customs and habits are unchanged, along with traditions that form community identity. A symbol can have multiple and varied meanings for the different people who interact with it. It is a process to be viewed as a survival technique (Durkheim 2015: 37; Turner 1973; Geertz 1973: 89).

At the Om Banna Temple, the ways in which visitors perceive the motorcycle lead to multiple connections. It can represent fear of the speed that the motorcycle affords, fear of the speed that life has changed into, and, in general, psychological stress. It can form a single meaning from one person's perspective, but, when other people see it, they find their own meanings within a variety of symbols. Belief in Om Banna and Bullet Baba reflects relationships between anxiety, hope and religion in the age of globalization.

Explanations have been put forth as to why humans need religion in the first place, but they do not explain why individuals and communities feel the need for new religious deities when millions of gods already exist. Possibly an important reason could be dissatisfaction with and within established religions. The beliefs and practices may have lost some of the emotional and psychological sustainability required in the modern global era.

While people's narratives still abound with miracles performed along the road, Om Banna is evolving from a guardian spirit of travellers to a deity who now has the power to grant wishes and is benevolent in his bequests. Followers worship him, not because they are fearful but because they believe he can help them (Arweck 1993). Om Banna is evolving though; his folk identity being absorbed as a god into the larger Hindu pantheon. He began as an incarnation of *Nagneshi Mata*, the Ranbanka Rathore Rajput family deity, who herself is an incarnation of *Shakti* or *Durga*. Now, he is transcending into a nationally-known god, and we shall see where the process leads.[16]

The Om Banna Temple is under close control by the Rajputs. Until 2017, no Brahmins were involved in the rituals, since the rites were performed only by family members. Om Banna's son was the head priest, responsible for the rituals – in complete sacred vestments at dawn and dusk, offering *aarti* [lights]*, prasad* / *bhog* [votive food] and *darshana* [auspicious viewing of the deity]. He is a well-revered hero

as the son of a God-Being, with strict norms of sacred identity and responsibility, since he was born only two months after his father's accident.

The temple is part of the local folk community, with Om Banna's clan responsible for managing the sacred space. But the shrine now follows traditional Hindu practices. A high-caste Brahmin priest has been recently appointed to perform sacred rituals, and so purity is maintained through the practice of caste hierarchy. There is nonetheless participation by all castes, from vendors selling *puja samagri* [ceremonial wares], musicians playing the *nagara* and *dhol* [drums] with singers, and those responsible for housekeeping. These workers all include non-Rajput castes.

This issue of control could reflect regional efforts to support their tradition against wider norms of Hindu hierarchy. There has been a power-struggle between Rajputs and Brahmins in Rajasthan, where ritual power has not been given to the Brahmins (although they have been part of royal and mainstream religious functions). At the Om Banna temple, these rituals followed Brahmanical principles and forms, but Brahmin priests had been absent.

The diversification and spread of a narrative from a village to other parts of Rajasthan reflects the increasing response of people to a power that is perceived to protect and solve problems. The hero-centric identity of a patriarchal Rajput clan is reinforced, yet the avatar identity of Nagneshi Mata brings in additional devotees, especially women. It is an example of a local folk tradition absorbed into the greater tradition of Rajput Hindu ritual and then into the even larger pantheon of Nagneshi Mata and Shakta devotion system within Hinduism (Flueckiger 2015).

The *Bullet Baba* shrine is a new form of religiosity that has emerged in response to a global upsurge in social tensions. Brought on by unprecedented worldwide connection and increased economic consolidation, rural folklife is now faced with unprecedented marginalization and anxiety. This modern veneration is an innovation of faith in a changed socio-cultural landscape (Bradley 2009: 269–270). It illustrates how societies can improve their socio-cultural life by setting up new codes of conduct, not just for individuals but for the community as a whole.

The shrine provides not just a spiritual culture but supports a material one too. By joining it to an existing belief system – Hinduism in this case – it has divine sanction and comes complete with the underlying ethics and morals of an existing sacred system. It is an elegant

process of engagement and a postmodern religion, with the meta-narrative serving as a lived reality (Lyon 2000). The believers establish a personal communication of devotion through the ritual of tying a sacred thread with their requests to fulfil their worldly and other-worldly desires.

In this case, the religious organization (managed by members of the family) emphasize the need for the Rajput community to grow together by introducing new norms that encourage 'local globality.' Among these new values are equality and freedom to pursue knowledge, as well as reverence for family and family-values, as demonstrated by giving up alcohol abuse, reformed gender roles, education for both men and women, and the need to become part of the world at large – all while preserving Rajput identity. A photo-copied manuscript that describes these values is circulated among believers.

What is especially interesting is the desire to advance into the wider socio-cultural world, which is admired and sought, while combating the fears and anxieties of the world by participation in this new belief system. It also reflects counter-cultural reforms, as the local society moves away from old Rajput norms. As a result, they sustain their community identity while transforming and integrating themselves into modern, global systems.

CONCLUSION

The last century-and-a-half of cumulative growth in transport, communication, mobility and ideas have brought together 'things that do not belong together, nevertheless live side by side' – in regular, inevitable and inescapable contact as part of everyday realities (Beyer 1993: 2). This illustrates sharp contrasts in lives and practices across communities that perpetuate both a sense of dissonance and deepen aspirations in the global reality of local cultural spaces.

Religion and belief are something in which people participate, a way of living in the world, a blend of universal principles rooted in a local community (Beyer 1993; Bradley 2009). Belief provides a vehicle for change during times of social stress by providing a sacred space through which people can seek answers. This explains the embeddedness of religion in the lives of people and its resilience. Local principles reflect cultural and historical conventions (Otto in Smart 1998: 29). Within a spiritual tradition, there can be thousands of religious worlds.

Religion is not fixed but a dynamic web of shared meanings, used in different ways and contexts: addition, deletion, reinterpretation,

elaboration, simplification, purification, syncretism, and even abandonment (Eller 2007; Gardner 1995). Belief in Om Banna and the Bullet Baba reinvents the form, symbols and icons of faith, while continuing the essential creed of established religion. In this case, Om Banna is embedded in the local clan worship of Nagneshi Mata but is also associated with universal *Shakta* belief, one of the three broad Hindu sects (Paden 1998; Flueckiger 2015).

The followers of Om Banna do not identify themselves as at variance with existing Hindu traditions. They maintain their position within the larger socio-political and economic system by incorporating their locally experienced realities with Om Banna into the Hindu mainstream. It can be understood as a local defence against the anxieties of global aspiration, economic progress, and fast-paced life. Om Banna and his Bullet motorcycle came into being in the larger reality of India's anxiety with modernity and mobility.

As anthropologist William Haviland observed: 'when cold reality offers no hope from the daily frustrations of the cultural deterioration and economic deprivation, religion offers the solution' (2007: 717). This is true for the anxiety felt about the speed and loss of lives on highways as well as frustrated aspirations and progress in Rajasthani society. The degree that drivers identify with Om Banna, along with the women who pray for their spouses, is indicative of this trepidation (Eller 2007).

At the Bullet Baba shrine, the greater Hindu gods have given way to icons that are close to current realities and practical issues of life. In outlying geographies around the world, individuals, families and communities are struggling to engage with the need to grow out of customarily undemanding and unhurried lifeways. The need to keep pace with rapid modernization leads to psychological support in religion. Socio-cultural processes continuously 'produce' and 'reproduce' religion, and the *Om Banna* shrine is an example of such 'production' and 'reproduction' of faith within local and global space. The community of the *Ranbanka Rajputs* stand in solidarity in producing this new symbol of belief and spiritual goods, which are distributed across a region in the process of establishing the iconography and meaning for communities to engage with *Om Banna* and his 350 cc Bullet Motorcycle.

NOTES

[1] Chotaram, Ramji. Conversation with Shweta Sinha Deshpande, Om Banna Shrine, December 2014.

[2] It is difficult to assemble a precise chain of events in the history of Om Banna and his temple, because it is so entwined in local religio-magical beliefs of devotees. During the field work, the site was visited from morning till evening. Conversations were undertaken with devotees, vendors and people in charge of the shrine. While attention was given to details of people's beliefs and behaviour, it was ensured that their private space was maintained. Interviews were carried forth only after explanation of the research project and with their verbal consent to participate. Most of the data was collected via informal discussion since respondents were often not comfortable with a notepad or a recorder. Points and observations were jotted down as soon as conversations were over to avoid memory lapses or interpolations from elsewhere. Photos further aided description of events and spaces.

[3] Singh Rathore, Brijesh [member of the temple committee]. Interview with Shweta Sinha Deshpande, Om Banna Shrine, 25–26 December 2015. The interview was written down and the data is stored with the author.

[4] *Ibid*.

[5] The temple was moved somewhat in 2012–2013, when the highway was widened. Three *Google Earth* images from 2009, 2013 and 2015 reflect this shift. It was originally closer to the accident site and the jal tree, which remains in its original position. The police station and rest house have been in their present places for at least twenty years, according to local people. The police station has two officers on duty to guard against drinking at the temple.

[6] Agarwal, Ramesh. Interview with Shweta Sinha Deshpande, Om Banna Shrine, 26 December 2015. The interview was written down and the data is stored with the author.

[7] In many Indian traditions, there is a strong link between a god and their *vahana* [vehicle] as with Shiva and his Bull or Durga and her Lion (Khin 2018. Panda and Mohanty 2021).

[8] Singh Rathore, Brijesh [member of the temple committee]. Interview with Shweta Sinha Deshpande, Om Banna Shrine, 25–26 December 2015. The interview was written down and the data is stored with the author.

[9] *Ibid*.

[10] Imam meaning leader, could refer to either Ali, the cousin of Muhammad and the 4th Caliph or to Imam Hussain, the son of Ali and grandson of Muhammad.

[11] Vinod [taxi driver]. Interview with Shweta Sinha Deshpande, Om Banna Shrine, 26 December 2015. The interview was written down and the data is stored with the interviewer.

[12] Singh, Baljit (Sikh taxi driver). Interview with Shweta Sinha Deshpande, Om Bann Shrine, and 26 December 2015. The interview was written down and the data is stored with the author.

[13] Ashish [taxi driver; family name not shared by the respondent]. Interview with Shweta Sinha Deshpande, Om Banna Shrine, 26 December 2015. The interview was written down and the data is stored with the author.

[14] During the study, the experience was of people tying the sacred thread, but not of anyone untying them, though some of the devotees who had come back to the shrine did mention that their pleas had been answered by Om Banna.

[15] While in Jodhpur during the field work, conversations with the female owner of a family-run self-owned apparel boutique catering to women of the upper-class Rajputana clan and tourists mentioned this issue of anomie among Rajput men as did others at the shrine. A member of the organisation that takes care of the shrine, while sharing the code of conduct, also spoke of a lack of purpose among Rajput men in great detail. The Om Banna temple's code of conduct includes duties to a girl child, education of both girl and boy children, avoidance of alcohol or drugs – all needs for a happy family, as principles to be followed for a good life.

[16] Most people interviewed did not yet speak of Om Banna's form being worshipped within the ritual space of the household, which is typical of the Indian folk tradition. Followers engage in buying objects like key chains, bracelets, CDs with devotional songs and calendars, but these are personalised items not established in external ritual spaces.

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A Cross-Cultural Analysis of Brazilian, Russian, and American Families*

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive fitness theory postulates that preferentially provisioning offspring that most closely resemble the parents can indirectly increase their gene-copying success, with phenotypic resemblance between (allo)parent and offspring acting as an indicator of genetic similarity. According to this prediction, the amount of alloparental effort should correlate with parent-offspring resemblance cues, and this effect should be more pronounced for fathers and paternal kin, as paternity certainty is concerned predominantly with men. We tested these predictions and conducted an online survey in 2019 in Brazil (N = 605), Russia (N = 302), and the USA (N = 308).

By examining the relationship between parent-child resemblance and kin altruism, we have uncovered a widespread positive correlation between parent-child resemblance and the willingness of parents and grandparents to provide care. For example, the more a child resembles their father, the more parents and grandparents are likely to provide support. Similarly, the resemblance between a mother and child is positively associated with (allo)parental effort. At the same time, greater similarity between father and child can actually discourage matrilineal grandparents from providing childcare. In this respect, our data challenge the conventional viewpoint that paternity uncertainty and father-child similarity cues are the driving force behind paternal kin investments, but not maternal ones. Our results suggest that a more general kin recognition mechanism is at play, one that is shared by both matrilineal and patrilineal relatives in modern societies. One possible explanation is that in the context of the extended family, mothers and maternal relatives, as primary caregivers, may be particularly sensitive to key phenotypic traits of dependent children.

In the resulting model a sufficient cross-cultural difference emerges when examining the degree of assistance provided by different (allo)parents across the studied samples. For instance, American respondents highlighted a significant level of paternal involvement in childcare, while Russian respondents noted a high level of maternal kin assistance. In contrast, the Brazilian sample exhibited relatively low levels of kin involvement. The divergent paths of these countries raise important questions about the future of family structures and the role of kinship in shaping them. The highly urbanized Brazilian sample may provide valuable insights into possible future directions in

family structure and the role of alloparental care within it. We propose that Brazil's high social integration and family member's incorporation into expanded social networks may contribute to the development of a communal model of breeding, marked by ultra-social or eusocial childcare practices. Will the Russian and American models of family follow the same ultra-social path as the Brazilian one? Or will Russian and US families maintain a distinct approach to childcare in a world influenced by globalization? We suppose that further field work on alloparental care in the Latin American region is essential to shed light on this important topic, and to uncover the answers to these intriguing questions.

Keywords: *parent-child resemblance, grandparents, paternity certainty, kin-recognition, cooperative breeding.*

1. EVOLUTION OF ALTRUISM

The concept of parental favoritism has long fascinated researchers and observers, who seek to understand why parents often show a strong preference for one child over others. While this phenomenon is often associated with evolutionary and genetic factors, it is essential to consider the broader context of altruism, which plays a crucial role in the development of social behaviors.

Peter Kropotkin is one such intellectual who was one of the first to draw attention to the importance of altruism in evolution, shedding light on the intricate social dynamics between individuals and groups. An anthropologist and philosopher, Kropotkin emphasized the importance of mutual aid within and between species in his works. In his book *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution* (1902) Peter Kropotkin challenged the conventional view that survival is based on competition, arguing instead that cooperation and mutual aid have been essential for the development of societies and the emergence of altruism. Kropotkin drew inspiration from a rich tradition of Russian thought that emphasized community, mutual responsibility, and collective action, in contrast to the prevailing Western individualism and competition of the time, which was also widely rejected by the late nineteenth-century Russian intellectual circles (Gould 1988). Kropotkin's merit is that he succeeded in expressing these sentiments in the form of a coherent evolutionary theory and in presenting it to a broad Western audience.

But in the middle of the twentieth century, when the triumphant union of population genetics and Darwinism had conquered the minds of scientists, Kropotkin's concept of mutual aid had already been forgotten in the West. And only in the early 1960s, after the publication of the work of the English ornithologist Vero Copner Wynne-Edwards, *Animal Dispersion* (1962), did the topic of the evolution of mutual aid again become the subject of a heated debate. In this work, Wynne-Edwards noted that in natural environments untouched by man, unlimited population growth and the subsequent stage of complete depletion of the resource base are very rare: the normal evolutionary trend goes in the opposite direction, towards the creation and maintenance of a habitat at the highest achievable level. Like the Russian naturalists, he made his observations in a harsh climate zone – in Northern Canada, where Wynne-Edwards found that in seabird colonies less than half of the individuals begin to lay eggs each season. He suggested that the birds may deliberately abstain from reproduction in order to reduce intraspecific competition and increase their group's chances of success under conditions of resource scarcity. According to Wynne-Edwards, there is some homeostatic effect that maintains the number of breeding individuals and allows the population density to be balanced at an optimal level.

However, the main difficulty in explaining this evolutionary mechanism, capable of regulating the number of individuals for the benefit of the entire group and limiting their intraspecific aggressiveness in the struggle for limited resources, was that it conflicts with the classical concept of Darwinian fitness, which was based on the power of natural selection to maintain the spread of traits by increasing the number of descendants of the most adapted individuals. The difficulty of explaining the mechanism of intra-group selection proposed by Wynne-Edwards, as noted in Maynard Smith's 1964 work ‘Group Selection and Kin Selection’, also lies in the fact that in the presence of contacts between neighboring groups, ‘infection’ with the gene of antisocial behavior undoubtedly occurs, and the gene of asociality can quickly spread in any group of altruists. As a result of the presence of these contradictions, which were unresolvable at the time, the Theory of Group Selection did not find understanding among the evolutionists of the second half of the twentieth century.

A turning point in the study of the problems of altruism and the features of kin selection was made by William D. Hamilton. In 1964

in his famous paper 'Genetic Evolution of Social Behavior' (Hamilton 1964a, 1964b) he proposed the concept of *inclusive fitness*. Hamilton's work was built upon the idea that individuals can increase their reproductive success not only through the production of offspring, but also through the survival and reproduction of their relatives. From his point of view, the main actors in evolution are not organisms, and certainly not groups or species, but genes, whose sole task is the maximum multiplication of their own copies. He presented a mathematical explanation of altruism as follows: an extreme degree of altruism, consisting in the sacrifice of one's own life for the good of others, can be supported by selection if this sacrifice can save more than two siblings, or more than four cousins. Self-sacrifice and altruism can also extend to more and more distant relatives, since common altruistic genes may be even more numerous in an extended social group, and even taking into account the distance of kinship, the ratio of their number to the coefficient of relatedness will have a positive effect on the maintenance of altruistic traits in a population. Some similar illustrations were given earlier by Haldane (1932, 1955), who, in fact, introduced the very concept of 'altruistic behaviour' into the thesaurus of evolutionary biology, pointing out that a behaviour such as an alarm call may harm the individual but benefit other members of the group. Haldane suggested two processes by which it might evolve. The first was the process of between-group selection, in which groups capable of achieving mutualistic goals eventually outcompete non-altruistic groups of egoists. The second model of the spread of altruistic traits, proposed by Haldane, was in many ways close to what we today know as kin selection theory. But it was in the hands of William Hamilton (1964a, 1964b) and his followers that the second one – the *theory of kin selection,* an evolutionary process which is used to be known as a key driver for the emergence of cooperative and altruistic behavior, – became a cornerstone of modern behavioral ecology (West, Griffin and Gardner 2007).

It should be noted that Hamilton (1975) updated his earlier theory to distinguish between *kin selection* theory and *inclusive fitness theory*. This distinction was based on whether or not the shared genes had been inherited by recent common descent. Hamilton explained that recent common descent had been no more than a simplifying assumption in his original kin selection model, stating that this had been done to render the mathematical model more manageable, but that this assump-

tion was not a necessary one for his inclusive fitness theory. With the freeing of that theoretical constraint, inclusive fitness theory became virtually indistinguishable from the *genetic similarity theory* that was elaborated later (Rushton 1989). This is important because recent common descent is not the only way that the same genes can be shared between two or more individuals. Another generative mechanism is the production of offspring via positive assortative mating for genetic similarity. When that occurs, which is the norm in most modern human populations (Figueredo and Wolf 2009; Figueredo *et al.* 2015; Wolf and Figueredo 2011), then the coefficient of relatedness may be higher than the theoretical value of r=0.5 (under assumptions of *panmixia*, or random mating), depending on the degree of positive assortative mating.

Nowadays the evolution of altruism is a complex and ongoing topic in the field of evolutionary biology. Since the discovery of indirect fitness theory, experiments and modeling have made it possible to demonstrate the quantitative mechanisms of preservation and evolution of altruism in conditions unfavorable for the cooperating individual. Altruism and cooperation have been studied in various contexts, including public goods games, social dilemmas and economic interactions. Research has identified several triggers that facilitate cooperation among individuals such as direct and indirect reciprocity, when individuals reciprocate kindness or help with kindness in return (Nowak and Sigmund 1998), regular contact with others also can encourage cooperation (Falk and Fischbacher 2006) and imposing consequences for non-cooperation can help deter antisocial individuals from free-riding and encourage them to contribute to the collective effort (Barron 2024).

At the same time, debates continue among evolutionary theorists about levels of selection, human and animal social behavior, sexual selection, and related topics. Researchers such as Lee Cronk (Cronk 2019), Richard Wrangham (Wrangham 2021; Glowacki *et al*. 2020), Christopher Boehm (Boehm 2018) and Jon Haidt (Haidt 2007) contribute to the ongoing debate and investigations in the field of group selection, altruism, and cooperation. Their work explores the mechanisms and outcomes of evolutionary forces on complex behaviors, such as cooperation based on moral foundation, self-domestication and human social behavior. In recent years, the theory of multilevel selection has gained significant support, offering a potential explana-

tion for human ultrasociality – the ability to cooperate in large groups of genetically unrelated individuals. This development has opened up new opportunities for interdisciplinary research, facilitating the convergence of history and biology, among other fields (Hertler *et al*. 2020). New approaches are also emerging, for example, Ohad Lewin-Epstein and Lilach Hadany (Lewin-Epstein and Hadany 2020) have proposed moving away from the individual and gene-centric picture of interactions and considering the microbes carried by the interacting individuals. The ongoing research in these fields by these and other scholars has helped to elucidate the mechanisms and outcomes of evolutionary forces on complex behaviors, including altruism and kin selection.

1.1 The Problem of Determining Relatedness

Hamilton's Rule of kin selection states that altruistic behavior for the benefit of unrelated individuals will only occur if the recipient of the benefit is not too distantly related, and the cost of helping is not too high. As a result, the ability to adequately determine kinship may become a key point in the manifestation of behavioral altruism, especially when the cooperative individual sacrifices significant efforts and resources, as is common, for example, in the context of kinship interactions that promote mutual help and care.

Due to its universal presence in human societies, kinship has traditionally been a core organizing principle in non-Western, non-urban societies that social anthropologists have focused on. It is not surprising, then, that many social anthropologists initially resisted the application of Hamilton's Rule to humans (Cronk 2019). Marshall Sahlins, a prominent anthropologist, was particularly critical of Hamilton's Rule, arguing that few humans could perform the complex mental calculations necessary to guide their behavior (Sahlins 1976). This skepticism was later labeled ‘Sahlins' Fallacy’ by evolutionary biologists (Dawkins 1979: 291–292), who view it as a cautionary tale in evolutionary psychology.

The underlying problem lies in the fundamentally different assumptions that social scientists and evolutionary biologists make about human behavior. Social scientists like Sahlins assume that behavior is the result of conscious deliberation shaped by culture, whereas evolutionary biologists recognize that many evolved mechanisms operate below the threshold of conscious awareness. The hypothetical mecha-

nism for the evolution of altruistic behavior toward individuals with phenotype tags that are sufficiently similar to the donor's phenotype was elaborated upon by Dawkins. In 1982, in his work on the extended phenotype question, Richard Dawkins proposed a specific innate mechanism of kin recognition that might operate between genealogical relatives. He gave it an olfactory name – the so-called *armpit effect* (Dawkins 1982). Dawkins supposed that organisms might follow the rule *'be nice to kin who smell more similar to you'*. This mechanism potentially facilitates the identification of a degree of genetic relatedness via phenotype matching, which involves individuals' ability to recognize a particular phenotypic marker carried by both the individual and its partner and to behave nepotistically on the basis of their phenotypic similarity (Dawkins 1982; Hamilton 1964a, 1964b; Mateo and Johnston 2000; Rousset and Roze 2007). Later, the recognition mechanism that discriminates between different recipients of altruistic help on the basis of such a phenotypic similarity was positively confirmed (Traulsen and Nowak 2007; Bavik *et al.* 2022).

In humans, the recognition between close and distant kin, as well as non-kin also employs an elaborate kinship family system (Jones 2004; Hamilton 1964a, 1964b; Hames 2015). However, there are still situations where an individual's relatedness to others can be ambiguous. Due to internal fertilization in humans, males, and paternal relatives may have greater uncertainty about their genetic relatedness to offspring than mothers and maternal kinships. In evolutionary psychology, the issue of unclear biological relatedness to the offspring for fathers and paternal kin is known as the theoretical concept of *paternal uncertainty*. Fitness losses for men who allocate their reproductive effort in parental care for unrelated children can be considerable, and males are expected to invest less in children whose relations are putative (Apicella and Marlowe 2004).

The issue of intrafamilial altruism and relatedness uncertainty also relates to patrilineal kin effort, as the paternity threshold model formalizes the role of paternity uncertainty as an adaptive explanation for biases in alloparental effort (Kurland 1979; Perry and Daly 2017). A number of studies have found that matrilineal grandparents are more inclined to invest in grandchildren than patrilineal grandparents (Perry and Daly 2017; Sear *et al*. 2000; Voland and Beise 2002).

Reasonably, in the past there were no explicit ways for fathers and patrilineal relatives to verify biological relatedness to a child. Therefore,

a process of self-referent phenotype matching and recognition of signs of physical and personality cues of kin resemblances could help the kin to determine the presence of biological relatedness and facilitate alloparental decision making about care. A rapidly growing body of research has demonstrated the human ability to match the phenotypic tags based on visual images, and to fairly accurately detect the actual genetic relatedness between different faces (Alvergne *et al*. 2009; Brédart and French 1999; Fasolt 2021; Woo 2021), even for faces of different races (Alvergne *et al*. 2009; Woo 2021). For instance, several experiments have shown that people's judgments on the facial similarity of child faces correlate with their actual relatedness (Maloney and Dal Martello 2006; DeBruine *et al*. 2009). In experiments appealing to the actual or digitally modified images have shown that similarity cues generally lead to more positive attitudes towards children who resemble adult subjects, and even guide fathers' decision making about parental effort (Platek *et al*. 2004; Volk and Quinsey 2002).

However, paternity uncertainty is not the only adaptive function for determining one's degree of genetic relatedness to a given potential recipient of parenting or alloparenting. Higher coefficients of relatedness are predicted to produce higher levels of altruism, so greater degrees of positive assortative mating should indirectly select for higher levels of child-directed parenting and alloparenting, and this logic should apply to the mother and matrilineal relatives as well as to the father and patrilineal relatives, even in the absence of maternity uncertainty. Thus, monitoring the degree of relatedness to a given child by the mother and matrilineal relatives for the purposes of optimal parenting and alloparenting would be theoretically expected when the degree of positive assortative mating between the parents of the children may be variable (Figueredo and Wolf 2009; Figueredo *et al.* 2015; Wolf and Figueredo 2011).

1.2 Current Research Design

The goal of this paper was to test whether the amount of alloparental effort is correlated with parent-offspring resemblance cues, and whether this effect is more pronounced for fathers and paternal kin, compared to mothers and maternal kin in a cross-cultural perspective.
We hypothesized that Father-Child resemblance traits in a child would enhance Paternal Effort and Patrilineal kin care in all studied cultures.

In contrast, Mother-Child resemblance should demonstrate a relatively modest impact on maternal and alloparental help.

It is hypothesized that culturally specific kinship structures may also play an important role in caregiving, as the availability of matrilineal and patrilineal kin may vary considerably. Here we implement a cross-cultural approach to test the effect of parent-child similarities in three post-industrial societies: Brazil, Russia, and the USA. These three countries are comparable in a number of important aspects, including their population and territorial size, urbanization rates and levels of integration into the global economy (www.cia.gov/the-world-factbook/countries/). All the three countries have a solid European cultural heritage, namely their main ethnic groups profess Christianity, implying that monogamy (as well as low extra-pair paternity rates) has been the only legitimate form of marriage there for centuries.

2. METHODS

2.1 Samples

Brazil. Data from Brazil were collected online from college students at two different public universities: the University of São Paulo, in the state of São Paulo and the Federal University of Espírito Santo, in the state of Espírito Santo, both in southeastern Brazil.

Russia. Data for the Russian sample were collected online. Participants were recruited from students at the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology and also through a series of advertisements on the Russian segment of the Internet mostly through social media facilities.

United States. Data for the United States were collected online in two states: Arizona and California. The Arizona sample was collected from college students at the University of Arizona in Tucson, AZ. The California sample was collected from college students at the University of Redlands in Redlands, CA. Participants were compensated with course credit.

Table 1

Demographic information on respondents from Brazil, Russia, USA

	Brazil	Russia	USA
N	603	301	308
Age (*M*)	25.5	29.1	19.6

Table 1 (continued)

	Brazil	**Russia**	**USA**
Age (*SD*)	9.28	9.82	2.33
Age *Range*	16–67	17–67	18–38
Female *n*	468 (78 %)	214 (71 %)	231 (74 %)
Male *n*	133 (22 %)	88 (29 %)	81 (26 %)

2.2 Measures

Parent-Child Resemblance Scales. To assess the degree of similarity between a child and a parent, our team utilized five-item subscales measuring self-perceived parent-child similarity. Participants rated the degree of resemblance to each of their parents (*e.g.*, 'Overall resemblance', 'Hair color and structure resemblance') on a 6-point scale (where 0 = not very similar and 5 = very similar). In order to assess the fit between the observed data and theoretically grounded constraints of *Parent-Child Resemblance*, all items within this scale underwent a *CFA* procedure (Appendix A).

Parental Effort Subscales. The Early Environment Questionnaire was used to represent the latent constructs of maternal and paternal direct care using a 6-point scale. The final subscale included items such as: 'I felt that my mother was emotionally supportive'; 'My father usually helped me solve problems'. To assess the fit between the observed data and the theoretically grounded constructs of *Maternal and Paternal Effort,* all items were subjected to *CFA* procedure (Appendix A).

Grandparental Assistance. To assess the level of *grandparental Assistance* our team utilized three-item subscales. Sample items include questions like: 'During my childhood, my maternal grandparents lived: with us; separately, but in the same city; in another city, but no more than three hours from us; in another city, more than three hours away from us; in another country; I mostly lived with my grandparents and not my parents?'; 'How often did you spend your school holidays with your paternal grandparents?' Participants used a 5-point scale (0 never; 4 almost always) to describe the frequency of each behavior during the childhood. To assess the fit between the observed data and the theoretically grounded constricts of *Maternal and Paternal Grandparental Assistance* all items underwent a *CFA* procedure (Appendix A).

Bayesian Multilevel Modeling (BMLM) was implemented to analyze the (allo)parental effort given by four family agents to a child based on the degree of resemblance the child has with its mother and father. In this model, both the IDs of the participants and the national group to which they belong were included as grouping factors in order to account for inter-individual correlations within the samples studied on individuals' responses.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Understanding the Role of Father-Offspring Resemblance in Kin Care

The summary output of the fitted *BMLM* model reveals that investments in childcare by both parents and grandparents appear to be positively mediated by the physical similarity between a child and a parent (similarity to a son or daughter in the case of grandparents).

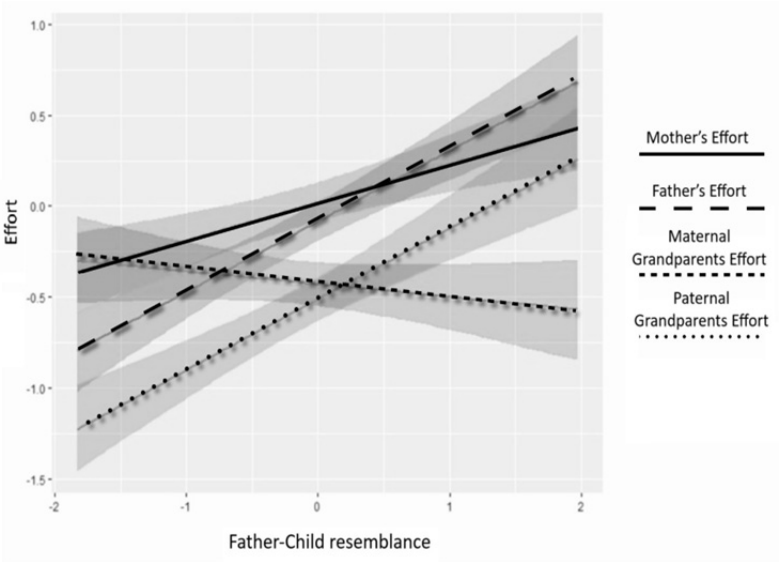

Fig. 1. Visualization of the Father-child resemblance factor on the level of effort of four alloparents

For instance, father-child resemblance demonstrated a positive regression coefficient and reliable confidence intervals in the *BMLM* model, which implies that paternal effort, which is a baseline in our model, is significantly higher for a child resembling the father (b = .39;

CI [.28, .5]). However, it is worth noting that father-child resemblance has a significant negative impact on matrilineal kin care, specifically on the maternal grandparent's assistance (b = –.46; *CI* = [–.33; –.03]) and the mother care (b = –.18; *CI*= [–.33; –.03]).

3.2 Understanding the Role of Mother-Offspring Resemblance in Kin Care

The summary output displays a positive regression coefficient (b = .11) for mother-child resemblance, although the 95 % credibility interval (CI = [–.01; .23]) is relatively wide. The wide credibility interval in our data suggests that there is not enough evidence to reasonably estimate the impact of mother-child resemblance as a significant positive predictor influencing alloparent's attitudes. However, mothers themselves do respond to phenotypic cues of similarity between themselves and their children. And mothers significantly increase their efforts towards children who resemble them (b = .21, 95; *CI* = [.05; .37]).

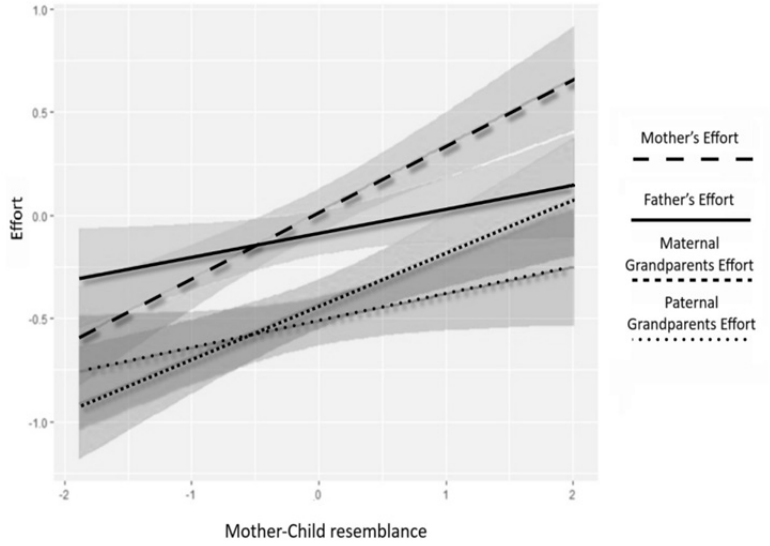

Fig. 2. Visualization of the mother-child resemblance factor on the level of effort of four alloparents

3.3 The Combined Effect of Culture and Alloparent

An interaction between the categorical variables is shown in Figure 3, which shows the combined effect of the two factors: country and allo-

parent. According to our analysis, the overall paternal effort was higher in the United States compared to Russia and Brazil (b = .28, 95 %; CI = = [.09; .47]). This suggests that, holding other predictors constant, children in the USA receive more kin assistance than in the other two countries. In contrast, Russia showed a notably higher availability of maternal helpers, who invested significantly more in their grandchildren compared to the other studied countries. Furthermore, maternal kin help in the Russian sample stands out as the highest of all the types of alloparental effort we examined (*b* = .71, 95 %; *CI* = [.41; 1.01]).

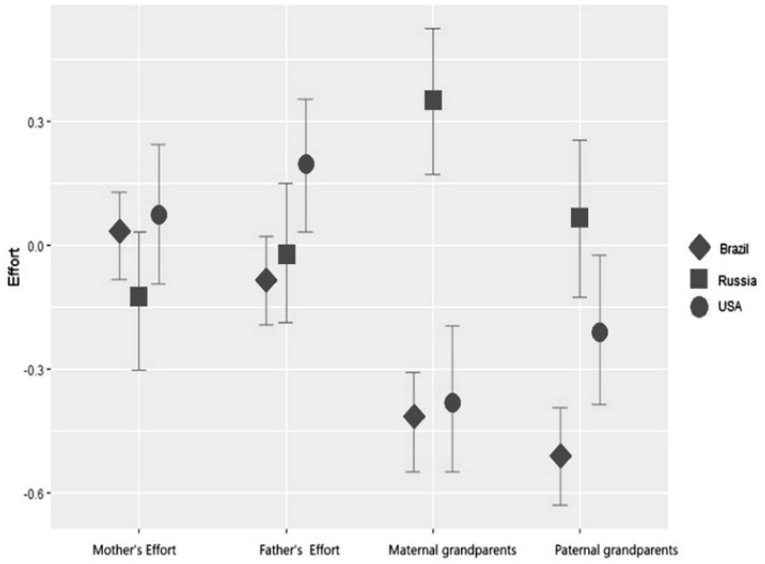

Fig. 3. Visualization of the combined marginal effects of four alloparental effort across three cultures

4. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Alloparents Care and Parent-Offspring Resemblance

While children share half of their genetic information with each parent and only about a quarter with their grandparents, both paternal and maternal family members invest in ensuring the well-being of their dependent children. However, confidence in the genetic relationship with their grandchildren varies among family members, including grandmothers and grandfathers from both sides of the family. Theoret-

ical predictions suggest that in humans, maternal relatives and mothers are more certain about their genetic relationship with offspring and therefore more interested in caring for them. In contrast, paternal grandparents may have less confidence in genetic relatedness due to uncertainty about paternity. Given these factors, paternal grandparents may be more attuned to the phenotypic similarity between their son and his children, and adjust their investment in grandchildren according to signs of similarity to their sons.

In this paper, we test this hypothesis using cross-cultural questionnaire data collected in 2019 in three countries: Russia, the USA, and Brazil. The collected data were analyzed using Bayesian Multilevel Modeling (*BMLM*) to predict overall (allo) parental effort based on the self-reported similarity levels between the participants and their mother and father.

BMLM analyses have shown that investments in childcare by both parents and grandparents appear to be positively mediated by the physical similarity between a child and a parent (similarity to a son or daughter in the case of grandparents). The graphical visualization of the results demonstrated the generally positive impact of the similarity factors on the effort of each family member, but not all regressions were statistically significant.

On the one hand, the association between care from patrilineal relatives and father-child similarity was found to be significant and positive (Figure 1). On the other hand, we also observed a significant positive correlation between mother-child similarity and the effort put forth by mothers and maternal relatives in childcare (Figure 2). Additionally, maternal relatives showed negative reactions to the child's physical appearance, leading to a significant decrease in their effort when prominent signs of resemblance between the child and the father were present (Figure 1). In contrast, as shown in Figure 2, other relatives, including patrilineal kin, generally viewed the mother-child resemblance positively.

One possible explanation for the positive response of matrilineal relatives to similarity cues and the increasing hostility to alien traits is an adaptive response to cues of genetic relatedness in different social contexts (DeBruine 2004). Based on the premise that in most mammals, including humans, young are raised in family groups with substantial variation in genetic relatedness among kin family members,

Mark E. Hauber and Paul W. Sherman (2001) developed the concept of adaptive innate neural recognition mechanisms to deal with physical similarity clues. In a human family in the prosocial context of cooperative breeding, offspring develop in a family of mixed relatedness, such as through multiple paternity or maternity, or among unrelated conspecifics. Individuals reared together may have different sires, so that full and half siblings grow up side-by-side.

However, the phenotypic sensitivity of females cannot be fully explained by the lack of biological relatedness that may exist in extended family contexts. Mixed relatedness is normative among full siblings and their offspring due to genetic recombination processes during the meiotic phase of reproduction, which result in a novel set of genetic information in each half of the ancestral genetic information passed from parents to their common children. Therefore, phenotypic similarity does not represent a completely irrelevant kinship cue for maternal relatives because the combination of positive assortative mating (which is prevalent in humans for most permanent and stable traits) and random genetic recombination may result in maternal relatives sharing more genetic similarity with one of their offspring than another (Rushton 1988; Nivard *et al*. 2024; Robinson *et al*. 2017).

One of the main conclusions that could be drawn from this article is that female effort depends on the perceived mother-child similarity factor, and that finding is most likely consistent with the evolutionary framework of the cooperative breeding model as a pervasive reproductive adaptation in humans, as explicitly delineated in the work of Sara Hrdy (1999, 2007) and Karen Kramer (2005, 2010).

4.2 Childcare through the Lens of Cross-Cultural Analysis

The sociological approach to cultural dimensions, as outlined by Geert Hofstede, classifies Russia and Brazil as collectivistic cultures, emphasizing the prioritization of the group's needs over individual needs (Hofstede 2011). On the other hand, the United States is an individualistic culture, where individuals are expected to prioritize their own needs and interests over those of the group. The analysis of alloparental effort in the studied countries partially supported these predictions: American participants demonstrated higher levels of self-efficacy in caregiving compared to those from other countries, indicating that they felt more confident in their ability to care for their children and

less reliant on alloparents. American fathers have relatively high involvement in childcare, compared to participants from other countries. This suggests that cultural norms in the United States may be supportive of greater paternal effort, which can lead to better outcomes for children. It is also evident that Americans are more likely to identify family norms as more gender neutral, with fathers more involved in childcare.

In contrast to other countries, Russia has demonstrated a remarkable prevalence of matrilineal helpers who heavily invest in their grandchildren. Our data reveal that the continuation of family traditions in Russia is largely maintained by maternal kin, with a significant presence of maternal grandparents in daily care and other family matters. This shift towards a matrilineal family structure in modern Russia reflects a profound cultural transformation: the evidence suggests that Russia has moved away from a patrilocal, patriarchal society, which is generally considered normative for Russian society (see, *e.g*., Gapirzhanovna 2023), and towards a more egalitarian family structure in which maternal relatives play a more prominent role (Semenova and Butovskaya 2022).

In stark contrast to Russia, Brazilian grandparents show a marked disinterest in providing childcare assistance. This is particularly evident among paternal grandparents, who show little enthusiasm for childrearing. While some researchers argue that racial and ethnic differences may influence grandparental support in different cultures (Livingston and Parker 2010), we suggest that the high rates of urbanization in Brazil may be a contributing factor. Potentially, the significant migration processes and rapid urbanization of Brazilian cities in recent decades (Aguayo-Tellez *et al.* 2010) may have led to a shift away from traditional kinship support.

In this respect, the decline in familial support in Brazil may be linked to several factors. Firstly, it is possible that many families lack the financial means to maintain frequent contact with their relatives living in a distant city. Secondly, it may be a consequence of the inadequate development of national transport networks (Ferreyra and Roberts 2018). Finally, it may reflect cultural changes in the family structure, influenced by the rapid population growth in Brazilian megacities, leading to increased involvement of genetically unrelated community members in caregiving practices. Ethnographic data point to the high importance of social integration for members of Brazilian society, who are

integrated into expanded social networks under the conditions of growing urban agglomerations (Klippel 2018). The American-born Brazilian anthropologist Claudia Fonseca estimates that in poor neighborhoods about half of the women give their children to other families or to state-run shelters, either on a short or long-term basis. In working-class areas, wealthier families are more likely to take in other people's children. A 1986 study by Claudia Fonseca in Porto Alegre, the largest city in southern Brazil, found that of the 120 households she surveyed, about one hundred respondents had lived with adoptive mothers, godparents, or grandmothers, often called mothers *de criação* (Fonseca 1995). This arrangement allowed for childcare assistance to be provided by the social group, rather than solely by genetic relatives. Social care for children in the context of shared parenthood can be seen as an example of eusocial characteristics in contemporary Brazilian society (Cassar *et al*. 2023), potentially facilitating adaptability to local childcare needs and the exchange of support and resources between unrelated individuals (Fonseca 2003).

4.3 Policy Implications

Our study has shed light on the intricate interplay of cultural and biosocial factors that shape family dynamics in three different regions: Russia, Brazil, and the United States. In this complex tapestry, we discovered both universal threads of parental support and unique patterns characteristic of each region. For instance, in the United States, the prevalence of an individualistic culture and strong paternal involvement in childcare should be celebrated as a positive trend. To support these emerging norms, policymakers can encourage flexible work arrangements and family-friendly policies that recognize the importance of paternal involvement in childcare and develop programs and initiatives that promote intergenerational family relationships and reinforce a sense of community responsibility. In Russia, a unique reliance on matrilineal kin support has emerged, highlighting the vital role that extended families play in shaping modern family dynamics in this region. Our research suggests that strengthening traditional family values and a sense of parental responsibility may be crucial for Russia. By embracing and supporting these values, we can create a stronger foundation for families and promote a culture of mutual care and support.

For Brazil, the societal shift towards more informal, collective forms of childcare offers an opportunity to strengthen social ties and create more resilient communities. By encouraging involvement of unrelated individuals in caregiving, Brazil can harness the flexibility and resourcefulness of its growing urban agglomerations. Brazil's high levels of social integration and inclusion in extended social networks may encourage the development of a more communal approach to childcare, resembling ultrasocial or eusocial caregiving practices.

The divergent paths of these countries raise fundamental questions about the future of family structures and the role that kinship plays in shaping them. Will the United States continue to emphasize individualized forms of childcare, in which fathers play a more prominent role? Will the role of grandmothers remain as important in Russia? Or will the increasingly urbanized Brazilian model become a harbinger of a new, more communal approach to childcare? In this sense, how prophetic were the ideas of Peter Kropotkin, who noticed that social organisms such as insects and some species of mammals form a complex structural organization with a clear division of labor and cooperation between individuals, and in which he saw parallels with human societies, where people often pool their efforts together to achieve a common goal.

As we ponder these questions, we are reminded of the vast cultural and economic disparities that shape family dynamics around the globe. In a world marked by increasing global connectivity and social integration, it is likely that family structures will continue to evolve, integrate and adapt. The fascinating trajectories of the United States, Russia, and Brazil provide a unique opportunity to explore the complex interplay between culture, biology, and society in shaping family structures. Further fieldwork on alloparental care in the Latin American region is essential to shed light on this important topic, and to uncover the answers to these intriguing questions.

5.0 DATA AVALABILITY

ajkn8/sim (github.com)

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Appendix

Appendix A

Latent constricts and confirmatory factor analysis

Grandparents Assistance. Manifest variables were used in the hypothesized CFA model of the association between paternal and maternal kin. The tests of the convergent validities (a major component of a CFA) of the two latent constructs produced from the observed 6 variables were psychometrically acceptable. CFA parameters: Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .85; Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = .72; Test statistic = 153.944; df = 8; *p*-value (Chi-square) < .001; Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = = .079. All the pathways showed P(> |z|) < .001, and regression Paternal Grandparents → Maternal Grandparents shows P(> |z|) = .003, with B = .097).

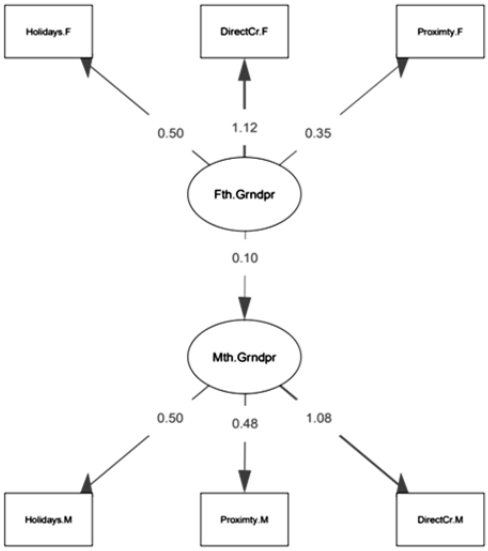

Fig. 1. CFA Grandparents Assistance model for latent variables results: Maternal Grandparent Assistance and Paternal Grandparent Assistance (two domains)

Notes: Fth.Grndpr represents the latent construct of paternal grandparent availability; Holiday.F – How often did you spend your school holiday with your grandparents on your father's side?; Proximity.F – 'During my childhood my grandparents on my father's side lived'; DirectCr.F – 'How often did your grandparents on your father's side babysit with you when you were ill?'; Mth. Grndpr represents the latent construct of maternal grandparent availability; Holiday.M – 'How often did you spend your school holiday with your grandparents on your mother's side?';Proximity.M – 'During my childhood my grandparents on my mother's side lived'; DirectCr.M – 'How often did your grandparents on your mother's side babysit with you when you were ill?'

Parent-Child Resemblance Scale. 10 items were used as observed variables in confirmatory factor analyses to depict the pattern of observed variables for higher ordered latent constructs: 'Father-Child resemblance' and 'Mother-Child resemblance' (Figure 2). Model parameters: Comparative Fit Index (CFI) =.84; Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) = .79; Test statistic = 586.219; df = 34; p-value (Chi-square) < .001; Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) = .085. All the pathways showed significant p(> |z|) < .001, except correlation Mother Resemblance ↔ Father Resemblance, p(> |z|) = .193; B = .047).

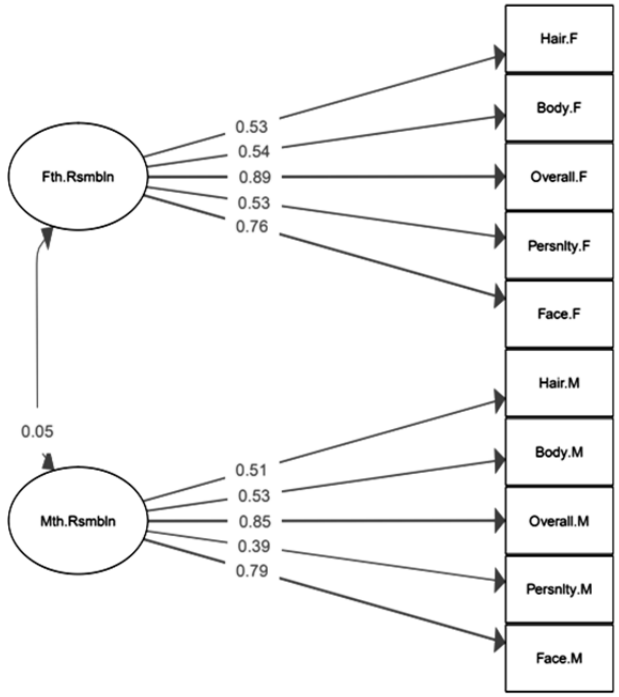

Fig. 2. Confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) for Latent variables results: Parent-child resemblance constituting two domains: Father-child resemblance (upper construct) and Mother -child resemblance (lower construct)

Notes: Model items include: Fth.Rsmbln – father-child resemblance; Hair.F – Hair color and structure resemblance with father; Body.F – Body type resemblance with father; Overall.F – Overall resemblance with a father; Persnlty.F – Personality resemblance with a father; Mth.Rsmbln – mother-child resemblance; Hair.M – Hair color and structure resemblance with mother; Body.M – Body type resemblance with mother; Overall.M – Overall resemblance with mother; Persnlty.M – Personality resemblance with mother.

Parental Efforts Subscales. 8 items were used as observed variables in a CFA procedure to describe the pattern of observed variables for higher-ordered latent constructs: 'Father Effort', 'Mother Effort'. The results of the CFA procedure are represented in Figure 3.

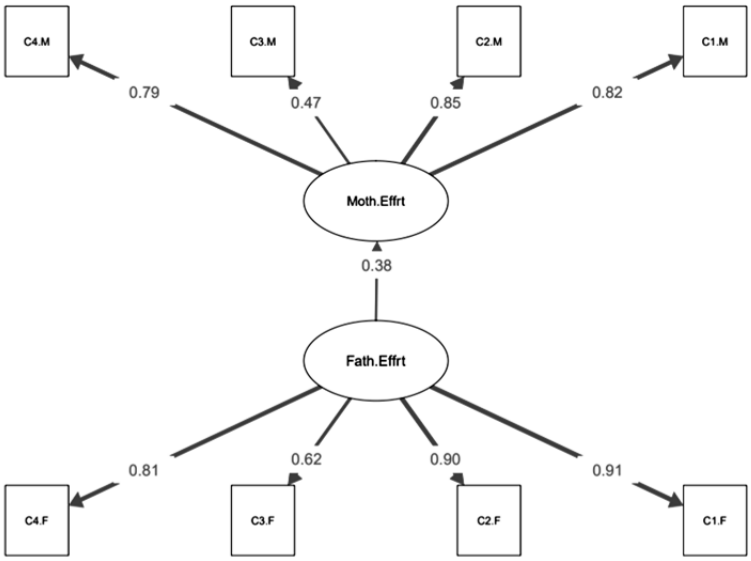

Fig. 3. SEM Parental Effort

Notes: Model items include: Mother helped solve problems (C1.M), maternal emotional support (C2.M), mother allowed learn from mistake (C3.M), amount of care and love that mother gave (C4.M), paternal emotional support (C1.F), father helped solve problems (C2.F), father allowed learn from mistake (C3.F), amount of care and love that father gave (C4.F).

Review Essay

What Could Happen in the Next One Hundred Years?

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Review of *Cybernetic Revolution and Global Aging. Humankind on the Way to Cybernetic Society, or the Next Hundred Years* by Leonid Grinin, Anton Grinin and Andrey Korotayev. Springer, 2024. ISBN 978-3-031-56764-3

'Today, many of us are convinced that the world is in a state of a major change, and the awareness that we are living in a period of transition to something new and unknown, is constantly growing.' It is difficult to disagree with this idea of the authors of the present monograph. However, it is much more difficult to find an answer to the question, which is increasingly worrying many of us: why has humanity reached such a dangerous bifurcation point when technological progress begins to frighten us? And it is even more difficult to answer the questions that interest everyone: What kind of future is awaiting us and will it be better or worse than the present? Which forces are shaping our future? What changes are likely to take place in the near future and by the end of this century, and what dangers threaten us? The authors of this monograph – Leonid Grinin, Anton Grinin and Andrey Korotayev – have made a profound, conscientious and scrupulous attempt to answer these and many other questions. They characterize the past and the present state of the world in many aspects and details, but the monograph is mainly devoted to the future, presenting the analysis

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and descriptions of how and why our world will change in the next hundred years.

Before starting to read this substantial and serious book, a reader may reasonably ask: Why is this book worth devoting time and effort? What is new in it? What distinguishes it? What does it offer that cannot be found in other books? I am pleased to give readers a summary of my reading experiences. First of all, such books are rare, because it is challenging to comprehensively cover vast periods of time in a single approach, combining past, present and future organically. The description covers almost the entire period of the historical process starting from the emergence of Homo sapiens up to the beginning of the twenty-second century.

The authors base their global research on two leading trends of our time and the future – technological and demographic development. These trends are reflected in the title: 'Cybernetic Revolution and Global Aging'. Moreover, it is very important and at the same time unusual that these trends are interrelated, because the authors convincingly demonstrate that global aging is likely to be one of the most important factors affecting technological growth in the near future, as well as why aging will become a driver of the technological process in the coming decades, and then will begin to slow it down.

However, although these two trends are certainly among the most important ones, both today and in the future, there is a surprisingly small number of works that present a consistent forecast of technological development in a systematic and coherent way. The situation is even worse for global aging research. There is a serious lack of systematic research and analysis on this topic. This monograph is one of the few that present the issue of global aging, the impact of social and societal aging on different aspects and spheres of life, society, the World System and our future, in a systematic way and with different scenarios. Thus, the volume fills both gaps, offering a unique combination of intersecting global trends.

The authors provide a broad panorama of the current state and future development of many innovative fields, including breakthroughs in medicine, additive (3D printing), nano-, and biotechnologies, robotics (including drones and driverless vehicles), AI and cognitive technologies, which they group under the term MANBRIC technologies (see below).

Moreover, the monograph touches on other urgent important issues for our present and future, such as: Which occupations may

change radically or even disappear in the future, and why; what advantages and dangers the development of technology will bring in the future; why the modern state will be radically transformed in the next five decades and in what forms; how global aging may threaten democracy; whether the threat of men and women living under the complete control of AI regulatory systems will be realized; is a post-human revolution possible, is the threat of becoming cyborgs real, *etc*.?

The monograph is mainly devoted to forecasts for the next few decades, up to the beginning of the twenty-second century. Of course, there can be several forecasts, but the future will be realized in the singular. Only time will tell which predictions will come true and to what extent. One thing is clear – our tomorrow will be different in many ways from today's lives, but how and in what ways it will be different is, of course, unknown. But is it a complete mystery? A discerning eye may offer a good opportunity to identify trends that are not yet obvious or clear today, but which will reveal themselves and become decisive tomorrow. The authors of this monograph have attempted to present a fairly comprehensive picture of the future. You may or may not agree with it, some may like such a future, and others may be outraged to imagine it. But it is extremely important that this monograph is a rare case of describing the future in such a comprehensive way, in a detailed and systematic manner, touching on aspects that most of us do not think about today. And it is extremely important that the book allows you to think deeply about where mankind is heading. Is it possible to change the course to the future? While the outcome is still unknown today, the authors strive for maximum objectivity, both in showing what concepts, tendencies and trends they base their predictions on, using in-depth historical research to do so, and in objectively assessing these changes.

So, Leonid Grinin, Anton Grinin and Andrey Korotayev share their vision of a cautious optimism regarding what the world will look like in hundred years. As is mentioned above, their view is based on two related phenomena: first the Cybernetic Revolution that will have reached its final phase and penetrate all aspects of everyday and social life in the course of the twenty-first century; second the advancement of the global aging process.

The Cybernetic Revolution is the third crucial technological revolution in the history of humankind. It follows the Agrarian Revolution which lasted from the tenth to the third millennia BC and the Industrial Revolution of the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries.

The Cybernetic Revolution started in the middle of the twentieth century and is still ongoing. The authors expect the final phase of the Cybernetic Revolution to start very soon, in the 2030s, and to end in the 2060s–2070s. During this period, there will appear a large number of technologies that will allow various systems to function without direct human involvement. The authors call such systems self-regulating, since they will become autonomous and will be able to function almost without human control. The most advanced of them can be called self-managing systems. Self-regulating/self-managing systems will become a major part of the technological process and of our entire lifestyle.

The completion of the Cybernetic Revolution will put social and economic life on new grounds. Relying on omnipresent data collection from web service users, smart solutions will replace industrial standards of production and democratic standards of politics. Growing amount of data, permanent feedback and algorithmic procedures to carve out the best possible solutions will pave the way for a new type of techno-social regulation. Random sampling, trial and error will give way to a purely rational way of planning. Today, the transition toward the Scientific-Cybernetic production principle is already manifested in a shift in leading sectors, with medicine, additive, nano, biotech, robotic, information-communication and cognitive technologies as core drivers of change, summarized in the acronym MANBRIC by the authors. They point out the crucial role of medical and health care in implementing self-regulating systems as leading, converging principles of the cybernetic production principle. These trends have been analyzed by the trio in previous works (Grinin and Grinin 2016; Grinin, Grinin and Korotayev 2017), both in historical perspective, tracing the patterns of development from the Agrarian and the Industrial to the Cybernetic Revolution, and with regard to future out-comes. They are further elaborated on the last topical developments in Parts 1 and 3. In this book, the authors underline their prognosis by combining the cybernetic transition with transitions in the field of global demography, in particular global aging.

As has been mentioned above, global aging, an extremely important trend, is equally portrayed in front of a *longue durée* historical analysis of demographic change, which reflects impacts of technological and scientific progress. ‘By 2050, the proportion of the population aged 65 and over will be more than double that of under-five children’, they write (Chs 1, 6 and 7). According to the UN Population Division more than a quarter of the world’s population will be over

65, exceeding the number under 20. The relevance of such a 'demographic crossing' has been widely neglected in prognostic scholarly discourse so far. It will further attribute importance to the Med-Biotech-Cognitive industries complex in order to ensure a decent and healthy life for the growing share of elderly persons. The elderly will promote unprecedented demand for the health complex and stimulate its leading role not only for economic growth, but for the cybernetic way of life in general with its general vector, defined as a 'special medical-biotechnological environment' with 'rapidly expanding opportunities for correction or even modification of human biological nature' (Chs 8, 11, and 15).

The new demographic pattern will trigger a shift from social to generational conflicts, however, affecting the regional as well as the global political order. The authors are convinced of the great possibilities the cybernetic mode of life might offer in life expectancy, quality of life and well-being. In some parts of the text they can hardly hide their enthusiasm with, as the reviewer would call it according to Morozov (2013), 'technological solutionism'. They believe that technological progress would improve human life, as it did in the past. While depicting the chances, they also warn about the dangers, the uncontrolled technological development might lead to, in all fields of social life, including the utopian trend to leave behind the age of Homo sapiens and enter a post-human revolution and age. Although much of the post- or transhuman ideas are still dreams, the authors clearly point out the possibilities to realize them along with the cybernetic transformation, with global aging as an important push-factor to intervene in the biological nature of mankind.

In their Introduction they maintain: 'And although we have no choice but to go forward, the maximum of caution, wisdom, prudence and even some humility before the greatness of the Universe and the world, and deep respect for the heritage left to us by billions of years of biological evolution, are absolutely necessary in order to successfully travel along this path'. The ongoing tension between socio- technological progress and its uncontrollable turn into technocratic, authoritarian societies, where dataism, complete surveillance and cyborgization become dominant, overcoming human dignity, human rights and democratic order, represent one of the leitmotifs of the book.

Grinin, Grinin and Korotayev do not only call for prudence, but they clearly speak out, what the cybernetic accomplishments would look like in case of successful implementation: We would permanent-

ly deliver our data and live under the control of algorithms, artificial intelligence and all sorts of programs that monitor and supervise human performance, including health, body and brain control. Optimized surveillance would affect governance, which is likely to follow the direction and guidance of complexity sciences, instead of gauging interests in democratic decision-making, for the sake of the best compromise. It would affect political freedom, which is likely to be outruled by surveillance capitalism. Last but not least, we – the human beings – might face a major transformation of our existence and undergo a fusion with machines that govern our daily routine. Some techno-freaks cannot await transforming men and women into sexless cyborgs, experimenting with virtual realities or even dreaming of the eternal transplantation of human brain into the collective cyber-space (Harari 2017; Kurzweil 2006). Grinin, Grinin and Korotayev reject such kind of transhumanist phantasies, which they classify as myths. However, the question has to be raised, whether or not their own visions of prolonged, protected and monitored life also risk transcending the entitlements of human rights and individual freedom, represented in the political anthropology of the Enlightenment, and replace it with a technocratic paradigm.

This is why I take note of the authors' cautious optimism with certain reservations. Neither am I convinced of the inevitability of the Cybernetic Revolution to progress in the predicted way nor am I willing to share the entire admiration of smart solutionism and its promise to make life better, more comfortable and happier. I miss more attention to the limits of allegedly self-improving systems and to the contradictions, unintended consequences as well as to individual rejection and public resistance these innovations will generate. These hesitations do not prevent me from highly appreciating the scenarios and forecasts the three authors are delivering in an unprecedented way. The book is structured into 15 chapters, focusing on four big themes: technological transformations, demographic transformations, the prospects of MANBRIC technologies in the forthcoming epoch of self-regulating systems, to culminate in characterizing the Cybernetic Revolution in the light of overall technological progress and aging. A conclusion is taking up the questions of the introduction.

The authors are well aware of the dangers and fallacies of the surveillance regime, resulting from the growth imperative of data extraction on the one hand and the tendency to move from paternalistic betterment to authoritarian control practices. Their main argument is the following: We still live in a period of transition; the Cybernetic Revo-

lution is approaching its final phase, revealing the main features of the future production regime, but it is not yet accomplished. This is why political, legal and ethical regulations must be discussed and implemented now, *i.e*., before the new principle will have acquired dominance. This may include R&D moratoria or restrictions on AI research and provisions, how much competence shall be delegated from political steering to the technological self-regulating imperative. The authors do not whatsoever doubt, that the dynamic to finalize the Cybernetic Revolution is under way and will affect all societal realms until it is fully implemented. The more it is crucial for the years to come to anticipate the social, economic, political and ethical implications and introduce as much regulation as necessary and as much social and democratic control as possible. The authors see that we (human beings) face a difficult choice – to gain something, but in return to lose something. Therefore, the book aims at contributing to find the optimal solution to this dilemma.

Frankly speaking, one has to be aware of the restricted maneuvering space for regulations. Regulations often rather serve as motors of acceleration. According to the authors it is not too late, and their clear descriptions of what technological change and self-regulating systems will presumably look like is an appeal for social and political actors to act now, instead of being overmanned by the pace of progress and its unwanted results.

To make it clear in advance: There is hardly a more precise and comprehensive forecast of how the transformation from industrial to cybernetic capitalism would happen. The authors restrain from using the term ‘capitalism’, however. Although they avoid any categorization of the social order or the property relations for the forthcoming cybernetic age, they seem to perpetuate the operation of the capitalist world-system. The strong influence of machine intelligence, which is going to determine social life in an unprecedented way, will further reduce the autonomy of the individual as well as the political domain. If politics and administration have to adapt to the practical constraints, derived from data analysis, self-regulation and self-management systems, (neo)liberal conceptions of the lean state will become obsolete. This is why the shift to authoritarian forms, or at least the subordination to a technocratic paradigm, is highly probable. Against the reviewer’s rather pessimistic fear, the authors introduce a different trajectory for the future of the World System in the twenty-second century. Without referring to the political label of such a new system, they argue, that

> new demographic and technological system will promote the formation of a new societal type, which can be denoted as the cybernetic society. I will be extremely high-tech society with a stable population size, a very large proportion of the older population and total technological support for societal health and the quality of biological life, achieved by creating of a continuous medical-biotechnological environment (Chs 7 and 15).

In Chapter 6 they plea for a significant change in financial distribution in the direction of increasing the share of benefits and funds allocated to the elderly and disabled people. And in Chapters 13 and 15 they also talk about the fact that a new consumption system will emerge and consumerism will decrease.

Theoretically, the argument of a flattening curve of innovation, economic growth and demographic reproduction, is based on the authors' model of the sequence of production revolutions as well as mathematical operationalizations, elaborated in Chapter 12. More easily comprehensible for those, who do not rely on mathematics, is the age-related change in mentality, the authors deduce from the growing share of old people. Accordingly, an aging population would contribute to lowering the pressure on permanent innovation and consumption by a more conservative, relaxed, less speedy and greedy elder generation, who – at the same time – exercise demand for those existing and novel health and longevity products that represent the chance for growth and investment return. Overall, an optimistic prognosis for a new societal model, that could replace today's global capitalism or reduce the imperative of accumulation.

Today, the dynamics and efforts to introduce a new production principle cannot ignore the fact that the international order is facing major restructuring. The hegemonic role of the West, led by the USA, does not hold out against the changing geography of global commodity chains, that have been transforming developing countries into new sites of manufacture, moving away from low end production to more profitable operations, including R&D in new lead industries. We face successful emerging nations, forging new initiatives and alliances, allowing the Global South to turn into a major force of transformation. In an earlier book, Grinin and Korotayev have been identifying a paradigmatic reversal from the 'Great Divergence', a code for the growing North–South divide since European expansion, toward closing the gap, denominated 'Great Convergence', since the second half of the twentieth century (Grinin and Korotayev 2015). The fact that the po-

litical architecture of international relations does not reflect global economic restructuring including its demographic impacts, has been giving way to serious conflicts; currently (January 2024) they are escalating militarily in Ukraine and in the Near East, with other eventual theaters of war lurking behind the curtain.

Renewal of leading sectors according to the Scientific-Cybernetic Production Principle is intrinsically tied to the changing role of the Global South, which gains momentum in the course of Western warfare, or weapon and logistical supply to war-faring parties. The consolidation of South–South relations supports the endeavors to set up international relations beyond the US-Dollar as the global currency and financial instrument of Western dominance. While at some points the authors' visions seem to resemble Klaus Schwab's and the World Economic Forum's visions of a 'Great Reset' (Schwab and Malleret 2020), the strong commitment to a politically and socially inclusive international order, representing a new societal type, opens new dimensions of a multipolar order beyond Western hegemony and their institutions.

Focusing the prospects for a new role of the Global South in international relations leads back to global demographic issues. On the one hand, the growing share of emerging and developing countries designates these populations to be the consumers of the MANBRIC industries' products. The high-income societies of former industrial countries will not suffice allowing those branches a global breakthrough. On the other hand, Grinin, Grinin and Korotayev can show that economic upgrading will change demographic patterns and turn societies with an overwhelming percentage of young people into aging societies – still young compared to the Global North, but approaching a transition, that will require more and more care, repair, in order to qualify people to stay longer a part of the active workforce, and allow retired people to participate in social life until a much older age.

The prognostic horizon of this book spans hundred years. The type of Big History, that the author-trio represents, does not rely on empirical historical methods only, but on identified patterns of technological, demographic and social development and on their own theories of production revolutions and production principles that cover the entire historical process. This allows them to carry out extrapolations of time-series analyses into the future. They are outstanding experts in this field, including the price, one has to pay when using statistical macro-perspectives, that is losing sight of individual actors or single historical events.

The reviewer was able to make use of the three author's expertise in her own socio-economic analysis of the Corona lockdown period 2020–2022, a relatively short, but more influential historical moment (Komlosy 2022). The lockdowns, contact and movement restrictions came as a shock wave, disrupting social and economic relations by far-reaching closures of the economy, trade, education, travel, cultural and sport events, *etc*. Against all statistical evidence, governments, international health organizations and media constructed a health crisis, turning a fairly curable mass disease with a low mortality risk into a high mortality pandemic. The Corona moment served as a catalyst. It accelerated the implementation of the MANBRIC sectors: digitalization and remote services opened a way for people to take part in social interaction without personal contacts; health products like tests and vaccines were decreed under compulsion as well as subsidized by governments; control and tracking apps gained grounds as did the use of body monitoring to improve lifestyle and health status (Ch. 14).

The Corona moment as a single historical moment served as a prism, in which elements of the ongoing cybernetic transformation showed up in a condensed form. To interpret them beyond the daily grievances, Grinin, Grinin and Korotayev provide the long-range, wide-angle explanatory framework of cyclical sectoral renewal and shift in production principles. It is possible that the predicted transformations toward a cybernetic society would have proceeded, without the accelerating impact of the Corona regimes. History takes its course, like rivers shape their beds. Maybe. Such a perspective does not take into account that Big History is mirrored in Small History. Only if we consider long-term and short-term, event and structure, we can approach the driving forces of history. Therefore, we can assume, as Grinin, Grinin and Korotayev acknowledge in Ch. 4 as well as in previous works (2021), that the disruptive effect of the Corona management accelerated the speeding-up of the Cybernetic Revolution.

Once events are taken seriously, we have to consider unintended consequences, however. In the case of Corona, not only did the measurements pave the way for the acceptance of new health and control regimes, which are at the heart of MANBRIC convergence and the introduction of self-regulating systems of surveillance, health monitoring and control. They also provoked a strong popular sentiment against data expropriation and digital surveillance, giving rise to a mass movement for human self-determination and sovereign conduct of life. This sentiment might change the course, or pace of the cybernetic transformation; it might as well contribute to being more attentive vis-à-vis

the authors' appeal to be vigilant against the dangers of authoritarian takeovers of the cybernetic society.

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