

Department of Anthropology

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Goldsmiths Anthropology Research Papers

**Works in Progress:  
Anthropology Postgraduate Symposium**

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A Collected Volume

Goldsmiths Anthropology Research Papers

Eds: Alison Clark, Frances Pine and Massimiliano Mollona.

The Department of Anthropology at Goldsmiths is one of the newest in Britain, having been formally created in 1985. We are proud of what we have achieved since then, and in particular of the way that people in the Department – students, staff and researchers – have sought to broaden the frontiers of the discipline and to engage critically and creatively with the traditions of anthropology in the contemporary world.

We hope that the Goldsmiths Anthropology Research Papers will provide a platform to communicate some of the work that makes the Goldsmiths Department distinctive. It will include articles by members of academic staff, research fellows, PhD and other students.

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All of the contributors are current Mphil students in the Department of Anthropology. The papers in this volume have been selected from those presented at the 2013 Goldsmiths Anthropology Postgraduate Symposium.

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## Editor's Note

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## 1 | Traces of the Past: Working with Archaeology as Ethnographic Object

### Traces of the Past: Working with Archaeology as Ethnographic Object

In the last decade processes of identification and social recollection have proliferated in relation to the bodies of the Republicans defeated during the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939). These activities have loomed in connection to the recent archaeological and forensic exhumation of the unmarked graves where these remains have lain since the end of the war. After years of silence surrounding these Republican deaths, first during Franco's dictatorship and later during the transition to democracy, these exhumation campaigns promoted by civil society groups have aimed to restore the memories of loss and repression of families and survivors, and seek their public and statist recognition in an unresponsive political climate. In so doing, the mass graves have become a source of information gathering about the conflict, in which scientific interpretations coexist with witnesses' intimate accounts and activists' ideological claims. In 21<sup>st</sup> century Spain, these mass graves of war and postwar crimes have been turned into laboratories of collective knowledge production, where historical exegesis meets familial mnemonic transmission in an effort to reconstruct the country's traumatic past. This paper provides a brief ethnographic account of the intricacies of such exhumation work and its value as a technology of historical and affective repair for the actors involved in the process.

#### *Exhumations in Context*

The first exhumation of a mass grave containing the remains of these war and postwar human remains took place in 2000 in Priaranza del Bierzo, northwest Spain. The exhumation, promoted by Madrid-based journalist Emilio Silva, happened almost by chance. Going back to write a book about his family's village history, Emilio

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contacted an old friend of the family, who knew the area well and who had also known his grandfather closely. This friend shared with Emilio his grandfather's last days before members of the Francoist military and paramilitary groups executed Emilio's grandfather and buried him on the outskirts of a nearby village. As Emilio recalls in his memoirs, a last minute change of plans (Silva 2005: 23) in his interview schedule to research the village's history, led the two men to search for the location of the unmarked grave. After days of inquiry in several villages and following their visits to several clandestine burials and cemeteries they finally found it. A neighbour from area who had witnessed the burial pointed to the site where Emilio's grandfather's body lay, in the middle of the countryside, under a tree. 'I felt an immense emotion', wrote Emilio, 'I walked to the tree and rested my hands on its trunk, as if in that way I could communicate with those men' (Silva 2005, p. 25). Following an article retelling the event in a local newspaper, in which Emilio expressed his wish to exhume the grave and recover his relative's body, Emilio received a call from a member of one of the main forensic and archaeological teams in the country. The team offered to take on the task of the exhumation; they would do it following the most recent scientific methodologies that had become well known to the Spanish public through the images of other post-conflict exhumation endeavours carried out in places like Bosnia, Chile or Argentina. This event would have a decisive impact on Emilio Silva's life and also on the lives of the families of the Republicans defeated in the conflict, who had remained in the shadow of distinct statist politics during the dictatorship and the following transition to democracy in 1975.

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Nonetheless, it has to be said that these were not the first exhumations that had taken place in the country. In the transition years after Franco's death in 1975, many small communities around Spain set out to unearth the remains buried in nearby graves. Mass graves in villages such as Valle de la Serena in the south-western region of Extremadura, were excavated with picks and shovels, with people collecting each bone and sorting them into types; femurs and ulnas, skulls and vertebrae. The villagers in these communities occasionally documented the process of excavation visually as they carried out these exhumations. The excavations were a village affair with little visibility in the national media and hence they had little impact on the rest of the country. Their visibility was also hampered by the lack of support the initiatives of reparation had from the national transitional agenda at the time. In later years, these exhumations stalled after the attempted coup d'état in 1981. Thus, only a few events of this kind are recorded in the 1980s and 1990s, mostly promoted by local socialist governments and their militant cohort.

In stark contrast with these exhumations in the transitional period is the forensic and archaeological intervention in Priaranza del Bierzo which stands out for its orderly disposition of the bodies and spatial situation. The image of these exhumations shows the impact that the scientific methodology had on the organisation and conceptualisation of the grave. In these novel images, numeric characters classified bodies and objects in perfect anatomic connexion, revealing the gruesome reality of their executions. The numerous exhumations that ensued in the following decade, promoted by volunteer associations outside the state legislation until 2007, when the Law of Historical Memory (or Law 52/2007) was approved<sup>1</sup>, would comply with

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<sup>1</sup> The full name of the law is "*Law of 26<sup>th</sup> of December through which the rights and measures in favour of those who suffered persecution or violence during the civil war and dictatorship are recognised*".

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different excavation protocols drafted by the main archaeological teams working in diverse regions of the country. Far from being centralised, each research collective would devise their own excavation and identification strategy which would generally include the collection of witnesses' oral accounts, archival material and the location, exhumation and analysis of the data extracted from the individuals in the grave and burial site itself. These research teams have also used DNA technologies widely for individual identification; however as Congram and Steadman (2008) observed, out of 3000 exhumed bodies only 8% had been identified with such technology at the moment of their study. This is due to difficult access to DNA samples in some cases, as some families are never found due to the lack of medical records about these individuals or simply the bad conservation of the bones. As anthropologist Leyla Renshaw (2010) has remarked, since a DNA match is so difficult to attain, the role of first hand testimonies, personal and public archives, photographs and the like have gained great importance in the work of identification and in connection to the exhumation process. These forms of private and official evidence should be understood as part of a larger assemblage of information production, in which they become directly connected to scientific interpretations, drawings and inventories of the mass graves and the bodies. Through the exhumation practice new ways of talking about the violent past are emerging that help to identify these human remains but most importantly to articulate a dislocated history of their lives and deaths.

##### *Sites of Knowledge Production and Exchange*

During my fieldwork in the region of Extremadura, southwestern Spain, I had the opportunity to investigate the interplay between scientific evidence, other repositories

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and oral accounts. In so doing, I could observe the significant role these technical meanings played in the construction of different political, familial and historical narratives about the past. In Extremadura I collaborated with the main institutional research Project for the Recovery of Historical Memory in Extremadura (PREMHEX) which coordinated four exhumation projects between 2011 and 2012. Simultaneously, I also worked with a number of civil society associations, activists, left wing historians and families of those who had disappeared during the conflict. In the summer of 2011, I participated in my first exhumation organized by a group of third generation activists largely affiliated to the left wing ideology party United Left. The exhumation took place in the village of Castuera, in the province of Badajoz, my hometown. The Association for the Memory of Castuera's Concentration Camp (AMECADEC) promoted the search and excavation of two mass graves with the logistic and technical aid of the institutional PREMHEX and their archeological team, and thanks to funding secured from the Spanish Ministry of the Presidency. This funding was obtained under the government of the Spanish Socialist Party, and before the general election in 2011. With the election of the new centre-right Popular Party, this funding aid, for associations and families and dedicated to Spanish Civil War-related research and exhumation projects, was gradually dismantled. In the summer of 2011, Laura Muñoz, the lead archaeologist and physical anthropologist that would carry out the exhumation project, invited me to participate as a volunteer social anthropologist, to collaborate in the exhumation not only as an observer but also as an active member of the excavation team and to gather oral testimonies.

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Through the research of local historian Antonio López which focuses on the history of the Concentration Camp that existed 3 km away from Castuera, between 1939 and 1940, the association learnt about the existence of multiple mass graves in the village's surroundings. Some testimonies of elderly residents of Castuera, who used to visit their relatives imprisoned in the Camp, revealed their memories of encountering opened dug out holes on the road that led from the village to the Camp, just at the rear of the village cemetery. They remembered how the following day these cavities would be closed, indicating the possible execution and burial of prisoners from the Camp the night before. From the beginning of my research, I observed that many of the exhumations carried out by PREMHEX and others were part not only of an endeavor to return these bodies to the families that claimed them but also of an effort to complete, as I heard on various occasions 'the gaps in the official files and archives'.

That summer, López, who helped to locate the graves, explained to me that he had an interest in compiling a list of all detainees that went through the Camp, for little had been known until then about the how this site of confinement functioned. This was an 'arduous task' he assured me, as the military archive was, in his words, 'fragmented...and full of absences' (interview with Antonio López, Castuera 2011). Other historians, especially from the institutional project, had already expressed to me their frustration with such gaps and 'inaccuracies' found in death sentences, prison and Camp reports and death certificates. According to the experience of these researchers, one could infer that these military and historical depositories were other spaces of contention, where the oppressive presence of the dictatorial regime could still today have a decisive impact on contemporary actions. Moreover, as these

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historians ascertained, the state of decay and disarray of these public information avenues impeded a reconstruction of the history of the Camp. It seemed then that the impulse behind the exhumation was also triggered by the search for a certain truth about the past that was concealed in such official archives. Incomplete documents, ambiguous descriptions about the deaths of the defeated (for example, ‘prisoner died as a result of a severe hemorrhage’) or lists of missing prisoners inflicted the feverish quality, to borrow Derrida’s trope, into these stagnant statist devices of past evidence accretion.



*Archaeological Work in the Mass Grave, Castuera 2011*

The archaeological project in Castuera aimed to excavate the cavities of these unmarked graves as much as the depths of Franco’s repositories. Two mass graves were exhumed during the archaeological intervention in 2011. Eighteen individuals were found in the first mass grave, Mass Grave 1, whilst the second, Mass Grave 3, contained the remains of three bodies. Whilst the bodies in the first mass grave were thought to be a group from the Camp, those in the latter belonged to a later period in

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the postwar years. Even though the remains in both areas were unknown to the association and the historians, they shed light on the characteristics of the irregular repression employed in connection to Camp prisoners and other individuals. These bodies were also unknown to other families from Castuera that were then still searching for the remains of their relatives in the village. These families, who were close to the association, visited the team at the grave everyday. Many of them agreed that the exhumation provided them with a space that brought them nearer to their own missing relatives. Unlike other exhumation sites around the world; for example Bosnia, where, as Maja Petrović-Šteger (2008, p.54) has observed, some *early* exhumation procedures promoted by the International Commission of Missing Persons (ICMP) ‘excluded [locals] from professional processes of remains’ retrieval’); exhumations in Extremadura (and elsewhere in Spain) have had a strongly intimate character from the beginning. Exhumation processes in Spain have been performed in close collaboration with families and other local community members at every step of the historical research, location and excavation work. This ultimately rendered the exhumation site a space of confluence between archaeological practices and local and familial personal expressions, where scientific action intertwined with the ubiquitous presence of relatives and village onlookers.

In Castuera, families often walked around the burial site, observing the archaeologist’s work and sitting next to the team retelling personal stories, usually first-hand and transmitting emotive memories and anecdotes, in connection to the deceased, the war and their own postwar experience. Indeed, the space of the mass grave became a site of intimate recollection. In addition, other types of personal documents and images were often brought to the site. Images of the missing were

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often shared and circulated for volunteers and archaeologists to see. For the volunteers, these had a powerful effect. In the case of a young woman with whom I worked during my time in the region, these visual props were compelling. As she explained to me, ‘...through these images, we can put a face to the bodies we excavate’ (volunteer, Castuera 2011). Likewise, these orphan bodies and their objects provoked strong emotions in the families that would possibly never find the human remains of their own relatives. Each encounter became a reason for hope. A pair of boots, a pencil, a lighter, a flask, a comb, the wire that tied the bodies together... These were often examined by each family member with a desire to find a hint, a form of evidence that would lead them to the remnants of their dead. Most certainly, these bones and artifacts were not dormant anymore. Their physical presence made people do, tell and feel things. Through the exhumation work, the materials of the mass grave became *actants* with a capacity to mobilize the political, cultural and familial worlds of the living (Fontein 2010). It is in these opened spaces that one can recognize the multiple affective potentials that these non-human actors, reminders of state-induced violence, gained in contact with the human agents (Latour 2005a) and their diverse subjectivities.



*Combs, Syringes and a Wallet: Measuring Archaeological Materials*

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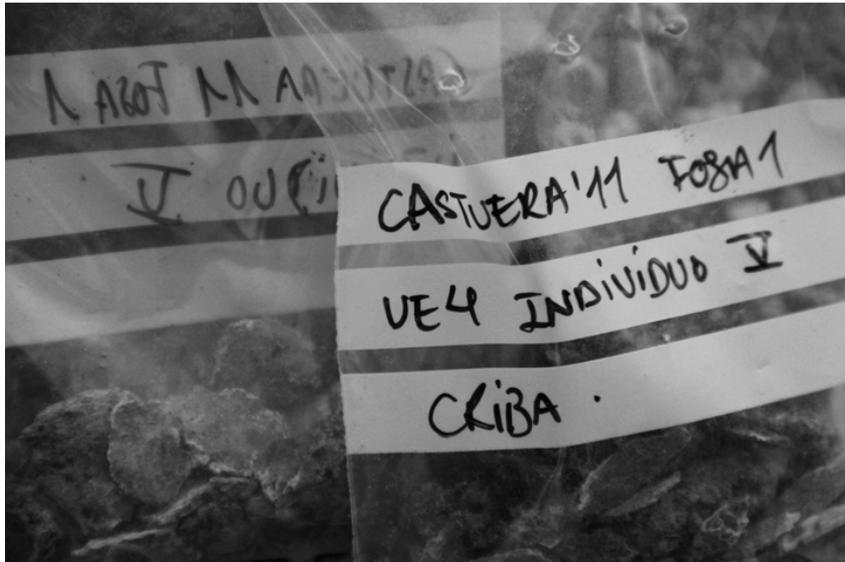
These constant exchanges defined the atmosphere of the exhumation, rendering the excavation site a space of boundless epistemic interaction. There, the traumatic narratives from families and the demands of activists became entangled with forms of forensic and archaeological interpretation. Archaeological action comforted long processes of individual mourning but also relied on this familial knowledge about the past to make sense of the materiality of the grave. The knowledge of older members of the community especially was often sought in order to identify the types of objects that appeared, the history of the war in the village and the history of its neighbors. Information, however, also travelled in the other direction. Families, neighbors and activists also began to gradually adopt the idioms of scientific language, the descriptions of the space of the mass grave and the terms that emerged from the first pre-mortem and post-mortem analysis of bones and artifacts. The presence of these exhumation technologies provided a different image to that of the first excavations, during the transitional period, to democracy after Franco's death from 1975 onwards.

During the three months of the exhumation, visitors at the site frequently admired the treatment of the remains, the care with which each bone and object were uncovered, handled and stored. It was commonplace to see archeologists and volunteers photographing and registering each coordinate to situate the bodies and their possessions in space. Hand crafted inventories and field reports were compiled for each 'individual', as archaeologists and volunteers referred to each skeleton.

*Individuo I, Individuo II, Individuo III*, their identities, at all times, conceptualized through these forms of scientific address. The scientific classification, organization and later representation of these bodies on digitalized mass grave maps did not seem

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so far removed from the taxonomic work developed in other types of historical archives. As the historians sought the traces of past histories in the conflicted documents of official repositories, participants in the exhumation found other materials that were in direct conversation with these conflicted records.



*Bags with Remains from the Mass Grave*

### *Conclusion*

During my time in Castuera, the exhumation site acted as place of encounter between different collectives, and the grave as one between the human and non-human. The site, imbued with the unsettling qualities and material traces of the repressive past, became a vital space of familial, scientific and historical *enunciation* and *enactment* in which distinct types of information about the past conferred and collided. It was a place where different affects were performed and transgenerational forms of trauma manifested. Like a magnet, it attracted the untold stories and emotions of those who suffered the prolonged consequences of the conflict, their memories of loss and the expression of historical understandings and anxieties. The day Emilio Silva unearthed the remains of his grandfather in northern Spain marked a turning point in the way the

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Spanish past was to be remembered and recalled in the present. The exhumation was that critical event (Das 1995) which transformed the presence of the historical past in the present. It propelled unspoken accounts into the open at the beginning of decade, progressively making things public, in Latour's words (2005b), and challenging the legacy of old political pacts of silence. In the present, official and private narratives, personal artifacts and documents, images and memorabilia intermix with scientific methods and forms of data recording and collecting, turning these ephemeral sites of knowledge exchange into substantial sites of information assembly and compelling alternative archives *in formation*.

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## **Researching Corruption; Theory and Practice**

My PhD research is on the travel visa industry in London. From embassy to Multi-national Corporation, the visa industry acts as a broker through the vagaries of culturally distinct bureaucracies. It functions as one of the veils of capitalism, a functional and discrete alternative to 'applying directly'. By utilising esoteric systems of knowledge and a variety of informal networks from embassy to embassy those in the industry can provide a fast and effective negotiation through the pitfalls of overly rationalised and esoteric systems, many of which retain the legacy of colonial era administrations. However this niche industry is now changing, the growth in embassies using outsourced privatised application centres and the emergence of large multinational visa agencies who are effectively attempting to corner the market has given rise to new and interesting tensions. From its history of travel agency side-line via arms industry slush funds to surveillance profiteers, this industry provides examples of both how practices and relationships at a micro-level function to maintain the spigot of profit for nations and organisations around the world.

In order to prepare myself for fieldwork it has been necessary to review existing research around corruption, bureaucracy, informality, and surveillance. In this paper I will focus on one of these areas, corruption, and will discuss various ethnographic approaches to researching corruption with an emphasis on understanding corruption in relation to legal and cultural frameworks in bureaucratic environments. I will then argue that attempts to classify corruption in legal terms suffer from certain limitations; in this case my concern is with the definitions of corruption that are used in academia as a starting point for framing corruption within bureaucratic environments. These definitions are concerned with the abuse of power and position that place individual actors as being problematic rather than the rational systems they operate in. The limitations of such an approach can deflect attention away from the institutional mechanisms that arguably cause certain facets of

corrupt behaviours to arise. Of interest here is the relation between the commodification of technical laws, the selective framing of social behaviours as aberrations and the use of informal networks, at all social levels, to negotiate bureaucratic regimes.

Many recent texts on corruption use the World Bank's definition which is simply 'the abuse of public office for private gain' (World Bank 2001, Sissener 2001, p.4, Smith 2007, p.44, Anders & Nuijten 2007, p.6-8). This definition can be traced back to Joseph Nye's 1967 definition which is; '[c]orruption is behaviour which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private regarding [personal, close family, private clique] pecuniary or status gains; or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence.' (Nye 1967, p.419). Nye's attempt to create a universal definition of corruption is overly concerned with bureaucracy and notions of transparency regarding the governance of state institutions.

In most of the literature and ethnographic examples that I draw on, the perceived lack of depth in this definition functions as a kind of counter-example. This definition frequently appears in anthropological literature when discussing its constraints versus the myriad subtleties of informal and corrupts behaviours that are encountered in the field. The definition has become a kind of shorthand for a narrow institutional way of theorising about the phenomena of corruption, that people can use a marker against the depth of their own experiences. Yet it also reflects unease with the dominant presence of political scientists and economists in this domain (Anders & Nuijten 2007, p.6). The World Bank paper (2001) referenced is not quite as 'thin' in its description of forms of corruption as may possibly be surmised from my criticism of it presented here, nevertheless it frames the issue of corruption in a narrow and potentially problematic way. The World Bank's definition of corruption places corruption and its causes as something that must be understood in the context of a nation state's bureaucratic civil society, ciphered through the lenses of politics and law in both western and non-western states. The central problem with this is that it makes an

assumption about the human element being the aberration in the rationalising mechanisms of bureaucratic control. Its focus is that it is the people in such a system that are the problem and not the system itself that is flawed. I would like to argue that this is not always the case and sometimes it is the problems inherent in the rationalising mechanisms of the system that can be the reason for corrupt or informal practices. As Maurizio Bovi (2003) has remarked, economic fraud towards the state is performed only when the citizen does not see a real advantage in playing correctly (Bovi 2003, p.60-61). In order to aid negotiation of the 'rigid' rules of the bureaucracy, people will bring to bear a variety of cultural and informal practices, to help tactically and strategically access services they require.

These myriad transgressions between formal and informal cultural practices during these bureaucratic negotiations highlight the paradoxical and ambiguous relationship between 'legality and illegality, secrecy and publicity' (Anders & Nuijten 2007, p.19). For my research, of particular importance in analysing this formal/informal flexibility has been Pashukanis' (1925) essay on law and its isomorphism to commodity forms. Pashukanis posits that both laws and commodities are ideological abstractions that can obscure objective social relationships but also that under certain conditions they become integrated into social relations so that social relations assume a legal character (Pashukanis 1925, p.58). These notions of inter-legality can be elucidated to a more nuanced understanding of the legal and illegal characteristics of state and corporate bureaucracies, with which definitions derived from Nye (1967) are often concerned. A lot of corrupt relations in bureaucracies draw on interactions based on power asymmetries between various hierarchically positioned persons. Which in certain respects do fit into those influenced by Nye's (1967) institutional frame, regarding dishonesty and abuse of privilege. But these asymmetrical interactions may also be due to incompetent persons or broken bureaucratic systems whereby people seek to circumvent the unfair or malfunctioning systems in some informal manner. In which case, is it still corruption?

For this reason bureaucratic corruption contains many contextual idiosyncrasies, and defining it in such simplistic terms can be a problematic endeavour, as I hope the following ethnographic examples will show. In this regard anthropological and sociological methods have a plurality of approaches in terms of de-constructing and theorising about corrupt practices. This paper is geared towards a dialogue about whether it is possible (or desirable) to create a universal definition that provides a useful, reflexive and workable framework in terms of classifying corruption and informality for anthropologists. Italo Pardo argues for studying these sorts of interactions in an empirical manner rather than searching for the roots of corruption in some form of 'cultural disposition' (Pardo 2004, p.5). Which, in the face of a plurality of cultural conventions that are often used to justify certain corrupt or informal practices, becomes important to keep in mind, in order to avoid the pitfalls of essentialist or overly deterministic cultural classifications. Corruption is a constantly shifting phenomenon and while some aspects of its forms are presented in terms of cultural values, its conceptualisation is also effected by personal interest, socio-economic status and 'the significance of corrupt behaviours that are not strictly illegal and of the *individual moralities* underlying such behaviours' (Ibid, p.2 my italics). In my own dealings with oil workers and multinationals the presentation of a particular nationality, ethnic or social group as being inherently corrupt, even in official corporate correspondence, is a common occurrence. It shapes the attitudes of foreign workers towards their host countries in such a way that the expectation of routinized corruption encourages and structures their behaviours and transactions to be by default corrupt even if this behaviour would not be tolerated in their home country. Imbalances of power and money can compound this effect so that they may subvert or undermine efforts to control bureaucratic corruption in that society or state. Therefore the first issue in the ethnographic study of corruption is to account for the myriad complexity of 'this phenomenon at the levels of official and non-official normative systems' (Ibid, p.5). In this regard Pardo puts forward two key considerations when researching corruption; the first is to investigate the diverse motivations of those 'who undertake

such actions at both ends of the exchanges’, whether those persons do so on ‘their own initiative or because they feel they have no alternative’ (Ibid, p.5). The second is to ‘account for the ways in which corruption is talked about among the corrupt’, whether they are operating within the law or outside of it and how that is relative ‘to the rest of the population’ (Ibid p.5).

Challenging these orthodox assumptions and justifications for corrupt practices is crucial to unpicking both contemporary and historical motivations and mechanisms that contribute to the existence of informal practice and its uglier relation, corruption. I use the term informal in lieu of corruption more often; it is less judgemental, broader, more flexible, and helps delineate between formal and informal economies, institutions and their different practices and methods. But it also has flexibility in moving across theoretical approaches. By calling someone corrupt you imply illegality and immorality which can be a problematic especially if you want to research the area within which they operate.

Keith Hart originally used informality to describe the wide range of informal income opportunities in Ghana in 1973 and it has become a kind of umbrella term for a wide range of descriptors: such as non-observed, irregular, unofficial, second, hidden, shadow, parallel, subterranean, grey, black, cash economy, unmeasured, unrecorded, untaxed, non-structured, petty production, and un-organized (Hart 1973, p.68-70). A more recent use of the term appears in Alena Ledeneva's analysis of the ineffectiveness of the rule of law in Russia and the prevalence of informality that both weakens and paradoxically supports state economic and juridical institutions (Ledeneva 2006, p.10-13 and 22-27). A similar point is also made by Josiah Heyman and Alan Smart, who discuss the conditions under which governments and illegal practices begin to enjoy some variety of symbiosis (Heyman & Smart 1999, p.4-8). Ledeneva's argument is not that the rule of law is absent, but rather the ability of the rule of law has been subverted by a powerful set of unwritten practices that have grown ‘organically’ in the post-soviet milieu (Ledeneva 2006, p.9). Building on Pierre Bourdieu's

field theory and on his ideas of how actors in a social field negotiate the rules of the game, Ledeneva also uses Douglass North's approach to informal and formal rules. Essentially asserting that they are two polar points along a spectrum with formal institutional behaviours at one end and informal behaviour at the other (Ibid, p.19-20). In addition she uses a set of unwritten rules which are essentially a form of habitus that apply to informal practices in Ledeneva's Russian examples, central to which is the system of 'Blat' -the widespread use of personal networks to obtain goods and services in short supply (prevalent during Soviet era) (Ibid, p.14-16). For Ledeneva this is a classic example of unwritten rules, which structured exchanges according to which resources from the formal distribution system were siphoned into informal networks, for example petrol from one person one week with a hook in an official channel, paid for by meat or building materials the next from another (Ibid). Ledeneva discusses how an informant described *blat* succinctly, saying 'do not have 100 roubles, do have 100 friends' (Ibid, p.104). Of course, friends and roubles are not mutually exclusive by any means as Ledeneva provides a striking set of examples derived from the role of the state as a major shareholder in many large corporations. Showing the prevalence of insider deals as a method of state asset disposal, while other opaque corporate governance arrangements have proliferated (Ibid, p.25-27). Ledeneva argues that these insider deals are impossible to decode or map without understanding the logic of these 'unwritten rules' and that unwritten rules have also played a part in regulating non-monetary exchanges, such as 'barter chains' that redistribute income among an inner circle, as well as among firms and their multiple subsidiaries, such influence has revolutionised informal practices of 'give-and-take' and provided them with a seemingly legal form (Ibid).

Abel Polese in his analysis of the Ukrainian public health and education sectors whilst starting from the same point as Ledeneva's critique makes specific reference to Maussian gift theory in the nature of how favours and obligations have come into effect specific instances. In his case studies of Ukrainian Hospital and University institutions (Polese 2009). Polese points out that while these

institutions ostensibly *should* be state managed 'their organisation is so peculiar it is difficult to see them as public' seeing as the staff, doctors, nurses, teachers and professors, who work in them earn such a small salary that they are dependent upon gifts of money from the students and patients who use or require their services (Ibid, p.2). Here we can also see the common theme of informality drawn from Hart's (1973) assertion that the informal system supports the formal one. Polese argues that these gifts of money, while fitting into the Nye and World Bank's (1967/2001) definitions of corruption, cannot really be seen as 'bribes'. Although Polese is also concerned with morality, specifically how the imposition of a Western institutional morality as narrowly framed by the Nye and World Bank (Ibid) definitions, does not take into account the subtleties of how the Ukrainian state has failed to provide basic services for its people and that bribing for essential services is a necessity for the overwhelming majority of the population (Polese 2008, p.12-16). To back this assertion he de-constructs the role of a bribe, which is perceived to be an impersonal transaction, into one that can have significant personal investment between both the giver and receiver. This turns the bribe into a more ambiguous gift-bribe hybrid, moving from being merely a payment for a particular service to also being tokens of appreciation in a reciprocal relationship, in this case for medical services and university level teaching. Polese, in noting that the distinction between gift and bribe is ambiguous and context dependent, proposes the creation of a third category he calls a 'brift' (Ibid 2008, p.4-6). Polese recommends that when dealing with corruption and gift giving in institutionalised and bureaucratic settings, attention should first be paid to analysis of the context of corruption with regard to provision of services and how that relates to cultural understandings and concepts of morality and gift giving. Secondly, that the researcher should be aware that this fluid border between bribing and gift giving can host some interesting hybrid phenomena. His case studies, especially where university students pay their professors because they have trouble passing exams required for a job, particularly outlines the moral and practical ambiguities that occur when bureaucratic institutions begin to malfunction and informality and corruption sets in (Ibid, p.7-9).

This theme of bribes for services is inverted in Jonathan Parry's paper on the Crisis of Corruption in India, a federal state where corruption is generally held to be widespread and 'endemic', a term in this case freighted with pathological discourses of 'sick' economies needing periodic 'fixes' (Parry 2000, p.28-30). Parry looks at the informal market for jobs in the Bhilai Steel Plant, and how a job there with its generous benefits is perceived to be so desirable by residents of the industrial town that there is marketplace for its job applications, where money is paid to informal brokers who promise to ensure that people are placed on desirable applicant lists (Ibid, p.30-36). Parry notes that as he was never directly asked for a bribe, what he writes about the subject relates to what people *say* about bribery and corruption (Ibid, p.29), an important distinction to make when researching corruption, as it is popularised by hearsay. This is really the crux of Parry's article, that the brokers for the jobs do equally well in terms of payment even if the steel plant's recruitment scheme is not corrupted. Corruption thrives on publicity as well as secrecy (Ibid, p.37).

It is also important to consider the literature on corruption in Nigeria, a state where corruption is seen to be endemic by Nigerians themselves. Nigeria is an interesting case in many respects, historically its bureaucratic institutions were imposed colonially by the British and have become heavily politicised, where systems of patronage and political manoeuvring have been rampant for decades and much public money for services ends up in the pockets of bureaucrats and officials. Chinua Achebe's novel 'Man of the People' (1966), a fictional account of the rise of a school teacher in the political system in a fictional West African nation that cannot really be anywhere else but Nigeria, is a work about how patronage and corruption are horrifying to the protagonist but gradually due to social pressures and rivalry he succumbs to its temptations and becomes a powerful and corrupt political patron in his own right. The novel touches on an important theme, one which Daniel Jordan Smith makes in his book 'A Culture of Corruption: Everyday Deception and Popular Discontent in Nigeria' (Smith 2007). Smith argues that in countries where informality for social provision is crucial and corruption is endemic, it is still commonly felt by many people

that it is morally wrong but the social pressure to not get left behind often overrides any moral resistance or imperative to it (Ibid, p.40-47). Here it is also important to remember the influence of multinational companies, in Nigeria's case oil companies, who work to keep political elites happy.

What these various ethnographies reveal is that the line between legal and illegal whilst being seen to be clear and definitive is, in actual practice, ambiguous and subject to resourceful manipulation. (Heyman & Smart 1999, p.11). I believe that large institutional definitions are often market centred, not focused on social norms or public interest but reflecting a singular institutional conception of corruption specifically to bureaucratic management. It is important to consider the size of the informal economy, the abilities of bureaucratic institutions (public or private) to manage provision of services and whether they are malfunctioning or not. Even in places where corruption is seen as endemic it may be prudent to assume that it is not occurring in all instances. Through considering these various ethnographies on corruption it is possible to then consider the question, is it possible to create a usable universal definition of corruption? I am not sure it is appropriate to have a universal definition, as the plurality of practices, cultural or otherwise, even when looking at corruption in relation to bureaucratic encounters, means a single universal rule will never be entirely workable or applicable. Thus we should recognise that whilst some forms of corruption may be globally isomorphic to others, when thinking about abuses of office for private gain, a robust ethnographic approach can provide much richer information about the ambiguities of power and process that affect people's relationships to practices that are designated corrupt or informal. Finally, as in so much ethnographic work, it is often what is *not* said that can be the most revealing. In that sense this literature review highlights a gap in anthropological research on corruption in western countries, particularly ethnographies on corruption, informality and the sort of personal networks that structure institutional dealings and bureaucratic management in many western states. Thus my PhD research will seek to address and contribute to this gap in the literature.

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## **Developing Ethiopia: an Historical Perspective**

One of the key contentions of an influential ethnography of an Indian rural development project is that development policy works as much to maintain systems of representation as to bring about the results that are supposedly its aim (Mosse, 2005). Rather than directing action, it builds a community of experts and adherents to articulate a self-supporting discourse, meaning that 'the gap between policy and practice [is] constantly negotiated away' (Mosse, 2006, p. 940) after the fact. In this paper, I am going to extend this insight from the micro level of an individual project to an overview of modern Ethiopian history. I will argue that international representations of Ethiopia have played an important role in how the 'development project' has been conceived and implemented in the country since the mid-twentieth century. In addition I will argue that successive governments have both resisted and utilised these representations in carrying out their own development policies.

Whether visiting, living in, or reading about contemporary Ethiopia, it is impossible to avoid discourse on 'development'. Although Esteva deemed the word 'doomed to extinction' twenty years ago (1992, p. 6), the concept and the interventions that follow its multiple logics have expanded exponentially to become a significant and indispensable part of the national landscape in countries such as Ethiopia, where more than a third of the total annual budget (c. US \$3bn) consists of development aid (Dereje, 2011, p. 788). The ends towards which this aid is directed are currently the source of escalating confrontation between Ethiopia's ruling party, the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Party (EPRDF), and its international 'partners', revealing deep disjunctures in how different modes of development are understood and conflict over who controls its representation. Using a recent survey of the relationship between the Ethiopian government and aid donors (Dereje, 2011) as a starting point, I will

place current development practices in historical context by considering connections to the mid-1930s, when Ethiopia was invaded and occupied by Italy and 'development' was employed as a justification for what the fascist government characterised as a 'modernising mission that would deliver the Africans from backwardness, slavery and chaos' (Ben-Ghiat, 2001, p. 126).

This paper is based on secondary and historical sources rather than personal ethnographic experience, and therefore takes a largely elite-centred and broad view. My own research will look at what happens at village level when an imported programme promoting sanitation and hygiene, which aims to produce 'empowered' self-governing citizens, meets the indigenous model of development that I will discuss below. At the same time I will look at the history of sanitation as a means of forming citizens in the colonial and industrialising worlds. I will consider how this plays out in the contemporary Ethiopian context, in order to counter the 'historical emptiness and ... intense focus on the future' (Quarles van Ufford, Giri and Mosse, 2003, p. 13) that constitute part of development's distinctive mode of operating.

In 1896, under Emperor Menelik, Ethiopia defeated Italy at the Battle of Adwa. Italy attacked from neighbouring Eritrea, which they had colonised in 1890, but suffered heavy casualties and national humiliation that 'remained vivid in national memory' (Falasca-Zamponi, 1997, p. 166) throughout the first third of the twentieth century. After the lingering death of Menelik in 1913 and a power struggle for the throne that lasted until 1930, Haile Selassie was crowned as the absolute ruler, or 'king of kings' and consolidated his power through the 1931 Constitution, which was partly intended 'to impress on Europeans Ethiopia's political modernity' (Bauru, 2001, p. 141). From 1932, partly encouraged by regional colonial power Britain's tacit endorsement of Italy's political ambitions (Bauru, 2001, p. 152), Italy prepared

to attack Ethiopia and invaded in October 1935, using the contrived Walsall border incident as a pretext. Earlier that same year, the *London Evening Standard* ran a series of articles characterising the government of Haile Selassie as cruel and despotic. The articles mirrored contemporary Italian media by prominently emphasising the institution of slavery, despite domestic legislation banning it having been enacted in the 1920s. In an article entitled 'We can applaud Italy', novelist Evelyn Waugh wrote: 'Ethiopia is a barbarous country that is capriciously and violently governed. The conquest of Abyssinia is an object which any patriotic European can applaud. Its accomplishment will be of service to the world' (1935, in Gallagher, 1996, p. 163). This echoed Mussolini who stated his aim as civilising an inferior country, freeing 'populations who for millennia have been at the mercy of [a] few blood-thirsty and rapacious leaders' (quoted in Falasca-Zamponi, 1997, p. 175). Waugh went on to report from Ethiopia for the *Daily Mail* in 1935 and 36 during Italy's invasion, and described in florid language how Italy's road-building programme would allow the 'eagles of ancient Rome' (1936, p. 253) to import qualities of industry and rationalism, which alone could develop the country.

Foremost in opposition to this position in the UK was suffragette and campaigner Sylvia Pankhurst, who, from 1934, espoused the Ethiopian cause with great passion and became a stalwart defender of Haile Selassie's government. She set up an organising committee and a newspaper – the *New Times and Ethiopia News*, which described itself as Britain's Anti-Fascist weekly – held fundraising events and energetically lobbied parliament. The Ethiopian government's problem, she believed, was lack of access to credit. In an undated article from the mid-1930s, she writes that: 'if [Ethiopia's] Government were convinced that if money could be borrowed on fair terms, entailing no unpleasant political obligations, it would gladly do so to speed up development.' (*Abyssinia*, no date, p. 2).

Refusing to borrow money did not forestall 'unpleasant political obligations' however: when Italy crossed the Marab River from Eritrea onto Ethiopian territory without a formal declaration of war, the League of Nations stood by without acting, although Ethiopia had been a sovereign member nation since 1923. The Hoare-Laval pact, secretly signed by Britain and France in December 1935, was intended to give Italy control over large parts of Ethiopia and economic influence over most of the rest. The pact failed after public outcry – stoked in large part by Pankhurst herself – but by early 1936, Ethiopia could no longer hold off the advances of the Italian army. In June it was officially declared as part of the territory of Italian East Africa, along with Eritrea and southern Somalia.

British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain publicly withdrew support for the League of Nations, saying that the policy of collective security had been tried and had failed, but disavowed Britain from any blame for the failure. Pankhurst was outraged and described the many ways, both through action and inaction, in which Chamberlain's government did not live up its commitment to protect fellow members of the League. In *Make the League of Nations genuine*, she shows interesting foresight into the growth of development, stating, 'Our Government refused permission for Ethiopia to float a public loan [in Britain] until the war had gone so far against her that only philanthropists would be willing to invest.' (no date, p. 4). This overview of the historical circumstances leading to Italy's occupation of Ethiopia brings up a number of issues that resonate with the current ubiquity of 'development' in Ethiopia and its contested meaning. Firstly, as the quotes from Pankhurst show, concerns around aid conditionality and national sovereignty, over what development means and how it should happen, have a long history prior to current disputes between donors and the Ethiopian government. This relates to Mosse's point that control over representations of 'the

development project' allows for 'the gap between policy and practice [to be] constantly negotiated away' (2006, p. 940).

Aid conditionality on donor-approved development policy is a political hot potato in Ethiopia. Dereje maintains that donor control over domestic policy-making has been much more limited in Ethiopia than in many other African countries, in part because the previous Derg government did not accrue a large national debt in the 1980s (2011, p.800). This meant that the EPRDF did not accede to the structural adjustment policy demands of multilateral donors in terms of liberalising the financial market and privatising land or telecommunications, all of which remain state owned. The late Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's international reputation as an intellectual heavyweight (for example, as leader of the UK's Commission for Africa and friend of Joseph Stiglitz), Ethiopia's strategic geopolitical positioning as a reliable ally of the west against Islamic fundamentalism, and its history of resistance to colonisation 'which is enshrined in the collective memory of the nation and strongly informs the country's international relations' (Dereje, 2011, p. 800), also play a part in improving Ethiopia's negotiating position in terms of the 'unpleasant political obligations' that Pankhurst identifies as accompanying accepting money from others.

The aim of Ethiopia's current ruling party, in power since it overthrew the communist Derg regime in 1991, is to bring about revolutionary (*abyotawi*) democracy. The political system involves a hierarchical model of civic participation, in which development is seen as a reciprocal obligation, enforceable by the state, and 'political sovereignty resides in collectivities' defined as ethnic groups or 'nations, nationalities and peoples' (Dereje, 2011, p. 809). This ideology has Marxist-Leninist origins, adapted during the period of struggle against the Derg in the late 1970s and 1980s from its original roots in the revolutionary

student movement of the 1960s and 70s, during which both the Derg and the predecessors of the EPRDF emerged in opposition to the rule of Emperor Haile Selassie. While most African socialist-revolutionary movements adopted political and economic liberalism post-Cold War, EPRDF's *abyotawi* democracy is 'an original ideological innovation' (Bach, 2011, p. 642) that operates as 'a "bricolage" [of] ... Leninism, Marxism, Maoism, and also liberalism' (Bach, 2011, p.641), although ostensibly being in opposition to liberal principles. A number of state practices reflect its Marxist-Leninist background, including cadres of party activists at village and sub-village level, five year planning processes, communal self-evaluation exercises, mass associations, and state ownership of land (although it is increasingly leased by the state to international capital). Since 2003, this model of development has delivered solid economic growth. Although disputed by the opposition and some economists, the EPRDF claims double digit growth in recent years and the head of the UK's Department for International Development says that 'it is indisputable that tremendous growth has taken place in the Ethiopian economy' (Taylor, quoted in Dereje, 2011. p. 793). Despite expansion of the private sector, two thirds of the economy is controlled by the government, and by extension the ruling party, through nationalised and parastatal enterprises (IDS, 2012, p. 3).

Much of the politicisation of development in Ethiopia revolves around human rights discourse. The government explicitly rejects the human rights framework within which much aid is designed and in 2009, they passed a new law, the Charities and Societies Proclamation, to regulate civil society. It specifically bans any form of human rights advocacy except by 'national' organisations, defined as raising at least 90% of their funding from within the country and 'all of whose members are Ethiopians' (FDRE, 2008, p. 3). This law, which has been enforced by a newly-created government agency since 2010, was part of the process of consolidating ruling party power following the disputed and violent elections of 2005 and the

government's accusations that NGOs were involved in illegally passing funds to opposition parties and are 'a means for "parasitism" and "rent-seeking"' (Dereje, 2011, p. 805). The result of this consolidation can be seen in the 2010 elections, in which the government won 99.6% of the vote, and in the massive expansion of party structure at the grassroots level. In advance of the 2008 local elections, local council members increased from around 600,000 to about 3.5 million and party membership has leapt from around 760,000 in 2005 to over 5 million in 2010 (Tronvoll, 2010, p. 132).

The NGOs that the government is aiming to control with the CSO law are the local and international humanitarian and development organisations, almost totally funded from outside the country, and heavily engaged and influenced by international development modalities. Ethiopia also has a strong indigenous civil society tradition, which was not damaged or disrupted by colonial domination, consisting of credit and savings clubs, funeral associations and other mutual support organisations, often centred around Orthodox saints. These groups are largely separate from both the domestic political arena and from involvement with international development funds, training and ideology. A third strand of institutions are the mass membership associations (women, youth, farmers) developed during the previous regime, which donors see as tied to the ruling party but the government believes to be essential elements of both economic development and (revolutionary) democracy and an existing method of mobilising large numbers of people. Donors do not see these types of institution as viable partners, instead choosing to work with the NGOs who are the most proficient in the technical language of 'development' and 'rights', and are more a product of global dynamics than local ones. Unlike the mass organisations, they have access to 'policy knowledge... available at privileged bureaucratic sites... expressed in development models and project frameworks' (Mosse, 2005, p. 132) that can work to produce coherent

interpretations of development interventions after the fact and prevent project 'failure' - that is, a 'disarticulation between practice and rationalising model' (Mosse, 2006, p. 940).

The current government's rejection of human rights norms should not be seen in isolation from the historical context. While the League of Nations did call for Italy to cease human rights abuses during its invasion of Ethiopia (such as mustard gas attacks targeting civilians), Mussolini responded that he did not believe Ethiopians to be fully human. By not acting, the international community appeared to endorse the belief that Ethiopians were relatively less important than citizens of other countries. Some historians see this shameful episode as being one of the key incidents that discredited the League of Nations as an institution and hastened its demise. This lack of 'recognition of a kind of global, supranational belonging, the sort of moral and political recognition of Africans as "members of the new world society"' (Ferguson, 2006, p. 174), is what human rights discourse is supposed to counter. The fact that human rights are seen as undesirable western imports and rejected by many states, such as Ethiopia, shows that the moral force of the human rights project is tempered by the form of its praxis: a particular form of rights is pushed by the international community, privileging the 'first generation' individualist civil and political rights and illustrating that 'human rights development [is] value-saturated and at the service of particular power vectors' (Nader, 2007, p. 125).

As Mitchell shows in his study of modernisation schemes in Egypt (2002), generating and maintaining representations of other societies and setting them against modes of order and thought in the western world was a crucial mechanism of the colonial encounter. As I described above, while Italian and pro-Italian British media constructed representations of Ethiopia as a country of barbaric slave owners in need of the civilisation the fascists would

bring, the Italian army had gassed a quarter of a million Ethiopians to death by 1938 and combined 'old-fashioned savageries... with industrial killing methods... [which]... was so out of keeping with Italians' self-perception as the more "humane" dictatorship that it has been edited out of popular and official memory' (Ben-Ghiat, 2001, p. 126) and it was not officially admitted by the Italian government until 1995.

Current development discourse - and its enduring power over images of Ethiopia in the media - portrays the country as indelibly linked with hunger and poverty. This representation does not appear to have shifted substantially since the mid-1980s, when the unprecedented celebrity events Band Aid and Live Aid responded to the 1984 famine with 'highly emotional televised images to stimulate donations...[that]... subsequently changed the face of international fundraising' (Huddart, quoted in Richey and Ponte, 2011, p. 33), featuring dying Ethiopian child Birhan Woldu who Tony Blair describes as 'changing his life' (*The Sun*, 2007). Their organisational descendent is called ONE, formed under a different name in 2002 and associated with the 2005 Live 8 initiative (during which Birhan appeared on stage with Madonna), and which concentrates heavily on Ethiopia as a recipient of aid. One of its current public campaigns is called Living Proof, described on its website as 'a showcase of the incredible progress being made in development' (ONE, 2013). It can also be seen as an illustration of how the massive expansion of aid since 1945 has become self-perpetuating to the extent that it now runs campaigns for itself and the need for there to be more of it, and as an example of how policy 'functions to mobilise and maintain political support as much as to orientate practice' (Mosse, 2006, p. 939). In October 2012 ONE paid for 12 self-described mummy/ mommy bloggers from Britain and the US to visit Ethiopia en masse to 'raise awareness'. Their default mode combines pity and positive thinking, showing the 'amazing

continuity of development optimism' (Quarles van Ufford, Giri and Mosse, 2003, p. 9). This is a quote from an audio diary by a participating blogger:

'it's terrible, but there is so much progress being made and so much hope. So, all we can keep doing is praying. And the development agencies, we'll keep providing the money that's necessary. And, you know - I'm here about living proof and I'm seeing that living proof. And that comes from the fact that I've not cried once since I'm here' (Pannell, 2012).

Far from an unusual or controversial statement, this quote illustrates a typical hollowing out of political content from the idea of development, which is portrayed as a free-floating technical process that can be 'applied' by an outside agency, unconnected to state, capital, labour or historical context ("just give us your fucking money" as Bob Geldof famously said during Band Aid). It can be read as just one small example of development discourse as 'the central and most ubiquitous operator of the politics of representation and identity in much of Asia, Africa and Latin America in the post-World War II period' (Escobar, 1995, p. 214). This discourse is both used and resisted by the Ethiopian government - the second largest recipient of aid in the world of countries not at war (Dereje, 2011, p. 788) - in pursuit of its vision of *aboyotawi* democracy. In order to develop upon this historical context my PhD research will explore further how this conflict over representations of development, which as I have shown here has a particular historical trajectory in Ethiopia, plays out at local level in relation to a specific development programme.

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### **Shifting Collaboration: Diplomatic Skills in Fieldwork**

In this paper I explore the methodological and ethical dilemmas I faced when entering into collaboration with a patient organisation whilst also conducting participant-observation in a specialist clinic. I examine how institutional expectations of collaboration have unexpected consequences that require constant re-negotiation, bringing the opportunity for the researcher to move beyond commentary and critique towards contributing and participating in debates, what Latour described as diplomatic anthropology (Latour 2007)<sup>1</sup>.

Inquiring into the diagnosis of Adult ADHD in the UK, my research design aims to trace the diagnostic practices through clinical and support group sites, thus positioning myself firmly in the midst of an enduring controversy within the public space<sup>2</sup>. As noted by Latour and colleagues, controversies can provide a privileged space to observe and describe collective life in its most complex and fluid state; because of this, researchers are faced with particular challenges, not least, respecting all the actors' views involved in the debates (Latour 2005, Venturini 2010, Venturini 2010). Being half way through my fieldwork at the point of writing adds to the open-endedness of collaboration; there will be no firm conclusion, nor resolution, presented at the end of this article, instead these are tentative reflections during continuing attempts at collective work between different actors. First I will provide some background to my topic, followed by some research methodology and rationale,

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<sup>1</sup> For more on social science needing to engage, participate and contribute fully with the life sciences, see Lock, M. (2012) and Rose, N. (2012).

<sup>2</sup> A Google search on 30/5/13 for 'ADHD controversies' produced 4,180,000 results encompassing a wide public space including scientific references, media articles and blogs all debating different levels of uncertainties.

leading me to discuss what collaboration meant as I designed my research project and, through a couple of examples, how it developed in unexpected ways.

### *Textbook ADHD*

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is well known as a childhood disorder. Its diagnosis is still controversial and often used as an exemplar for the medicalisation of everyday life<sup>3</sup>. ADHD has in the last decade been considered and applied to adult populations and the psychiatric classifications have adapted their descriptions of symptoms to the context of adult life, from school environment to work place. According to the diagnostic criteria for ADHD, in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, the DSM (2000) , the most common behavioural symptoms of ADHD fall into three categories, inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity, with the stipulation that these must cause significant functioning impairment to be considered pathological. These impairments may be experienced through the inability to sustain employment, to meet deadlines, to pay bills, through being unfocused, through argumentative behaviour in public spaces, speeding while driving, overspending when shopping and through mood swings.

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<sup>3</sup> The controversies associated with ADHD are mostly related to the following issues:

- its first line of treatments is stimulant medication
- its symptoms are behavioural and are found amongst the general population
- the diagnostic process is entirely reliant on clinical assessments.

The increasing prevalence rate in the USA, reported at 11% of children ( See New York Times 2013) is often used to describe the medical expansion into social problems (see Conrad, P. and D. Potter (2000). The debates are likely to be re-kindled by the publication of the DSM5 in May 2013 that will reduce the numbers of criteria required for an adult diagnosis see and the online petition 'Is the DSM5 safe?' <http://dsm5response.com/>

In the UK the rise of prescribed Methylphenidate (active ingredient in Ritalin) has triggered fears of its diversion and abuse as smart drugs for cognition enhancement purposes. (see BBC news and Mail Online 13/08/13)

The term diagnosis, omnipresent in support group discussions and in psychiatric conferences<sup>4</sup>, is used both to describe a classification, a category, the naming of something, and to describe the process for identifying and detecting disease, often referred as the art of medicine. On one hand the mundanity of lists, pigeonholes, taxonomies, on the other the intuition, the act of judgment that leads to a decision. The two meanings are intertwined and can only be separated with difficulty, but as the process leads towards classification, this led me to ask how a diagnosis is made and what the diagnostic tools do. I therefore made the diagnostic process my object of study and decided to follow this process wherever it takes place<sup>5</sup>, starting with the national specialist clinic for adult ADHD, where I have joined the team, observing assessments and training towards using the diagnostic tools. But discussing a diagnostic process, rather than a diagnostic moment, opens the door of the clinic to other activities by other actors and led me to situate the other part of my fieldwork in collaboration with a patient organisation, and in spending time with support groups and their members.

### *Shades of collaboration*

But what is collaboration? It seems that calls for collaboration are omnipresent in all kinds of research arenas, including the biomedical and the social sciences.

Collaboration brings an inherent positive attribute and a sense of optimism. It opens opportunities for exchanging knowledge, expertise and resources between different

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<sup>4</sup> My initial research with Adult ADHD support groups highlighted how much importance the members attached to the diagnosis, through screening online, preparing towards confirmation by a psychiatrist and dealing with the diagnosis once confirmed. In meeting psychiatrists in conferences and in preparation for my present fieldwork I noted the same focus on the diagnosis, their interest in its changing criteria in the DSM 5, the development of new diagnostic tools to identify ADHD, their research in its prevalence in the adult population.

<sup>5</sup> See Mol, A. (2003) for her pathbreaking exploration of following practices in medicine.

contributors in the belief that this accumulation of views will bring positive outcomes including resolutions of common problems. This vision of collaboration is particularly evident in health related research as it provides the means to include different contributors, often different disciplines, in the hope of alleviating suffering. This applies directly to my research proposal that finds itself at the intersection of an already existing collaborative network, some arrangements more formalised than others, for the purpose of understanding adult ADHD, biologically and otherwise. The UK Adult ADHD Network (UKAAN) is a group of clinicians and scientists who collaborate in conducting research and providing educational and training events nationally and internationally. AADD-UK is a collective of adults with ADHD who through a web site provide advice, information and educational forum and run support groups in different parts of the UK<sup>6</sup>, and has contributed to the formulation of the NICE guidance in 2008. Both organisations are set up through a ‘dispersed collaboration’ (Konrad 2012) that favours virtual and fluid connections forming what Callon has called ‘hybrid forums’ (Callon, Lascoumes et al. 2009) where lay and specialist experts debate and discuss common issues. It is in this context where multiple collectives are seeking others for contributions that are different yet generally convergent, that my collaborative proposal was formalised by AADD-UK, and supported by UKAAN.

Nevertheless there are darker clouds to add to the enlightened picture of collaboration given above and tensions can arise from collaborative alliances. Strathern warns that agreements of collaboration may be abstracted from actual collaborative practices and come to represent ‘a generic intention to treat any ‘other party’ with due respect’

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<sup>6</sup> ‘AADD-UK the site for and by adults with ADHD’ see website <http://aadduk.org/>

(Strathern 2012, p.119). In pointing out that collaboration can be conceived as ‘an idea of rhetorical force’ (Ibid, p.109), a value that can be exchanged as part of a transaction, Strathern argues that there is a moral reward for those entering collaborative agreements that has the potential to render the actual collaborative practices obsolete. In other words, to call for collaboration endows the institution with an ethical stance that may not require acting upon. This suggests potential asymmetrical relations of power in the collaborative network, where different parties benefit in different ways, and those in power may be setting up the agenda with contributions unequally distributed or ignored.

### *Institutional expectations*

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) is one such institution that makes calls for collaborative proposals; it is supporting my research with a non-statutory organisation. But what constitutes collaboration for the ESRC was only explicitly explained in emails and on their websites in my second year of funding following ‘a bit of confusion with regard to what is entailed by collaboration’ (DTC communication 28/02/13). The message focused as much on meeting targets for collaborative work, 20% of all funded projects, as it did on defining collaboration as synonymous with knowledge exchange, with the caveat that ‘collaboration must include substantive knowledge exchange and not just one way engagement (e.g. data collection.)’<sup>7</sup>. My intention is not to bite the hand that feeds but to suggest that the word collaboration is too often used as a shortcut, a black box, with little descriptive power as to what is actually going on, which may encourage assumptions and reinforce the rhetorical force of the term. This became clear to me through my contact

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<sup>7</sup> See ESRC website for more recent definition of knowledge exchange and collaboration. <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/collaboration/knowledge-exchange/>

with another institution that is responsible for regulating research access to clinical sites.

The ethical clearance process I needed to undertake was two-fold in order to cover both clinical and non-clinical sites; access to support groups would be monitored by the University process, whilst my participant-observation in an NHS clinic would be overseen by the National Research Ethics Service (NRES). This created an unexpected and arbitrary divide between individuals attending the support groups and those attending the clinic as in reality they often found themselves in both sites. When meeting the NHS Research Ethic Committee to review my application<sup>8</sup> concerning the clinic, it became clear that they understood my proposal in terms of collaboration with clinicians as I intended to base myself within a medical establishment and that they were supporting my project on this basis. Their focus was firmly on the protection of NHS users, i.e. individuals attending the clinic, from any harm that could be caused by my research and they undertook their safeguard by using similar check lists as they would for clinical trials. The consequence of applying this one size fits all ‘procedural ethics’ was that it left no space for patient involvement; protecting the patients also silenced them.

There were lay members on the committee, there to represent users of the NHS, but my interest in the particular needs of patients with ADHD attending the clinic was more detailed than they had time for. In reflection, the process of gaining NHS ethical

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<sup>8</sup> The procedures involved in gaining NHS ethical clearance are obtained through a lengthy and mostly digital process that requires of the researcher considerable administration skills and determination. There are many complaints within the research community, medical and otherwise about the NRES system such as the protracted process, the insistence on anonymity, and misunderstanding of qualitative research methods Stewart, P. (2008)

approval steered my time and energy towards meeting the NHS requirements, thus demanding multiple interactions and negotiations with clinicians and scientists to the detriment of the intended collaboration with the patient organisation. This highlighted to me that collaboration takes work and time; it needs to be invented and re-invented through constant conversations, similar to the role of a diplomat who moves back and forth between parties. To explore the practices involved in making collaboration, I turn to the recent work of Bruno Latour, who has been writing on the issue for several decades, one way or another, and more recently has set up a collective collaboration with his new project 'Une enquête sur les modes d'existence' (Latour 2012).

#### *Diplomatic anthropology*

Reviewing Latour's empirical philosophy would require more space than I have here, but his reworking of the divide between Nature and Culture has been very influential in studies of science including medicine, providing analytical tools such as networks to trace the material conditions across boundaries and the cartography of controversies. It has been said before that Actor-Network Theory is more method than theory, and it is also as a methodological stance that I am interested by the idea of diplomacy that Latour develops<sup>9</sup>. Diplomacy suggests the presence of a conflict and Latour argues that some debates and controversies have so much at stake, they are conducted like conflicts and that the diplomat can unlock fixed positions towards making something new and different, some kind of peace. In the context of social science it suggests a symmetrical positionality for the researcher that requires the suspension of value judgement, a kind of reflexivity that offers opportunity for

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<sup>9</sup> See Stengers, I. (1997) for the source of Latour's inspiration on the use of the character of the diplomat.

negotiation and most importantly considers that participants may know more about the phenomena at hand than the researcher; in other words the researcher is only finding out what his informants already know. This last point is regularly made clear to me in my interactions with support groups and clinicians that are never surprised by any attempt I make to describe what are unexpected practices to my eyes. Latour is the first to acknowledge that this is not unlike the reflexive practice that is familiar to most anthropologists (Latour 2007); but his focus turns away from interpretations towards the practices and the network of associations<sup>10</sup>. The figure of the diplomat, according to Latour, has the quality of not knowing the exact and final outcome of his negotiations and this forces different kinds of inquiries: ‘The relevant question for the diplomats would no longer be, ‘Is it or isn’t it constructed?’ but rather: ‘How do you manufacture it?’ And, above all, ‘How do you verify that it is well constructed?’ (Latour and Tresch 2002, p.40).

This is particularly helpful when studying a contested illness like ADHD, whose reality is constantly questioned, does it really exist? usually as a preamble for an exposé of the medicalisation of everyday life and the social construction of psychiatric disorders. In Latourian language, construction is a descriptive word rather than a disparaging one, as he suggests that all is constructed, Nature and all, and that the diplomat is best placed to help redefine the notion of construction as ‘the lingua franca for beginning to understand each other’ (Ibid); a bridge across the gap between the naturally and socially constructed. Key to Latour’s vision for a diplomatic anthropology is ‘the art of speaking well to people about things that really matter to them’ (Latour 2012, p.58) which requires the researcher to pay close attention to the

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<sup>10</sup> See the Modes of Existence website for glossary of terms <http://www.modesofexistence.org/>

process of describing and checking their findings with their participants before exploring the potential disparities and proposing ways to resolve the gaps of understanding.

In my role within the adult ADHD clinic I have attempted to apply this concept and have been sharing with clinicians my observations on their use of a long list of diagnostic tools; the clinicians heard my description, added their own comments and I am now exploring with them the disparity between the gold standard and best practice they have in policy documents and their daily practice.

So far, this has been going well, possibly because of the lack of controversies in my reporting on this issue up to now, but what if diverging views are brought together? To conclude I want to describe the ongoing attempt to firm up my collaborative work with the patient organization which, in bringing tension into the clinic, also created a space for common concerns.

#### *Reaching out for collaboration*

In November 2012, a high profile research paper was published involving media briefing on TV, radio and newspapers by some of the scientists and clinicians of the clinic I attend (Lichtenstein and al 2012) The subject is rather controversial as it examines the links between ADHD pharmaceutical treatments which are amphetamine based and their efficacy in reducing crime rate. The clinicians I work with were clearly enthused by this, partly because the Swedish national register used for this study provided access to a huge sample of patients (over 25000) which is

impossible to achieve in the UK<sup>11</sup>, but also because, whilst not authors of this publication, they are involved in researching the prevalence of ADHD in the prison population in the UK.<sup>12</sup>

Whilst attending support groups I was curious to find out if members had seen the media coverage. Some had and were ambivalent in their response; on one hand they felt this was more evidence that ADHD was a real disorder, but on the other it associated them with criminals. In particular there was a sense that the vast majority of ‘sufferers of ADHD who are not criminals would be forgotten and continue to be invisible’, as one individual told me. I mentioned that I had some queries about what I thought were assumptions made in the article; from national registers, the research compares the data on criminality with the data on prescribed drug, equating being prescribed medication with being medicated. There is ample evidence to show that individuals establish their own regime of medication to suits their needs and apply agency whenever possible. Particular to ADHD is that treatments are generally short acting (i.e.: will not remain active in a person longer than 12 hours) and fast release (i.e.: will become active within an hour of ingestion) thus adding flexibility in managing symptoms to fit their life patterns<sup>13</sup>. I was then invited to write a summary of the paper to post on the AADD-UK website for comments; I agreed, thinking this could lead to the collaboration I had been looking for and was an experiment worth

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<sup>11</sup> The combination of a personal identity number that gives access to population based registers and a recently establish Prescribed Drug Register provided the means to track and link criminal records to the prescription of pharmaceutical treatment amongst other things. See Wettermark, Bjorn et al (2007). and Ludvigsson, J et al (2009) for a description of the Swedish National Register.

<sup>12</sup> There is a long history of medical and biological interest in criminal activity dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century ; for a sociological review see Conrad, P. and J. W. Schneider (1992).

<sup>13</sup> For more details on ADHD treatments autonomous regime see Jousselin, C. (2010). Adult ADHD support groups in the UK : an emergent biosociality for an evolving diagnosis.; also Anthropology and Medicine 2010 special issue Applbaum, K. and M. Oldani (2010) on compliance, concordance and autonomy of decision making with pharmaceutical treatments.

attempting. Back in the clinic I mentioned the ambivalent response of the patient organization to the article along with my reservations which initially did not elicit any comments. A few days later, I started a conversation with a clinician involved in separate research on the issue and was surprised by a rather unsympathetic response and obvious puzzlement as to my intentions in writing this small blog. I felt under scrutiny as I had not done before, suggesting that I might have underestimated how my position as a student in that environment affected my relationship with clinicians. Nevertheless I took this opportunity to report back my observations that in the clinic and in the support groups, patients describe managing their medications as they see fit and that being prescribed medication was very different from taking medicine, which I felt was relevant for the research paper's outcome. Despite initiating further interesting conversations, he deemed my points not significant enough to have an impact on the findings of the article and his disquiet about opening online debates through the patient organization remained. Positions were held; a few weeks later my comments on this research were posted online, the patient organization is still concerned that research on ADHD and criminality may also render other ADHD population invisible, deflecting funds away from mainstream services, and the scientists are still conducting their research on ADHD's prevalence in prison population. What strikes me is that the process of establishing a working collaboration with the patient organization had threatened the implicit collaboration with clinicians. But wasn't this stalemate a missed opportunity for opening a dialogue on the implications of research vis-a-vis stigma? Whilst research on the prevalence of ADHD in the prison population may bring the potential for treatments and relief from

symptoms, it also has the potential to increase the existing stigmatization of individuals with ADHD through its high media profile.<sup>14</sup>

However, wrestling with this difference of opinion what Strathern called ‘practices of disagreement’ (Strathern 2006, p.200) has seemingly led to a mutual engagement in one another’s concerns. What is it that matters to clinicians, the patient organisation and myself in our engagement with the field of adult ADHD? In the first instance it is to bring relief to people whose lives are negatively affected by ADHD including its stigma; our open ended and unresolved disagreement about facts provided the impetus to attend to our common concerns and attempt a piece of collaborative work that could contribute to this aim.<sup>15</sup> To that effect I am conducting a survey of adult ADHD support groups in the UK in order to facilitate the signposting of newly diagnosed patients and this will highlight issues such as lack of access to services<sup>16</sup>. Tensions have the potential to be creative, and perhaps this one will be; but as the etymology of collaboration suggests, from the Latin con- labōro, (with + work), I am sure it will require work from all parties.

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<sup>14</sup>The publication of the research article on 21/11/12 was followed by news report from both sides of the Atlantic, notably from the BBC, CBS, CNN and Sky News. Numerous blogs also reported this including those wondering if giving medication to prisoners would not improve their criminal activity (see web links).

<sup>15</sup> For further discussion on turning matters of fact into matters of concerns and researchers engaging with respect with their participants’ concerns, see Latour, B. (2004).

<sup>16</sup> This is a mutual concern for clinicians and patient organisation as a diagnosis of adult ADHD is often experienced as a double edged sword with unexpected life changing consequences that require support to accompany medical treatment.

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### **Beyond The Myths of Costa Rican Exceptionalism**

The practices and politics of conservation as well as the discourse on nature greatly inform the notions of identity and nationalism in Costa Rica. In order to dispel common myths regarding Costa Rican identity it is critical to engage with the nuances of Costa Rican historiography. Such nuances will afford scholars the ability to explain how Costa Rica is neither the ‘Switzerland of the Americas’<sup>1</sup> nor the eco-friendly ‘Green Republic’ that many imagine through older accounts (Barry 1989, Lara 1995, and Wallace 1992). Although Costa Rican exceptionalism carries with it some truth<sup>2</sup>, there remain common misconceptions regarding biodiversity, sustainable development, and current political structures (including social movements and goal oriented action) that need to be unpacked.

This moment when Costa Rican historiography breaks from the established norm of the nationalist agenda is perhaps best expressed by historians Steven Palmer and Iván Molina. Palmer and Molina expose three myths:

‘One is that when the Spanish arrived, they found but a tiny indigenous population in Costa Rica. The second holds that the Spanish conquest of the area was essentially peaceful. The third, more complex, myth of Costa

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<sup>1</sup> Now a famous and widely used phrase, it should be credited to Mario Sancho. Palmer and Molina write that Sancho’s 1935 work, *Costa Rica: Switzerland of the Americas*, ‘mocked the national mythology’ (Molina and Palmer 2004, p.99).

<sup>2</sup> See Molina and Palmer (2004, p.186): The authors cite low infant mortality, high life expectancy, high literacy, and low unemployment as social factors that indicate a very healthy Costa Rica, especially when compared with other countries of the mislabeled ‘Third World.’

Rican exceptionalism claims that the lack of indigenous people to serve as laborers and the scarcity of precious metals made Costa Rica a poor and marginal colony, a condition from which a society of homogeneous yeoman farmers without any meaningful class or racial divisions emerged and flowered in the Eighteenth Century' (Molina and Palmer 2004, p.9).

Stating plainly that 'the first two of these myths are nonsense' (Ibid, p.9.), the authors explain that during the period from 1502 to 1675, the indigenous population fell from 400,000 to 500 inhabitants. Genocide, slavery, and disease were the leading causes of this decline, and as Palmer and Molina suggest, they were never peaceful (Molina and Palmer 2004, p.9-10). A more critical look at the third myth will offer scholars a genealogy of political hierarchy, and critique the idea that Costa Rica was a pure representative democracy. Indeed, the nation could have hardly been considered half of a democracy until women received the right to vote following the civil war. Palmer and Molina explain that politics has been hidden within every corner of Costa Rican social development, and to understand the role that power plays – to understand the voices heard and those suppressed – is to understand more completely modern day Costa Rica and concurrent historical views.

Firstly, is Costa Rica a Green Republic? In order to address this question, we should begin with a consideration of what a Green Republic<sup>3</sup> might be and thus, how a nation

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<sup>3</sup> See: Evans, Sterling. 1999. *The Green Republic: A Conservation History of Costa Rica*. Austin: University of Texas Press. His aptly titled work discusses in great detail the

green-washes itself and maintains an eco-friendly status. The most common narratives that support this understanding are those of conservation and ecotourism. These should, importantly, not be seen as mutually exclusive. Conservation must take place for ecotourism to be genuine and for it to be successful. The facts are clear: Costa Rica is the most ecologically conserved nation per square kilometer on earth, with 28% of the country under environmental restrictions (Evans 1999, p.7) and containing over 5% of the earth's species biodiversity. These conditions make the country a ripe place for ecotourism to flourish as indeed it continues to do. The neglected facts are that during the 70s and 80s, especially, Costa Rica had some of the worst rates of deforestation worldwide – over half the trees in the country were cut down (Edelman 1995, Evans 1999, Wallace 1992, and Vivanco 2007). The history of deforestation here does not work to illuminate some extreme dialectic moment where massive conservation had to take place in order to mask the guilt of deforestation; rather, it challenges the notion of purity that is so often posited by claims to green-ness.

Another neglected situation, especially in terms of its influence, is the Costa Rican debt crisis of the early 80's. Costa Rica became the world's first country to default on its foreign loans, and was subsequently forced into an economic structure even more integrally linked to global capital (Edelman, 1999, p.1-3). Debt swaps were common, meaning that foreign entities (corporations, small companies, wealthy or politically connected individuals) could buy back the county's debt for land (Ibid, p.1-3 and p.80-

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challenges that face Costa Rica's environment. Evans's historical perspective demonstrates how conservation came to be known and practiced.

83).<sup>4</sup> Some of this land had become biological preserves. Many foreign interest groups knew about the gorgeous landscapes and the precious biodiversity of the area, and they speculated the land's value. Many of the preserves in Costa Rica, both public and private, are a consequence of what the foreign debt crisis afforded the global marketplace. For example, Costa Rica was one of only a few countries to benefit greatly from the US funded project Roads For Peace (Evans 1999, p.160-161). This came as a result of a deal between Costa Rica's Óscar Arias (Nobel Peace Prize winner) and US president Ronald Reagan. These roads have proven critical for gaining access to such national parks as Corcovado on the Osa Peninsula, despite their original intention as military transport during the anti-Sandinista foreign policy adopted by the US.

The timing was fitting because the environmental movement in the US that began in the 1960s was gaining momentum by the 70s and 80s. National Parks changed from an American phenomenon into a global one, a market opened for ecotourism worldwide, and nature in its newly commodified form became more than a vacation fantasy for a growing number of city-dwellers with leisure time and a longing to escape their urban routines and urban aesthetics. In this type of context, investment poured into Costa Rica's landscape and the country quickly transformed into an ecotourism economy. Costa Rica's greenness should be seen in this light, within the context of the increasingly popular notion that the wilderness is a tourist attraction and that Costa Rica's doors were forced open through a debt crisis that allowed the conditions for a more fluid global integration. These economic and political reasons for producing a Green Republic, briefly alluded to here,

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<sup>4</sup> This is widely cited, and also see Edelman, 1992.

should be incorporated into an understanding of what conservation in Costa Rica is. This type of ‘goodwill’ myth segues into the next story of Costa Rican identity – the one that claims Costa Rica to be ‘Switzerland of the Americas,’ implying a resilience to conflict amidst chaos and an uncanny ability to maintain control and stability.

This myth allows many to make the anachronistic mistake of saying something like; ‘Costa Rica gave up its military so the government could spend money on saving the planet and creating national parks.’ As previously stated Costa Rica began its national park campaigns following the growth of the US environmental movement in the 70s and gained most of its momentum after the debt crisis in the 80s when deforestation came to a halt. The military was abolished at the end of the country’s brief civil war in 1949 and had absolutely nothing to do with national parks. Even the manner in which the military was abolished and the consequences of the war’s end were largely due to political posturing and hardly a sincere claim for enduring peace (Bowman in Molina and Palmer 2004, p.178).

Palmer and Molina present political scientist Kirk Bowman’s essay, ‘Democracy on the Brink: The First Figueres Presidency,’ in order to provide ‘fresh eyes’ to an account of the politics of Costa Rica’s civil war (Molina and Palmer 2004, p.175-182). Through this account, historians agree with the latest in political theory from Bowman; scholarship must account for complicating President José Figueres’s national hero status, providing more evidence and reasoning behind the post civil war policy changes, and unpacking more completely the description of Calderón as a political ‘failure.’ This, in addition to

workers' strikes against corporate control and constant voter suppression (women and peasants were denied access to voting until 1949), paints a less than democratic picture of the flourishing democracy.

Along with some election reform, a new constitution, women's right to vote, and the abolition of the military, Figueres, upon securing victory during the civil war, established political prominence for his rebellion and the new Party of National Liberation (PLN). In order to keep his party in power, he restored the presidency to the candidate he felt lost the election of 1948 only due to election fraud, and stepped aside to run four years later in 1952. Figueres would win the election of 1952, confirming his assumptions at the end of the civil war, and thus realizing the political gains and preparation previously established. Abolishing the military to confuse his adversaries, who found it difficult to engender a rebellion against a military dictator who did not have a military, and a leader who would give the presidency to someone else, was another political gesture that gained Figueres much favor (Bowman in Molina and Palmer 2004, p.178). Figueres then became a national hero, popularly known as Don Pepe, and only recently has the historiography of the war and latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century presented a less flattering profile of the leader. Nevertheless, Don Pepe and his new constitution have served as nationalistic narrative for decades and have been employed to establish an identity for Costa Rica as a peaceful democratic haven, often contrasted with the politics of its neighbor, socialist Nicaragua. The account of the patriotism and nationalism embedded within the claim that Costa Rica has always been peaceful and democratic should include a more sophisticated account of

how that political process has worked, who has been included and excluded, and what types of politics has been employed to maintain some sense of harmony.

It remains probable that the abolition of the military was a consequence of the civil war, an instrument for creating a rationale to support the newly empowered political party, and not a characteristic of an essential Costa Rican identity as is popularly conceived.

Historians have recently warned against such nationalist rhetoric as it creates a politics of exclusion and has been generally employed as propaganda, serving to bolster political interests of a powerful elite. The way that nationalist propaganda is linked to a love of nature reflects both a general claim for unique ecological awareness and a claim for a unifying identity that reifies the bridge between being Costa Rican and being eco-friendly.

The 'Costa Rican exception' has also been bolstered by the way power has been shared. It is illegal for a president to run for consecutive terms and he must therefore wait for re-election at least four years later. This creates a network of political allies as presidents have tried to maintain loose political power while outside office; an ethic of taking turns has been created, and has produced limited policy change as presidents have been turned over every four years. For example, almost all of the social 'communist' programs under Calderón, with whom Don Pepe waged rebellion, were left in place; only they were no longer labeled communist. Calderón had created an alliance with the communist party to gain votes and favor, but the plan backfired when Don Pepe made similar promises and

gather greater support. Don Pepe attempted policies that he felt the majority of citizens desired and made political moves necessary to gain international allies.

Just recently, foreign currency exchange became Costa Rica's largest cash crop, surpassing both bananas and coffee combined, all the more impressive given that Costa Rica was once the world's largest banana producer/exporter. This, another example of a global economy, was due to the monopoly of United Fruit, which maintained foreign capital control until Don Pepe forced them to relinquish 30% of the company's profit to Costa Rican personnel and infrastructure. Now, ecotourism is the largest moneymaker for Costa Rica; and, additionally, the notion of nature and the environment is intrinsically linked to the way national identity is imagined and reproduced.

Scholars (and certainly many environmental journalists and natural scientists) have approached Costa Rica's greenness from multiple angles. The nuances of Costa Rican historiography explain the importance of rethinking and dismantling popular myths, stereotypes, and nationalist narratives imposed by powerful economic and state interests.<sup>5</sup> In particular, two works with suggestive and apt titles, Sterling Evans's *The Green Republic* and Luis Vivanco's *Green Encounters*, portray ecological ethics as very much a part of everyday life and the conception of a national identity. The differences between the two pieces are more interesting than the similarities, however, as Evans provides a historical mapping of the Costa Rican conservation process and Vivanco provides an ethnographic portrait of the socio-political consequences afforded by the conservation

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<sup>5</sup> See: Palmer, Steven and Molina, Iván ed. 2004. *The Costa Rica Reader: History, Culture, Politics*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

effort. While Evans bolsters the notion of Costa Rican exceptionalism, Vivanco demonstrates how many factors within certain green movements, and especially ecotourism, can impose upon local values. Evans remains more concerned with the ecological conditions that conservation movements arose from, and Vivanco provides some contextual aftermath, the socially embedded problems that arise – for example - between farmers, park rangers, researchers, tourists, and jaguars.

Taking pesticide use on banana plantations as one example, historians and political theorists have developed an understanding of how power and place relate within an economic structure of agro-exports. Bananas recently replaced the coffee plantations in their prominence, growing in popularity to make Costa Rica the largest exporter in the world at one point.<sup>6</sup> With this economic growth came problems for many Costa Ricans. Evans explains that ‘...76 percent of all pesticide poisoning claims at the National Insurance Institute were filed by banana plantation employees’ (Evans 1999, p.45). Evans continues, citing a number of case studies, to point out that ‘...by 1992 Costa Rica’s pesticide use was seven times the world’s per capita average, resulting in 250 to 300 cases annually of pesticide poisoning involving agricultural workers’ (Ibid). The disposal of waste from such a large industry was another serious issue for ecological health, as it was non-biodegradable and created additional plastic waste (Evans 1999, p.45-46). Such research works partly to dispel the myth that environmentalism is bolstered by the musings of ecocentric romantics from North America; they show that in

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<sup>6</sup> Widely cited, but also see Evans: ‘Two thirds of the national economy revolves around agriculture, with bananas as the top crop (occupying nearly 100,000 acres of lowlands and still controlled by foreign corporations), followed by coffee, sugar, and beef’ (Evans 1999: 48).

fact they represent a concern about (in this case) whose health is jeopardized by pollution, pesticide, and waste.

Steve Marquardt, an eco-historian, explores the relationships between ‘the environment as a living and changing system (and) corporate capitalism trying to create ‘factories in the field’, and laborers and their organizations’ (Molina and Palmer 2004, p.298).

Marquardt’s celebrated essay, ‘Pesticides and Parakeets in the Banana Industry,’ is a central prominent addition to Palmer and Molina’s reader, as it constructs a justified and sharp critique of the banana industry’s use of the ‘Bordeaux Mixture’ to exterminate fungal infections on plants. The Bordeaux Mixture contains too much copper and lime (making the concoction too heavy) for it to be sprayed from the air and therefore workers must spray on foot, subjecting themselves to the toxin. With a nod to Rachel Carson’s famous work, *Silent Spring*, Marquardt begins his critique of such methods that demonstrate blatant disregard for the health and wellbeing of the worker and environment alike. Marquardt explains:

‘The quotidian nickname for spray workers in the *zona bananera* was not *quimico* (chemist) but *perico* (parakeet), a term that referred not only to the blue-green bordeaux salts that caked clothing and stained bodies but also suggested the way central pumps drove the spray crews (the *periquera*) through the plantations like flocks of brightly colored birds’ (Marquardt in Molina and Palmer 2004, p.302).

Marquardt continues to argue that ‘the mocking job title’ implies that these workers perceived their job ‘not as a step up into the brave new world of industry and technology, but rather as a humiliating task for those at the bottom of the plantation work hierarchy’ (Ibid). The financial interests of corporations like United Fruit were clearly leading over the health interests of plantation workers, as well as the environmental concerns and ignored long-term effects. What Marquardt labels the ‘exchange of the lives of men for the productivity of plants’ exposes: ‘The irony of men becoming sicker as plantations were restored to health was not lost on residents of the banana zone’ (Marquardt in Molina and Palmer 2004, p.305).<sup>7</sup> The Bordeaux Mixture’s dangerous effects soon developed into a nation-wide scandal and the use of it was largely stopped.

Unfortunately, the mixture could not be neutralized and bordeaux salts have remained in the soil and rendered much agricultural land unusable (Marquardt in Molina and Palmer 2004, p.309). As residues remain, tainting the health of the land, so also we see a rise in cancer cases and other health complications that severely damage the population of field workers. Once a quite productive plantation zone, the *Golfito* region in southwest Costa Rica shut down in 1985 amidst decades of strikes and other ‘market considerations’ (Edelman 1999, p.115). Such stories of structural violence beg the question: what is the cost of a green republic?

An understanding of Costa Rican ecology and identity is informed by nationalism and its critics. Through a story of who is paid and who is stained and poisoned, scholars inherit a complex history of democratic maintenance that is clarified as myths are probed. One

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<sup>7</sup> One such banana worker, *ex-perico* Ramón Amaya Amador, wrote a novel about his experience entitled *Prisión Verde* (Green Prison, 1950) (Ibid).

particularly outstanding example (among many) of how nationalism has been enabled and reinforced throughout Costa Rican history is the public education system and its continued strength. The high regional literacy rates attest to this, as well as the capacity for ideologies and symbols of nationalism to be disseminated rapidly and accepted so readily as a common perspective. The history of Costa Rican national identity informs the way identity is imagined today in context of ecotourism. Understanding how the nation has become green and what political consequences are afforded by that green-ness helps to circumscribe the constitution of conservation. What does it mean for organizations to make political claims and support goal-oriented action based upon a shared assumption of what the environment is and the intimate relationships woven through its embodiment in daily life? How would the ambiguity of a national eco-identity threaten the security of defined categories for biodiversity preservation, land conservation, and ecotourism?

The country has a population slightly higher than 4 million and there are over 2 million tourists per year (a growing figure) – over half of whom are from the US. The profitability and success of ecotourism creates a political structure where prospective capital gain is in competition with the ethics of sustainability and biodiversity preservation. In other words, ecotourism as Costa Rican political strategy is a unique trajectory at this scale, and such uniqueness deserves a more critical understanding.

The landscape is socialized, and a genealogical understanding of how the socio-political relations have reproduced, and continue to do so and to characterize the land is engrained

within national identity and global marketplaces. Likewise, if the surrounding landscape is embodied within the experience of daily life, then the intimacy entangled within that practice is constituted by both the environment and its inhabitants – so that political ecology seems the most appropriate methodological lens for interrogating sustainable development and biodiversity.

Just as hierarchies of power complicate the notion of purity within Costa Rican democracy, the salesmanship of nature and history of brutal exploitation problematize the nation's green-ness. The academic purchase for such a discussion should be more than an enlightened sense of history. Our discussion should enable a better sense of the relationship between power and place, in light of a place's inhabitants and thus what is truly being sustained or preserved. Ultimately, the way that sustainability is taught, practiced, and challenged is rooted within the visceral connection between an individual and her or his environment as well as the socio-political complexities of an historically located subject – one whose uniqueness is challenged by the overwhelming homogeneity of an ambiguous ecologically informed identity.

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## **'At-risk' Youth? 'At-risk' Researcher? Anticipating Ethical Dilemmas Pre-fieldwork in Rio de Janeiro**

Contemplating life in the favela as I sat on the dusty step of the capoeira community centre in the *Complexo da Maré*,<sup>1</sup> where I was a volunteer and student in 2008, I could never have predicted that I would return several years later to study the bittersweet lives of the young people who live there. Perhaps on previous visits I was naïve or lucky, under-prepared but over-protected, yet I did not encounter any problems. I am currently in the pre-fieldwork stage of my doctoral research on young people and police occupation in favelas in Rio de Janeiro. Preparing for the third time to work with young people in the favelas in some capacity, I find myself re-configuring a vaguely familiar place into a 'field site' and re-designing myself as a fledgling anthropologist, with supervisors and ethics committees to satisfy. In doing so I have unearthed an ethical minefield and am forced to carry out some kind of theoretical risk assessment. Through discussion of my own research I hope to contribute to a broader debate on how best to approach the ethical challenges presented by carrying out fieldwork with so-called 'at risk' or 'vulnerable' youth, including how ethnography in these environments poses a risk to both the participants and the researcher.

### *Youth and Police Occupation in Rio de Janeiro*

My research is situated in a global context of youth disenchantment with neoliberal regimes accompanied by new forms of policing to suppress resistance. Specifically,

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1 A complex of 16 favelas in the North Zone of Rio de Janeiro.

my focus is on young people's experiences of Police Pacification Units<sup>2</sup> in favelas in Rio de Janeiro. The UPP are part of a state project involving police occupations, evictions and gentrification in favelas in the lead up to the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Olympics. The explicit aim of the UPP is to reduce the drug factions' armed violence and community control. Specifically trained new recruits, UPP officers have a permanent presence in certain favelas<sup>3</sup>. By 2014 Rio de Janeiro state government aims to have 'pacified' forty favelas, those which are most strategic in terms of presenting a 'peaceful' face to the inhabitants of upper class neighbourhoods and to the thousands of visitors expected for the sporting mega-events

This style of community policing is in contrast to historical patterns of confrontational invasions from the infamous BOPE. Since the 1980s when armed drug factions and militia groups asserted armed territorial control of many favelas, residents have lived in a 'culture of terror' (Taussig, 1989). Fear and violence permeate and codify everyday life (Wilding, 2013). Growing up in this context, most young favela residents have never known anything different and this violence has become normalised (Margold, 1999), codifying quotidian movements and relationships. This has an impact on schooling (Leeds, 2006) and impinges on freedom of movement (World Bank, 2012) and bodily integrity. A particular fear is to be caught by a stray bullet (Cataldo 2007, Penglase 2011), to be a victim of the crossfire between rival drug gangs and the police. There is extreme mistrust or even hatred towards the police, especially amongst young people (Goldstein, 2003, p.202, Gay, 2005, Ramos, 2011, Zaluar, 2010) largely due to the brutality they have seen or experienced during

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<sup>2</sup> Known as the UPP.

<sup>3</sup> Currently thirty two out of approximately 1,000 favelas.

frequent war-like incursions from the BOPE<sup>4</sup>. The police are generally considered poorly trained, poorly paid and corrupt (Gay, 2005, p.86). Many are themselves from favelas and other low-income neighbourhoods.

Through engaged ethnographic investigation, I plan to explore the ways in which young favela residents imbue notions of citizenship, rights and social justice with new meaning in relation to what is presented as a radically new public security policy. Experimenting with the possibilities offered by the fusion of a participatory action-oriented methodology with more traditional ethnographic tools, I will focus on the ways in which urban youth negotiate changing relationships with the state, including how these are shaped by activist networks and NGOs.

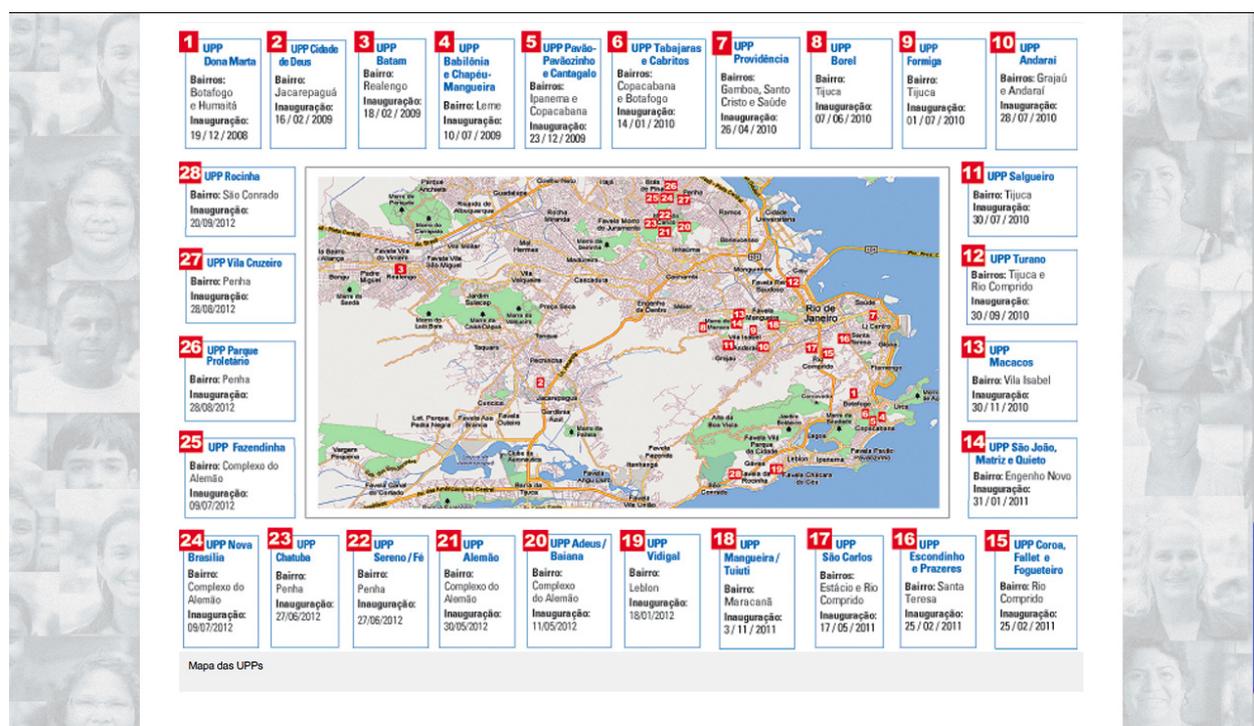
In Brazil's favelas young black men have historically run the greatest risk of being victims of Brazil's policy of what Donna Goldstein called 'policing as social control of the lower classes' (Goldstein, 2003, p.201). Until recently, high youth homicide rates have largely met state and public ambivalence, implying tacit complicity in violence directed towards a sector of the population deemed undeserving of citizenship rights (Mapa da Violência, 2012, Ramos 2011, Roque, 2012).

### *The 'Pacification' Project*

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<sup>4</sup> BOPE – *Batalhão de Operações Especiais* -The Elite Squad

In the build-up to the international mega-events, the UPP have been presented as a magic bullet to relieve the endemic fear of violence, as well a makeover of the notoriously violent police. It is the public security arm of a broader project to reconfigure Rio de Janeiro as a city fit for the World Cup and the Olympics. The aim is to bring 'peace' to the communities by reducing the drug factions' armed violence and community control. According to José Mariano Beltrame, the Security Secretary for the State of Rio de Janeiro, the policy will integrate the favelas into the city and allow favela residents to become full citizens. Following the initial Shock Battalion (*Batalhão de Choque* and BOPE) invasion to chase out the drug dealers, UPP officers, all new recruits and trained in proximity policing and human rights, are installed and have a permanent presence in selected favelas. The pilot UPP was installed in 2008 in



RECEBA NOTÍCIAS DAS UPPS

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Map of UPPs in Rio de Janeiro (c. January 2013)

Santa Marta, Botafogo, and since then it has spread, evolved and gained international accolade, including visits from heads of state and public security in other countries troubled by violence. As can be seen from the map, the UPPs are concentrated around the *Zona Sul*, the big stadiums and the international airport.

Surprisingly, ethnographic studies specifically addressing young people's experiences of police violence and perceptions of citizenship in this context are scarce. A focus on youth is necessary due to the historical conflict between youth and the police, which continues to be marked by mutual mistrust. This nuanced perspective is made increasingly urgent due to the way that the voices of favela youth are currently being marginalised in official discourse on the UPPs and associated urban change. Yet arguably they are those most affected, through stop and search tactics, policing of culture (by the bans on funk music) and indications that youth who have left the drug trade have been overlooked in the social development accompanying the 'pacification' process, and are ostracized by the community (World Bank, 2012).

In order to interrogate the official line that the UPPs are a panacea to Rio de Janeiro's problems of urban violence and territorial exclusion, I anticipate working primarily with a diverse cohort of young people aged sixteen to twenty four. This age cohort stands out for high levels of homicide and is shown as most likely to experience violent exchanges with the police and to be drawn in to the activities of the drug factions. Although regarded as problematic, and often characterised as criminal or as 'at-risk' of joining criminal gangs, this age group have remained relatively muted in

official talks on the UPP. I face several challenges in this context, including the potential danger such research presents for the participants and myself.

As Timothy Jenkins said, 'the anthropologist is committed in the body – unlike almost any other form of social research – to an encounter with another form of social life' (Jenkins, 1994). One of the differentiating features of our discipline is this embodied commitment that we make, immersing ourselves in the everyday lives of others to gain an understanding of the diversity of the human existence. This is anthropology's great strength. Yet achieving such intimacy of knowledge in high-risk environments inevitably means we ourselves become tangled up in such risk. It can be conceived of as an act of solidarity, an apprenticeship in local risk mitigation, but it could also get messy. Therefore it is important not to be naïve about the potentially adverse and even fatal consequences of research in these contexts. Vulnerability and danger, of both the participants and the researcher, are key issues to confront before commencing fieldwork.

So how do we prepare, for those encounters in contexts marked by social conflict, mistrust and fear? 'Fieldwork under fire'<sup>5</sup> is a common reality for many ethnographers, now that war and violence are far from exceptional circumstances in which to carry out social research. Anthropological research in such settings is urgent if we are to 'speak the truth to power' – yet negotiating the complex dynamics of this power – which we inevitably become a part of – needs careful consideration. Mo Hume, who has carried out ethnography with young people in Guatemala says that

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<sup>5</sup> *Fieldwork Under Fire* refers the book edited by Robben and Nordstrom (1995).

'integral to the discussion is the role of the researcher, who is not immune to the emotions and ambiguities that researching violence presents' (Hume, 2007, p.481).

A crucial issue that has been highlighted in my pre-fieldwork year is the importance of doing research in a way which is cognizant of our often privileged or powerful positions as researchers in relation to participants, particularly in situations already characterised by inequality. Yet we rely on our interlocutors for everything, developing an understanding of their everyday lives, becoming versed in the intricacies of their social context. Ensuring ethical practice, is not then simply a matter of ticking a box, but is fundamental to ensuring the survival, ontological and epistemological, of the researcher and the researched.

In this case, it is not sufficient just to abide by the Association of Social Anthropologists' guidelines. These guidelines are not exhaustive. For a start, in relation to my own research, they make no specific recommendations for those of us who are working with young people or children or in conflict situations. I have to make my own informed decisions, refer to those who have gone before me, and rely on relationships with NGO gatekeepers who will assist me in adhering to local protocols and unwritten codes of conduct. In addition the question, should I base my ethical choices on a human rights framework?, arises. Despite critiques of the limitations of the UN Declaration of Human Rights as a Western construct, not relevant in all cultural contexts, the rights discourse does hold high sway in Brazil and can be a powerful tool for advocacy organisations to use in the face of state violence.

If we witness or are made aware of rights violations during the course of research, do we intervene? Thus potentially breaking the trust with our participants, endangering them or ourselves. Or do we cast aside our own ethics and morals and just note it down in our field diaries like good 'neutral' observers? Translated to my own research project, it is quite possible that I will experience both ethical and moral dilemmas. These could include searching for the balance between engagement and detachment; contact with or approval from local power brokers, and assessing which risks are worth taking and which are deemed to great for participants or myself. For example, what if discussing the relationship between police and young people stirs up emotions that lead to more conflict? What if the material I am presented with will endanger the participants if it is published, despite all attempts to hide identity? Or if even by simply being seen to speak to me they are presumed to be informers by the police or other armed groups in the community.

In the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, fear and violence have a pervasive grip on most residents, forcing them to abide by the *lei do silencio* ('the law of silence', Gay 2005, Machado da Silva, 2008, Wheeler, 2012, Wilding, 2013). At least publicly, this is adhered to by people who live in favelas controlled by armed actors, whether a drug faction or the *milicia*, who impose their own codes on community life. There is a real danger of retaliation for speaking out directly about the perpetrators of violence, particularly of non-state actors, though it has become easier to talk about the brutality carried out by the police, or to displace the agency of violence from the traffickers to a *bala perdida*<sup>6</sup>. Silence is a familiar problem for anthropologists of violence both in

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<sup>6</sup> Meaning lost bullet, see Penglase, 2011.

and beyond Rio de Janeiro. As Linda Green (1995) found in Guatemala, it can be a considerable barrier to communication.

When the primary participants in my research are young people, will they be fully aware of the implications of speaking to me and being seen with an outsider who may be regarded with suspicion? I imagine that they will indeed know what they can and cannot say, but this could mean they simply refuse to talk about any of the subjects crucial to my research. This brings us back to the issue of informed consent. For this to be valid, the participants must be fully capable of understanding all of the possible consequences of the research, consent must be an on-going process and they must have control to opt-in and out. To avoid adverse effects, during the initial stages, I will work closely with NGOs and social workers, carrying out participant observation, building trust and familiarising myself with the nascent politics of the community. In the second phase, when I feel these conditions to be established, I will move on to also carry out participatory-action-research and interviews.

The young people I anticipate working with are often described as 'at-risk' or 'vulnerable'. Yet what does a 'vulnerable' or 'at-risk' population actually mean? Does this phrase assume that young people from favelas are only violence's victims - that the risk they face is totalizing and homogenous? Are some of them not also the agents of violent acts? Or perhaps it suggests that they are to blame for taking risks and getting involved with the traffic. This ambiguity de-politicises the concept of risk. Mary Douglas (1992) points out the socially constructed nature of risk and that it is increasingly politicised – unequally distributed according to social class, power, wealth, gender and race. Young people in Rio de Janeiro's favelas, especially men,

face a disproportionate level of risk, a risk of suffering violence or death at the hands of drug traffickers or the police, exacerbated by poverty, inequality and stigma. The other image in this paper shows the extent to which even school children are routinely targeted for stop and search in the favelas, assumed to be both a risk and 'at-risk'.

The *dono do morro*<sup>7</sup> is admired and perceived by many to have won in the game of risk, the prizes are respect, adoration from beautiful women and power, precariously based on a reign of fear (Gay 2005). As a risk mitigation strategy, many young people get drawn into the game for protection (Dowdney 2003). By association, the researcher is also in a vulnerable position. What do we do in these circumstances? Dennis Rodgers (2007) adopted the gang logic and chose the risk mitigation strategy of joining the gang during ethnography in Managua. Co-optation of the research by power holders, whether state or non-state actors is not only dangerous but would also add deep ethical and moral complexities.

When we encounter problems during fieldwork, support and advice is provided by our supervisors, albeit at the other end of an internet connection. So far removed from the visceral reality, the limitations of this support in situations of fear and violence are clear. During fieldwork in the Congo-Rwanda border area, Larissa Begley faced serious challenges in this respect and found that there was inadequate support for herself and participants for the feelings of isolation, mistrust and fear they experienced (Begley 2009). In these contexts, as Jane Margold points out 'sanitizing discourses [can] mask and normalise violence' (1999) which even the researcher may become desensitized to. When we are faced by these problems, the best a supervisor

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<sup>7</sup> King of the hill or drug baron.

can do is to help us weigh up the potential consequences of engaging in a risky situation and advise us to leave the field if the risks are deemed too great. Ultimately, although we may do our best to reduce power imbalances, that is where our privileged position as researchers falls into sharpest relief. As Michael Taussig and Larissa Begley have shown, we have an escape route. Our interlocutors, do not.

Thus despite my most meticulous and sensitive preparations, there is a real possibility that my research will increase the risks experienced by participants and myself. Yet we take risks precisely because we believe in the transformative potential of doing so. In my case, I believe that, if carefully manoeuvred, the benefits to be gained from a fuller understanding of the implications and experiences of the UPP for young people in Rio de Janeiro's favelas out-weigh potential risks.



*BOPE officers in a favela in Rio de Janeiro in front of a graffiti tag saying 'peace' – the irony of peace at the barrel of a gun.*

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Goldsmiths, University of London  
New Cross, London SE14 6NW, U.K.