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FROM THE EDITOR

Student Anthropologist is the flagship journal of the student section of the American Anthropological Association, but it seems that we have historically been relegated to publishing our scholarship as PDFs to a WYSIWYG web host. You may note that there was some delay with the publication of this issue of Student Anthropologist. This is simply because just as I was preparing to publish the issue to our website, an exciting opportunity dropped into my lap: the opportunity to publish Student Anthropologist through my own institution – Washington University in St. Louis – on an open-access platform called bepress. I have long believed that because Student Anthropologist is a peer-reviewed publication, it needs an ISSN and that the articles therein need DOIs; bepress does just that, and will continue long after I finish my editorship and after I leave WUSTL. Further, bepress also acts as a portal from which we can distribute our Calls for Manuscripts and through which authors may submit their manuscripts. Unfortunately, to move forward on this issue in a timely fashion, it is not possible to publish through bepress until the next issue. I am happy to report, however, that once our new bepress portal is online, we will begin retroactively archiving our backlog of issues and those articles will receive DOI numbers as well. Best of all, as I mentioned, bepress is open-access so the journal will continue to be available to anyone and everyone. I am very excited for the future of Student Anthropologist.

This issue would not have been possible without a lot of passionate and dedicated people. I want to thank my most immediate predecessor, Sara Smith, for her guidance and support throughout the process as I found my sea legs. I also want to thank my incredible Editorial Board who responded to countless, nagging emails with patience and understanding. More than anyone else, however, I need to highlight the hard work and drive of Alexea Howard (Peer Review Editor) and Jessica Chandras (Book Review Editor), without whom there would be no 2016 issue. The excellence that they demand of themselves is interminable and awe-inspiring, and it has been an honor to work with each of them.

Richard Powis, Editor
Washington University in St. Louis
St. Louis, Missouri, USA
“Look North”: Conspiracy and the Sojazación of Argentina

Geneva Smith
University of New Mexico

Abstract. The scientific community now overwhelmingly agrees that genetically modified organisms (GMOs) are safe. Yet vigorous public debate continues worldwide about the entry of GMOs into the environment and food chain. Unique to the Argentine context, however, is that expert and civic debates about GM soy have more to do with the redistribution of export profits than with potential environmental or health risks. In this essay, I examine Argentina’s GMO expert regulatory bodies and recent conspiracy theories as spaces where I would expect concerns to be voiced about the “dark side of the soy boom” (Lapegna 2013)—but are not. I argue that conspiracy theory involving GM soy’s economic prospects reveal both a pervasive unease about the industry, and that GM soy more closely indexes economic anxieties than environmental or health concerns. I explore the production and circulation of knowledge about GM soy that led to its role in economic sovereignty. I develop the idea that conspiracy centers on Argentines’ deepest concerns and ask whether the GM soy industry is seen more as an obstacle to redistributive politics than as a threat to the health of the Argentine population.

Keywords. Argentina, GMOs, Conspiracy

Near the end of her last term in office, Argentine President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner received her first email from the Islamic State. She initially thought she had been targeted because of her close relationship with Pope Francis, but it was not long before she offered up a different explanation: “If something should happen to me, don’t look to the Middle East, look North.”

The emails began to arrive in October 2014 after a contentious legal battle. New York District Court Judge Thomas Griesa had just ruled on a decade-long court battle between the Argentine state and a small group of hedge funds that were seeking full repayment on debt still owed from the largest default in financial history back in 2001. Many still blame the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank for the collapse since it came on the heels of years of structural adjustment. Between 2001 and 2005, Argentina experienced political and economic instability until Néstor Kirchner, the leftist governor of Santa Cruz province, was elected to the presidency. The IMF had by then issued a loan repayment schedule, but in a show of economic
dismissed Kirchner’s theories as conspiratorial, describing them as the ranting of a woman who is “extremely thin-skinned and intolerant of perceived criticism” (The Guardian 2010). I believe this interpretation is inadequate. Following anthropology’s renewed interest in conspiracy theory (West and Sanders 2003), I also argue for the productive capacity of conspiracy to articulate social anxieties (Harding and Stewart 2003) and offer alternative truths that “fill the explanatory void” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2003, 287). Conspiracy theories should not be dismissed as “paranoid delusions” (Hofstadter 1965) but rather should be examined closely to identify issues of pressing social concern. In line with this logic, Kirchner’s warnings about sojeros’ [soybean farmers] dubious intentions—which could either indicate her own preoccupation with their notoriously tense dynamic or be a political calculation meant to tap into the economic anxieties of the electorate—lead me to probe their relationship further.

Expertly drawing on the bounty of suspicions—indeed based on historical precedent—about Northern designs on Argentine sovereignty, Kirchner\(^1\) mapped out a network of unlikely co-conspirators plotting to derail her progressive agenda. Much of the Northern media coverage

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\(^1\)From this point forward, Kirchner refers to Cristina Fernández de Kirchner.
began to specialize in GM soy for export. In fact, the success of the GM soy industry was a critical component in rebuilding the economy after the 2001 collapse (ibid.). Moreover, the spread of GM soy was instrumental in Argentina’s emergence as a key player in Latin America’s “pink tide.” Nonetheless, the GM soy industry that flourished initially because of deregulation and the Kirchners, who championed redistributionist politics often relying on profits from GM soy exports, were philosophically at odds, resulting in enduring tensions. A point of agreement, however, seems to be that the economic benefits from an expansive GM soy industry far outweigh potential risks to the environment and health. Many scientists, politicians, and activists agree with Argentina’s pro-GMO model and herald the potential of GMOs to tackle some of the world’s most difficult to solve problems, most notably ending world hunger and the use of fossil fuels. Their optimism, however, has been met by fierce skepticism about whether this agricultural technology can effectively and ethically achieve such lofty goals.

Anxiety surrounding the proliferation of agricultural biotechnology has been intense worldwide. Unique to the Argentine context, however, is that civic debates about GM soy have more to do with economics than potential risks to human health and environmental sustainability, making many Argentines’ prevailing GMO-related anxieties remarkably dissimilar to those experienced elsewhere. In the United States and Europe, for example, it is common to hear activists express concerns over whether GMOs are safe to eat (Hakim 2016). Experiences in Argentina also stand apart from other countries in the Global South where Mexico’s well-studied ban on GM maize (Quist and Chapela 2001) and India’s mislaid hope in golden rice (Shiva 2002) have garnered much of the attention. In Argentina, there is huge emphasis on the positive effects GM soy has had on the national economy (Newell 2009) and disagreement on how to allocate export profits (Leguizamón 2014). Kirchner’s elision of science-related anxiety reflects a broader trend in public discourse across Argentina and prompts questions into Argentina’s overwhelming acceptance of GM soy (Liberatore and Funtowicz 2003). I argue that conspiracy theory involving GM soy’s economic prospects reveal both a pervasive unease about the industry, and that GM soy more closely indexes economic anxieties than environmental or health concerns.

I use this paper to explore how knowledge about GM soy in Argentina has circulated in such a way that it emerged as a symbol
of economic sovereignty. I develop the idea that conspiracy centers on Argentines’ deepest concerns and ask whether the GM soy industry is seen more as an obstacle to redistributive politics than as a threat to the health of the Argentine population. I begin with an overview of Argentina’s agricultural history to situate my discussion of how the interplay between Argentina’s GM soy industry squares with Kirchner’s theory of a “global modus operandi.” Next, I show how early regulatory mechanisms established to regulate GMOs may have contributed to the explosive uptake of GM soy in Argentina. Then, by putting anthropological literature on conspiracy in conversation with science studies scholarship on risk, I establish the parallels between institutional risk assessments and conspiracy theories, with each configuration trying to make sense of a universe of possible threats. Since I have not yet conducted in-country doctoral fieldwork, this essay is intended to pose more questions than it answers. Nonetheless, the preliminary conclusions I offer draw on data collected during a 2012 pilot study on Argentine agricultural practices, archival research completed in 2015 about Argentina’s influence on international GMO regulatory policy, and a review of media coverage on GM soy and the Kirchners’ presidencies.

Agriculture in Argentina

A century ago, Argentina was developing faster than the United States, Canada, and Australia in terms of population growth, per capita income, and total income (Cavallo et al. 1998). It was more than just Argentina’s explosive economic development, however, that inspired comparisons such as U.S. President Theodore Roosevelt’s when he fondly referred to Argentina as a “sister republic” (Salvatore 2008). Buenos Aires’ elites placed virtually no restrictions on European immigration in hopes of fashioning their nascent democratic institutions and cultural style on a European model (Celarent 2011). Following the settler logic of the time (Wolfe 1998), the rural interior’s nomadic gauchos and indigenous peoples were often viewed as impediments to national progress. Many urban elites argued they should be removed and replaced with a more “ideal type” (Shumway 1993). Decades long wars, known as the “conquests of the desert,” ensued whereby soldiers fighting at the behest of urban elites violently pushed back Argentina’s frontier. Developers backed by British investment then began to develop Argentina’s interior infrastructure by constructing railroads and shipping lanes intended to import culture and

2Even though the British established formal colonial rule within Argentine territory, Matthew Brown characterizes their investment in infrastructure and strong trade relationship as an informal empire (2009).
export agricultural goods (Gordillo 2011).

Since then, however, the country has faced periods of intense economic and political crisis (MacLachlan 2006). In fact, Argentina is the only country in the world to have gone from developed to developing in the last century (Pellegrini 2013). Critics call this Argentina’s “century of decline” (The Economist 2014) and blame unrestricted immigration policies that welcomed Europe’s least desirable citizens (Salvatore 2008), Peronism’s price controls that initiated periods of hyperinflation (Manzetti 1992), and military coups that led to periods of authoritarian rule (The Economist 2014). This stark divergence from the United States’ trajectory has led many to question Argentina’s presumed similarities with North Atlantic nations and to ask instead, what happened?

Economic conditions at the end of the twentieth century were again worsening after a brief period of growth in the 1990s. By late 2001, the IMF refused to release its next loan installment, the Argentine government was paying employees in IOUs, and then President Fernando de la Rúa's administration froze bank accounts. Infuriated, Argentines took to protesting in the streets across major cities. And by the end of December 2001, clashes between protesters and police became so intense in the capitol that President de la Rúa fled the presidential palace by helicopter. By then, though, Argentina entered the largest debt default in financial history.

Yet despite dismal economic indicators at the national level, the Argentine agricultural sector was undergoing a rebirth that began in 1996 legalization of GMOs. Farmers and landowners were planting GM crops in record numbers each year. Today, GM soy is farmed on approximately 60% of the country's agricultural surface and GM soy makes up 25% of all exports (Pellegrini 2013). Remarkably, soyaization expanded steadily during deregulation in the 1990s, the 2001 economic collapse, years of political crisis, and the rise and now fall of Kirchnerism. Upon winning the 2005 presidential elections, Néstor Kirchner made good on his promise to restart social programs terminated during Argentina’s neoliberal era in the 1990s. Again, soy exports were put to political work and financed the re-expansion. The state has taken consistent advantage of its early adopter and leading producer status to forge new trade partnerships, most notably South/South connections that bypass conditions imposed by

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3 Indeed, this line of questioning is extremely problematic most importantly in how it assumes racial composition should ensure a certain degree of national success. Nonetheless, it describes what remains a prevalent way of conceptualizing Argentina.
financial institutions and nation-states in the Global North. In a show of support for the soy industry, Argentina’s recently elected center-right president, Mauricio Macri, stated he would progressively reduce soy export taxes as he guides Argentina back toward greater integration with global markets. Throughout changes in dominant political and economic ideology, GM soy farmers have benefited from a dearth of state regulation.

Economic necessity can only partially explain GM soy’s popularity in Argentina. Indeed, many argue GM soy has been essential to debt servicing and that “without agribusiness and oil, Argentina would never [have met] the surplus [the IMF was] demanding” (Elsztain in Smith 2003). Argentina’s rural land barons, meanwhile, wielded their political influence to maintain a favorable regulatory climate (Newell 2009). According to World Bank data, 91% of Argentina’s population lives in urban centers, with nearly one third of the country’s population living in the capitol city of Buenos Aires and surrounding neighborhoods. Even with so many Argentines living in urban settings, a small cohort of landowners remain political heavyweights in domestic politics. The Sociedad Rurale, the rural lobbying group that represents Argentina’s largest landholders, advocates for policies that maintain the unregulated spread of transgenic crops (Fishlow 2013). Moreover, the majority of transgenic crops are typically produced for animal consumption abroad, not human consumption domestically. Unlike Bt-11 maize that sparked heated debates about safety for human consumption, few Argentines have to decide whether they want to consume GM soy varieties (Newell 2009).

Finally, when GMOs were legalized in Argentina, the United States had already completed testing and developed a regulatory framework, helping Argentine companies and regulatory bodies save on start-up costs and vetting processes normally associated with novel technologies (Cap 2004). Benefits from the rapidly expanding soy industry appear side by side with the less-discussed negative consequences such as pesticide over-exposure, illegal land grabs, and loss of small farmer autonomy (Teubal 2004). In considering the “dark side of the soy boom” (Lapegna 2013), anthropologist Gaston Gordillo argues that soy’s expansion is entirely contingent upon “sacrifice zones: geographies destroyed at the altar of profits and, in the case of Argentina, of the promise of a socially inclusive progress” (Gordillo 2014, 17). Between 1996 and 2008, the area used for soy cultivation nearly
tripled, growing from six million hectares to 16.7 million hectares, and has since expanded even further. The destruction of space “increases amid waves of economic acceleration and operates through...the idea that the planet is a blank, available surface to be exploited for profit” (ibid., 82). Sojeros exhausted existing farmland in the pampas early in the sojazación process and now push the agricultural frontier outward into the Gran Chaco, which is being deforested at one of the fastest rates in the world, to Salta in the northwest, to Santiago del Estero, and all the way to Rio Negro province in the far south of Argentina. Access to new land is often gained through evicting already marginalized peoples. Evictions have turned bloody on more than one occasion resulting in the deaths of four activists from peasant and indigenous organizations at the hands of the police and hired thugs—the culprits have yet to be prosecuted (Lapegna 2013). In ways that bear striking resemblance to victims from the “conquest of the desert” and political dissidents who were “disappeared” during the 1976-82 military junta, the absence of environmental regulation and the ready support for soy expansion shows the state to be complicit in wiping criollos and indigenous people “off the map” in service of capitalist imaginaries and national progress (ibid., 129). And while these negative consequences have profound effects, they seem mostly to affect already marginalized communities, and only very recently and with limited success, entered national level debates about the future of GMOs in Argentina.

Architecture of Conspiracy

Well into President Cristina Kirchner’s last term in office, reports of scandal in Argentina began to appear regularly in international headlines. The floodgates opened a year earlier with a legal dispute over economic sovereignty in which a group of U.S. hedge funds, known as “vulture funds,” filed a lawsuit in New York State District Court to compel Argentina to repay outstanding debt from its 2001 default. A legal dispute over economic sovereignty, in which Kirchner characterized “vulture funds” as the enemy of Argentine economic sovereignty, was beginning to snowball. The Kirchner administration soon became embroiled in scandals about judicial corruption, the suspicious death of Chief Prosecutor Alberto Nisman, and the country’s beleaguered economy. Not only were the mounting scandals threatening Kirchner’s progressive legacy, but for some, it was becoming harder to believe that the firestorm was mere coincidence. By the end, Argentina’s Intelligence Secretariat (SIDE), the judiciary, Jewish community groups, powerful
rural associations, sojeros, “vulture funds,” and the administration were all implicated.

On April 20th, 2015, after months on political defense, Kirchner issued a warning to the world: She had uncovered a global conspiracy intended to destabilize her administration. She published an open letter on her website about a “global modus operandi” in which a group of co-conspirators were “[generating] international political operations of any type, shape and color...[contributing] to financial attacks or simultaneous international media operations, or even worse, covert actions of various ‘services’ designed to destabilize governments.” She cast her adversaries as props of international hedge fund manager, Paul Singer, whose campaign to compel debt repayment would potentially net his firm, Elliott Management, a 1.3-billion-dollar profit.

From this period’s outset, Kirchner accused Argentina’s most profitable industry, GM soy, of colluding with alleged free-market allies, the “vulture funds.” Kirchner’s relationship with the soybean industry has been fraught; on the one hand, profits from exports financed the revival of domestic social programs, but on the other, sojeros fought hard against relinquishing those profits for redistribution. Kirchner leveraged this tension when she pushed back against the maelstrom of conspiracies threatening to engulf her administration.

We have local financers among us who conspire with the vulture funds, we have the soybean farmers who have lost fortunes for being silly and not selling the beans on time as they were recommended. They preferred to speculate with prices by sitting on a third of the soybean crop, while prices dropped from almost 600 dollars to 360 dollars. (Kirchner, October 2014, MERCOSUR press).

This was not the first time the Kirchner administration came to blows with the GM soy industry over trade policies. Back in 2008, sojeros protested Kirchner’s tax hike on soy exports by blocking arterial roadways connecting GM soy-producing regions with port cities for months. Most importantly, Kirchner’s objections are economic in nature. Nowhere does she mention that the GM soy industry is depleting Argentine soil, inciting illegal land grabs, or using dangerously high levels of pesticides. If anything, Kirchner admonishes the industry for not exporting more soybeans. The absence of environmental and health issues that generate so much political action...
elsewhere reveals there is indeed something peculiar about GM soy’s primacy but also that it is deeply embedded in the Argentine economy.

The tension between Kirchner’s administration and the GM soy industry was just one piece of much larger geopolitical puzzle that once assembled, appears meant to draw on persistent anxiety about Northern financial interests sabotaging the Argentine economy. Though seemingly convoluted at first, there is an elegance to the way in which Kirchner organized her political adversaries as enemies of her political base, the urban, working class. The following is a discussion of the many different moving parts and is meant to illustrate Kirchner’s damming of the GM soy industry.

Kirchner claimed “vulture funds” masterminded Alberto Nisman’s investigation into Kirchner’s alleged involvement in covering-up Iranian involvement in the 1994 AMIA Jewish Community Center bombings in Buenos Aires. Nisman’s apparent murder took place the night before he was scheduled to present his findings to the Argentine Congress and just after he requested a judge freeze $23 million dollars of Kirchner’s assets. At first glance, it looked like Kirchner had the most to gain from Nisman’s death. Her subsequent and at times clumsy attempts to prove her innocence in Nisman’s death only drew further scrutiny about her possible involvement. Paul Singer also launched a website to disseminate Nisman’s 300-page criminal complaint about the alleged cover-up. Prior to his death, Nisman accused high-ranking officials in the Iranian government of the AMIA bombings. Even though this became most people’s working theory, it has questionable underpinnings. Most notably, in 2008 Nisman issued an arrest warrant for former president Carlos Menem and his brother, the children of Syrian immigrants, for allegedly derailing an investigation into Syrian involvement in the attacks. Also, a former FBI agent involved in the case, James Bernazanni, stated evidence of Iranian involvement was tenuous at best (Filkin 2015).

Initially, it appeared as if Nisman’s death was a suicide and Kirchner readily agreed with those findings. But once the suspicious circumstances surrounding Nisman’s death started making international headlines, Kirchner changed her position (Gilbert and Gladstone 2015). Instead, she accused SIDE of involvement saying, “They used him while he was alive and then they needed him dead” (2015). Because Nisman did not have the financial resources necessary to launch a full-scale investigation into the bombings, he relied on alternative sources. He frequented the American Embassy
to report and exchange findings, but also relied heavily on Argentina’s Director of Counterintelligence, Antonio (Jaime) Stiusso, who consistently pointed Nisman to Iranian involvement, even though provenance of Stiusso’s intelligence remains unclear. SIDE is widely regarded as corrupt and believed to have significant influence over the Argentine judiciary with a poignant legacy from the Dirty War (Goñi 2015). At one point in the 20-year-long investigation, investigators discovered that SIDE supplied the presiding judge with 400,000 pesos to bribe a key witness for the prosecution when Buenos Aires police officers involved in a car theft ring were suspected of supplying the car used in the bombings (Faulk 2012).

Kirchner also alleged that Nisman and Singer were allies in derailing a burgeoning Argentina-Iran partnership. Back in 2013, Argentina’s Foreign Minister, Héctor Timmerman, entered a joint Argentine-Iranian “Memorandum of Understanding.” The memorandum outlined a “truth commission” dedicated to a collaborative investigation into the 1994 attacks (La Nación 2013). It seems to have been a first attempt by Kirchner to encourage Interpol to withdraw “red notices” on Iranian suspects. According to Nisman and others, this could have generated trade between Argentina and Iran. Specifically, it would have been a food for fuel exchange (Goñi 2015). Kirchner administration officials, however, disputed this claim on the premise that high sulfur content in Iranian oil is 6 times what Argentine refineries allow. Kirchner’s now defunct memorandum could have been meant to needle perceived adversaries such as the United States and Europe, but may have also been out of necessity due to Argentina’s increasingly isolated position in the global economy.

During the final stages of his investigation, Nisman was heard saying, “If necessary, Paul Singer will help us” during an address to Argentina’s main Jewish umbrella group, DAIA (Goñi 2015). Nisman seemed to count on Singer’s record of speaking out against Argentina’s potential collaboration with Iran as well as his financial contributions to the group. Singer, meanwhile, used Argentina’s dealings with Iran as further justification that they should be forced to repay debts at the full amount. In July of 2014, Singer wrote a letter to then U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder urging him to side against Argentina during the “vulture funds” disputes, arguing that “at a time when the rest of the world (including the United States) is attempting to isolate Iran to pressure it to give up its nuclear program.” Moreover, American Task Force Argentina,
Singer’s anti-Kirchner advocacy group, financially contributed to several U.S. lawmakers who in turn issued public statements warning that “rewarding Argentina’s decision to flout well-established international principles regarding the orderly restructuring of sovereign debts has clearly emboldened its leaders to defy other international norms with impunity” (Mercopress 2013).

Kirchner alleged that Singer offered financial assistance to Argentina’s Jewish groups in support of lobbying efforts to stymy trade agreements with Iran. Last spring, Argentina’s first Jewish Foreign Minister, Héctor Timerman, resigned his membership from the AMIA Jewish Community Center and DAIA citing egregious, “obstructionist” actions regarding the investigation into the 1994 bombings. Similarly, former director of DAIA, Jorge Elbaum, published an article outlining back-alley agreements between Israel, “vulture funds,” and Argentine Zionists operating both within the government and amongst civil society. Accordingly, each is accusing Singer, via Argentina’s Jewish groups of seeking to destabilize the center-left government (Elbaum 2015).

GM soy in Argentina has not sparked widespread controversy over adverse effects to the environment, health, and the rural labor market (Delvenne et al. 2013; Stone 2010). Instead, it has become a tool and symbol of economic sovereignty that at once builds on Argentina’s longstanding reliance on its agricultural productivity to assert global influence, and places Argentina as a world leader in this agricultural revolution. Many still think there is something unsettling about the GM soy industry even though controversies surrounding GMO cultivation and consumption do not resonate as widely in Argentina. Soy’s critics in Argentina have only recently gained traction in condemning their adverse effects. Yet still, it seems that growing attention to the “dark side of the soy boom” is still, mostly, about the industry’s financial interests, and not the environmental and health effects (Lapegna 2013). Kirchner’s placement of the GM soy industry among this international cabal came about a time of growing economic uncertainty. And the way in which she framed the threat posed by the industry was in economic terms. This was surely a political calculation meant to save her presidency, which suggests that her choice for framing the GM soy industry in economic terms was her best shot at tapping into pervasive anxieties. If this was her most effective strategy, the next question must be, how did GM soy bypass contentious civic debate about health and environmental risks and jump right to its role as economic
salvation?

Regulatory Expertise in Argentina
Like several other Latin American states in the 1990s, Argentina was a transitional democracy recovering from dictatorship, turning increasingly to free-market solutions prescribed by financial institutions in the North. Former President Carlos Menem put Argentina through a textbook neoliberal restructuring by privatizing state-held industries, dollarizing the economy, and decimating social welfare programs (Cieza 2008). He also maintained a climate of deregulation for the agro-industrial complex at the behest of powerful interest groups (Newell 2009). One byproduct of structural adjustment was the legalization of GMOs at the height of the IMF’s regional influence, making it the first country to do so in Latin America. Promptly following legalization, production of cereals surpassed livestock production, which had been a stalwart of the Argentine export market (Food and Agriculture Organization). The regulatory framework first established for GMOs set the tone for decades to come.

Before the end of the Washington Consensus, regulation throughout Latin America reflected neoliberal values of privatization and liberalization (Delvenne, et al. 2013). Regulatory bodies were meant to operate outside the political realm and produce regulations grounded in scientific and technical expertise (Yeung 2010). Dubash and Morgan argue that in the case of South American regulatory bodies, however, extensive international pressures coupled with a strong climate of redistributive politics where “regulation is too important to be left to the regulators” (Dubash and Morgan 2012) seems to have undermined objectivity.

In 1996 when GMOs were legalized, Argentina had no laws specifying how to regulate GMOs (Pellegrini 2013). The state responded by establishing one of the first GMO regulatory bodies in the world. The three branches of Argentina’s agricultural regulatory bureaucracy, in charge of environmental risk (CONABIA⁴), health risk (SENASA), and market risks (DMA), are cast as expert organizations, despite notable conflicts of interest (Pellegrini 2013). Industry and corporate interests are well represented throughout the regulatory process, which prompts questions about whose interests they serve. CONABIA, for example, is tasked with producing environmental risk assessments, and is the first regulatory stop for new products.

⁴ Comisión Nacional Asesora de Biotecnología Agropecuaria
Scholars note that Argentina’s regulatory process tends toward being a “policy-mirror” (ibid.), meaning regulatory experts look to safety standards in places where Argentine GMOs are exported most often. An example of this dynamic is when the European Community (EC) instituted a moratorium on imports of GM agricultural products from 1998 until 2003. The EC espouses the precautionary principle, which means if a new product’s risks are unknown or are controversial, it should not be introduced until those issues are resolved. The EC based its own regulatory procedures on two directives: first, Directive 2001/18 is concerned with “the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms.” The second is European Community Regulation 258/97, which regulates “novel foods and novel food ingredients” (World Trade Organization 2010). The EC was operating under the guidance that each state has the “sovereign right to makes its own decisions on GMOs in accordance with the values prevailing in its societies” (BBC 2006). Individual member states were empowered to interrupt regulatory proceedings with those Directives that allow objectors to implement “safeguard measures” based on scientific findings even after European Community-wide approval (ibid.). Argentina’s DMA failed to legalize an interinstitutional advisory group responsible for evaluating scientific and technical issues associated with the potential impacts of GMOs” (ibid., 12). CONABIA is run by a body of experts, including many from the private sector. As of 2014, Syngenta and Dow AgroSciences sent experts to serve on CONABIA, and Monsanto and Bay Crop Science representatives advised in the Chamber of Fertilizers. Argentine biotech firms also loan experts to CONABIA (Pellegrini 2013). Public research institution experts serve on CONABIA in roughly equal numbers as the private sector experts. Many public experts, however, rely on funding from private corporations to conduct their research (ibid.). The process typically takes six years for a new product to pass through Argentina’s increasingly complex and strict regulatory screening process. Interestingly, this seems to benefit large, well-funded multinational corporations because few others can afford the legalization process for novel agricultural products (Delvenne et al. 2013). It stands to reason that the [overwhelming] presence of experts from private biotech firms and long processing times contributed to the comparatively light GMO regulation in Argentina.

Once a novel product successfully makes its way through CONABIA and SENASA, the DMA then begins to assess market risks.
single new GM product throughout much of the EU moratorium even though some products were approved by SENASA and CONABIA until 2001 (Delvenne et al. 2013). Even though Argentina is a global producer of GMOs and the EC a consumer, the “policy-mirror” model espoused by Argentine GMO regulators is limited by sound science norms in the Global North, even though the EC’s rejection of GMOs is out of line with scientific consensus. Several other factors have allowed GMOs to embed deeply in Argentina: The absence of traceability standards, no distinction between transgenic and non-transgenic seed varieties, and perhaps most importantly, the fact that legalizing novel seeds looks only at the product itself, not the process (Delvenne et al. 2013; Pellegrini 2013). Taken together, existing regulation seem almost entirely economic in nature, and when regulatory hurdles are imposed, they address risk assessments being produced elsewhere.

**Conspiracy and Risk**

Argentina’s national regulatory bodies were so successful at framing GMOs as safe and sustainable that most controversy and conspiracy have to do with economics and not environmental and health issues. If such sweeping conspiracies simply ignore the environmental and health issues, is it plausible that GM soy’s stability in the Argentine economy is taken for granted? I have drawn heavily from Harding and Stewart’s description of conspiracy theory “as an embodied anxiety that articulates the stresses, contradictions, and dreams of redemption of a subject under the influence of diffuse and haunting social, political, and discursive force fields” (2003, 264). Crucially, Kirchner’s expansive conspiracy theory touches on an array of issues most important to Argentines, such as independence from the Global North, the nefarious power of rural land barons, economic sovereignty, and religious freedom. It does not, however, mention the effects that GM soy is having on rural populations and the environment—an issue that could have easily been framed to emphasize implications on sovereignty, economics, and corruption. Therefore, it is the absence of conspiratorial thinking about environmental and health risks that is most remarkable.

When historian Richard Hofstadter began publishing on conspiracy in 1964, conspiracies were often ignored in academic discussions (Hofstadter 1964). Until recently, Hofstadter’s approach prevailed and conspiracy theories were dismissed as “bizarre and irrational” (Ostler 2003) or “silly and without merit” (Keeley 1999, 109), even pathological (Hellinger 2003) musings of...
So expands the universe of possible risks, and anxiety about potentially imminent risks that can accompany these advancements. Political scientists, economists, and policymakers typically manage with the ubiquity of unknowable risk (Beck 1992) through empirical risk assessments such as cost-benefit analysis, expert analysis, and econometrics, to identify potential risks, assess their likelihood, and mitigate adverse effects. Techniques to assess risk are continually refined and approximating reality more closely than ever before. They often gain credibility through reflecting the “completeness” of their model (Jasanoff 2003) or through projecting objectivity (Jasanoff 1990). For realists, experts and expertise are key to determining the extent of and containment strategies for risk (Kusch 2007). In the case of GMOs, controversy surrounds the types of risk and the extent of risk they pose to humans and the environment. Bruno Latour sees the “genius of the model [stemming] from the role by a very small number of persons, the only ones capable of going back and forth” (Latour 2009). The realist model is built on the notion that the truth is out there and will be discovered, deciphered, and translated by experts.

Theories of existential risk, on the other hand, respond to the implicit contradictions of empirical risk. STS
resources being poured into realist models of risk assessment and mitigation, scholarly attention should also be paid to what happens when these models fail. When well-funded risk assessments fail to predict the eventual outcome, many are left confused, searching for answers outside of mainstream scientific and political voices. It is here, where official narratives stop making sense that conspiracy theories flourish. Crucially, conspiracy theories develop along the same Enlightenment logic of truth seeking through rational inquiry that we see with expert risk assessment. However, when someone or some group senses “that something is not as it is said to be” (West and Sanders 2003, 2), conspiracy can offer an alternative explanation that may “fill the explanatory void” (Comaroff and Comaroff 2003). There exists in Argentina conspiracy theory and institutional risk assessment that build from agricultural history and function to circulate knowledge in support of unfettered expansion of GM soy production.

Conclusion
In this paper, I used conspiracy theories to gage the constitution of collective anxiety, which I argued includes the GM soy industry—but only its economic aspects. This points both to a broad-based distrust of the powerful soybean industry and the

scholars, amongst other critical social theorists (for example, Auyero and Swistun 2009; Gusterson 1998), tend to see the realist approach as flawed from outset to implementation. Building on decades of scholarship, STS scholars reject realists’ attempts to separate the social from the scientific. Instead, Sheila Jasanoff, for example, shows how situated politics shape shared understandings of risk that invariably shift depending on political or social context (Jasanoff 2011). Acknowledging the situated and changeable nature of risk further complicates the realist view that risk can be bracketed and anchored in quantitative terms. Moreover, Brian Wynne criticizes experts’ tendency to privilege scientific expertise and dismiss lay knowledge without due consideration (Wynne 1995). Others note how privileging sites of scientific fact production to prevent the public from “diluting and endangering” the scientific process will more likely diminish the quality of knowledge (Nowotny 2003, 2).

Conspiracy theory and risk assessment are more similar than one might expect. Both the empirical and existential approaches to risk assessment attend to ways people negotiate risk. The realist perspective, however, remains widely preferred from an institutional perspective while the existential is still largely theoretical. With tremendous
success of a politically motivated expert regulatory system that allowed Argentina to become an early adopter of GMO farming technology and to advocate aggressively for pro-GMO policy today. Risk assessment experts working at the time of GMO legalization had clear political motivations to ensure the successful passage of GMOs into mainstream Argentine agricultural practices. Their success has been so profound that it all but foreclosed the possibility for widespread civic protest on anything other than economic grounds. Kirchner’s all-encompassing conspiracy theory reflects this division between the process of growing GMOs to the process of exporting them by only questioning the economic motivations of sojeros and not the risks posed to rural communities by increased pesticide used, significant soil depletion, or the mechanized nature of GMO cultivation that is reducing the number of rural jobs. During doctoral fieldwork, I hope to probe what conspiratorial thinking says about expert risk assessments in the case of Argentina’s soyazación. At the heart of the matter is how GM soy so quickly and so completely become the lifeblood of Argentina.

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Remnants of Colonialist Ideology in Patagonian Tourism Representations and How Collaborative Heritage Tourism Can become Inclusive Heritage

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Abstract. This paper explores the way in which colonial discourse is engaged and represented throughout the Argentinian Patagonian tourism industry and accompanying cultural heritage sites, as a resource from which local cultural communities gain political and social capital. Patagonian history is often associated with the presence of three distinct groups—the early Spanish colonial settlers, the indigenous groups, and the more contemporary Welsh diaspora. However, only the Welsh have been able to capitalize on this history. Regional history now commemorates and values Welsh presence over both predecessor groups. Despite this unequal valuing, however, Welsh heritage could conceivably be positioned as a tool for collaboration with that of indigenous heritage, in order to elevate this marginalized ethnic minority, and create a more inclusive heritage tourism destination. This paper explores the multiple cultural histories of the Patagonian landscape, through the lens of heritage representation, to argue how and why Welsh heritage is privileged, compared to its Patagonian counterparts, and the potential implications of the positioning of Welsh heritage for the Patagonian heritage industry more broadly.

Keywords. Heritage Narratives, Tourism, Cultural Landscapes

Developing a tourism infrastructure is touted as productive and viable economic, and sometimes political, agenda for historically marginalized and disenfranchised communities, often in destination countries, in order to achieve some sort of economic stability and success. In fact, tourism scholarship has shown that, tourism development can lead to increased living standards, as well as increased community political participation. While development agendas are often at the state level, there can also be opportunities for grassroots tourism development (Hall 1994). However, not all communities have the capital (in the
form of social, cultural, economic, political, and so forth) to mobilize in such ways. In fact, in some national contexts, post-colonial national narratives have effectively erased the existence of indigenous groups as part of the contemporary national community, resulting in, for all intents and purposes, an inability to access resources that could otherwise be obtained through tourism development to mobilize group identity and heritage. Such is the case with the remaining indigenous communities, the Mapuche and the Tehuelche, in Argentina. Internal colonial processes, in the form of pervasive subordination of a particular population, have resulted in the indigenous communities experiencing social closure, or limited participation, in the tourism industry in Chubut Province (Pinderhughes 2011). Interestingly, the Welsh diaspora community in the Patagonian province of Chubut has, in stark contrast, been highly successful at mobilizing their heritage for the local and provincial tourism.

It is my intent, throughout this paper to make the argument that as two groups who offer alternatives to Argentine national heritage, primarily recalling Spanish cultural traditions, the Welsh Patagonian community and the indigenous groups could conceivably collaborate to diversify the regional cultural heritage tourism industry in the Chubut province, as a means to further economic and political goals, including increased local representation and recognition in politics as well as other development projects. These processes would, ideally, begin to undermine what has been the continued subordination of the indigenous communities by reworking the dominant tourism narrative toward one of cultural equality in order to enable indigenous access to the tourism industry as a source for capital gains. While the values of inequality as a consequence of internal colonialism within the Argentine nation are implicit in heritage representations, heritage narratives are not static and can therefore be reworked to be more inclusive. I will first provide the theoretical foundations for my claims, as well as a justification for why I think, especially for the two seemingly disparate groups I am highlighting, collaboration would be highly beneficial for both. I will additionally provide a brief historical context to situate my claims, framing the differential historical trajectory and contemporary outcomes of both populations, through the lens of internal colonialism. I will begin by framing this paper with the notion of alterity before moving on to themes of heritage mobilization.

Alterity, or otherness, can signify both similarity and difference.
because, while subaltern identities imply difference from more powerful hegemonic identities, they may also be used to create relational ties to other subaltern groups who may have had similar histories/experiences, or been marginalized in comparable ways. However, simply because subaltern identities may relate to one another on some level, in the form of similar past experience, we must be careful not to oversimplify and mistakenly assume sameness (Hoffmann and Peeren 2010). Heritage sites are venues where these identities can be represented, put on display for public consumption, and often given a voice not previously attained. In this way, heritage sites can be sources of legitimation and serve a public educational role (Graham et al. 2000). Lowenthal notes that heritage can be used as a productive resource for marginalized communities, but can also be highly exclusionary depending on which narrative(s) are favored or, conversely, which are ignored (1998).

Landscapes are implicated into these processes because collective activity on, and remembering of, physical space and place creates emblematic and symbolic landscapes, with which we associate certain cultural meanings, ideas of ownership, as well as a location where aspects of group identities have developed (Graham et al. 2000; Hoffmann 2010). As Cosgrove notes, landscapes are “signifiers of the culture of those who have made them” (1998: 8). Linear narratives of place are often used to recount the history of the landscape. However, the unintended consequence of such tactics is that groups and identities are sometimes presented as traditional, historical remnants. A group presented as ‘maintaining tradition’ is then positioned as ‘lost in time’ and having never reached modernity. This is an unfortunate remnant of colonial history that mistakenly ordered social groups based on the cultural evolutionary model (Taylor 2013). Consequently, contemporary popular memory is in many ways still linked to elite historical memory and, therefore, heritage is often still valued hierarchically in many tourism destinations. Thus, so are landscapes and the people and values associated with them.

Anette Hoffmann, however, suggests that heritage narrative can be used to re-signify landscapes and identities (2010). Graham et al. note that landscapes can become places of resistance, or localities to question the dominant narrative (2000). Some groups have effectively rejected former colonial constructions by reworking their heritage in a way that enables these groups to reassert relevance to and representation in national discourses. Therefore, throughout this paper, I would like
to highlight the ways in which the current narrative for the Chubut tourism industry in Patagonia would need to be retooled, not necessarily as a site of resistance, but more so as an inclusive alternative to Argentine national heritage. The contemporary representations of the landscape are the results of the historical maltreatment and unequal valuing of the different ethnic groups in the region. As such, for this paper, the concept or re-signifying the landscape is especially salient considering that the two groups discussed here, the Welsh diaspora and the indigenous Mapuche and Tehuelche communities, share claims to the same landscape and, as a result, to provincial history. Before moving into the specifics of this paper, however, I want to address one other concept that is useful in conceptualizing my claim.

I will continue by discussing Appadurai’s concept of “grassroots globalization” in relation to how I envision this concept can be used within tourism to create more viable, and inclusive, tourism destinations (Appadurai 2006:131-135). Grassroots globalization is, in essence, the idea that marginalized groups can align with one another, in common struggles, as an attempt to gain recognition and representation (state). This has been evidenced in indigenous movements throughout Latin America, beginning in the 1960s where revolutionary movements began to plant the “seeds of indigenous nation-building” (Houghton and Bell 2004:10). That is, when ‘indigeneity’ is left relatively undefined, maximum potential can be reached because the identity can be strategically used and adapted dependent on the context of mobilization (Hoffmann and Peeren 2010: 22). In this way, it is important to make the distinction between globalization, used here to denote the global exchange of resources, ideas, and values, and homogenization, or the flattening of defining and unique characteristics. The intersecting and joining forces, so to speak, of group identities for a larger goal does not inherently equal the flattening, or loss of specificity, of distinct groups, though occasionally it does result in smaller, less powerful groups being absorbed into larger group dialogues, as demonstrated by Huub van Barr in his discussion of Romani holocaust survivors and the presentation of Roma groups within holocaust heritage. In that example, the Roma experience is often overshadowed by the larger group experience of holocaust survivors but, at the same time, having aligned with this larger group has enabled the Roma to achieve a voice, including global recognition that they had not yet attained previously (van Baar 2010: 115-118). Therefore, we see in this example the strategic employment
of a marginal identity as a tool for broader recognition in this example. This can then be broadened out and ideally applied to other groups who have not yet been able to gain the same global recognition. Before delving into the intricacies of the case study on which I wish to elaborate, I will outline my methodology and provide a brief history of the Welsh community in Argentina to provide the context for my argument.

Methodology

The data for this paper comes from ethnographic field research carried out over 12 months, divided between three different trips to Chubut, over three years. I came to study Welsh heritage in Argentina after completing heritage research in Wales and learning about the intricacies and complicated positioning that Welsh heritage holds in the United Kingdom. The prospect of a thriving Welsh community in the middle of Patagonia struck my curiosity, as it did for many, and I sought to understand how Welsh heritage would be practiced in a distinctly different national context. After my first trip to the region, I realized the story of Welsh heritage in Patagonia was much more complex, and inextricably intertwined with indigenous heritage. As part of my project, I sought to determine the ways in which Welsh and indigenous heritages were displayed differentially. Similarly to some of my previous research, I undertook a narrative analysis of museum displays and tourism literature, to better understand the complex relationship the presentation of heritage of each community’s heritage had in Argentina. Though this was not the sole focus of my various trips to the field, I devoted significant time and energy toward visiting cultural and historical museums, regional and town-based tourism offices, heritage festivals, as well as collecting and analyzing physical and web-based tourism literature to determine the stories being told both by and about each community. Due to the ethnographic nature of my project, I was additionally able to contextualize the above noted data based on lived experience in the region. This perspective enabled me to holistically understand the imagery presented through the tourism industry and its relationship to the lived reality of community members of each ancestry group.

The Patagonian Heritage Landscape

The Welsh arrived in Argentina in 1865, in an attempt to escape British hegemonic control over language, tradition, religion, labor, and other ‘cultural givens’ in the nationalist sense (Smith 1998; Williams 1991). Despite disagreements with the
Argentine government for the first several decades of the Welsh presence in Patagonia, including forced assimilation through Argentine schooling, conscripted military service, among other strategies, Welsh identity has been revitalized throughout different periods of the past 150 years and provincial memory, and textbook history, is now strongly linked to Welsh contributions to the region (de Oleaga and Bohoslavsky 2011; Williams 1991). The semi-nomadic Mapuche and Tehuelche lived in the region long before the Welsh arrived, their story tends to be nothing more than a preface to the actual transformation of the Patagonian landscape from an uninhabited, undesirable region into what has become a largely ecotourism destination, characterized by tropes of the untouched wilderness, frontier region of the country (Mendez 2010). In this construction of the landscape, semi-mobility or nomadism that of a liability because it implies a lack of rootedness, or formal engagement with or use of the land. These artificial attributions can, and often do, lead to the recalling of ideas from colonial regimes, and serve as elusive forms of neo-colonialism.

This heavy preferentialism toward Welshness, or Welsh history and heritage, is readily seen throughout the tourism literature and brochures, as well as municipal websites, which boast the continued presence and influence of Welshness throughout the region. The favoritism toward Welsh heritage, over that of indigenous heritage, stems from the values upon which the Argentine nation was developed. Expansionist ideologies predicated on settling undeveloped Patagonian territory, coupled with the desire of the highly centralized Argentine government to whiten the young nation resulted in a persistent proclivity toward European, broadly defined, heritage (Gordillo and Hirsch 2003). As a consequence of the Conquest of the Desert, a targeted campaign throughout the latter part of the Nineteenth Century to remove the indigenous presence from Argentina, the country has not experienced indigenous revitalization in the same way as other South and Central American nations have (Houghton and Bell 2004).

One example of the very literal way in which Welsh heritage is valued more highly, in tourism rhetoric in this example, comes from the City of Esquel’s website, which emphasizes Welsh contributions to the city, as indicated in the following quote directly from the tourism part of the website, under the Welsh Culture tab, “The [Welsh] cultural legacy of the first settlers in the valley endures…” or, “With the arrival of the first immigrants to the area in the late 19th
political processes, are essentially eliminated (2010: 180). The general rhetoric is that no indigenous peoples exist in the contemporary period, within Uruguay’s borders. This has the implicit effect of whitening the population and precludes any possibility of Uruguayan identity that recognizes, even in part, the contribution of indigenous values (Hoffmann and Peeren 2010). Similar outcomes for what was called the Conquest of the Desert in Argentine history have been witnessed in Argentina whereby the Argentine national narrative and identity recalls primarily European heritage (de Oleaga and Bohoslavsky 2011). The indigenous communities do not have access to European heritage claims and thus are constructed through the heritage and tourism industry in a way that contrasts the Welsh narrative significantly. This is a prime example of the way in which heritage has been used to silence the voice of one group, and elevate the visibility of another.

To expand, Anette Hoffmann notes that linking indigenous identities to territory can result in these groups being conceived of as unchanging and “natural”, in an animalistic sense, rather than as adapting to the postcolonial conditions of their current circumstances (2010: 166-5). Sztainbok goes on to state that, “conceptualizing a people in a certain century, so began the development the region as we know it today” (City of Esquel 2015). In contrast, while there is a tab for Native Peoples, they are presented as follows, “The Tehuelches and the Mapuches were the first inhabitants to these lands,” and, “They witnessed the birth and development of our city, and though many have moved and adapted, others still live in permanent contact with nature and using the earth as a means of life” (City of Esquel 2015). It is clear through these examples that visitors get the impression that the indigenous groups are spoken about as a part of pre-history, and passive bystanders to progress. The indigenous communities are also presented as having largely left the area willfully and of their own accord but, in actuality, indigenous groups still live in the region, albeit in small numbers and relatively poor communities. Nonetheless, narratives such as these from the tourism industry naturalize in the 21st century the purposeful and often violent removal and population transfer of the indigenous groups from the area that took place throughout the 19th century. Vannina Sztainbok discusses similar narrative processes in Uruguay, and notes that these “national realities” are problematic because in both countries, the indigenous groups are, in narrative, but subsequently in economic and
way constitutes them and the space they inhabit” (2010: 182). Because the indigenous are constructed as hunter-gatherers, devoid of any official claims to the land, they are also recounted as having disappeared after European settlement. In this way, we see that strict boundedness to a place, or being ‘local’ (synonymous with being native) is also a liability because of the negative connotations associated with an inability to move from/leave a place due to access to resources. The Welsh, in this example, are able to more fluidly and easily move within and between the ‘mobile’ and ‘local’ categories because of their diaspora status. The Welsh community was, at one point, mobile in the initial migration to Argentina, and notably at a time where European heritage was highly valued, but at the same time are credited for working and developing the land in a manner that has afforded the community ‘first-place’ claims on which to develop a heritage tourism industry and aligns with colonialist values of productive land use (Berg 2017). In this way, it becomes very easy to see how and why Chubut provincial memory is inextricably linked to Welshness, rather than indigeneity. Narratives presented through the tourism industry, developed to tell the story of the people who inhabit the iconic Patagonian landscape, corroborate historical claims over the physical land, and contemporary claims over the intangible heritage not only by, but more importantly for, the Welsh descendants. This process of rooting a particular group identity to a physical space has enable the Welsh community to capitalize on material benefits of establishing a tourism destination.

Collaboration Through Heritage
Despite the hierarchical valuing of Welsh cultural traditions in Argentina, relative to indigeneity, it is precisely the power that Welshness, and more generally European ties, carry in Argentine national discourse that position the Welsh community as a viable partner to collaborate with local indigenous communities to more effectively mobilize their own heritage and gain legitimacy, recognition, and presence I claim here that, because the Welsh have been able to harness “firstness” for Patagonia, but at the same time the indigenous could also rightfully possess this claim, collaboration in the form of developing new and reworking extant tourism narratives of these alternatives to Argentine national identity could be economically and politically fruitful for both communities (Hoffmann 2010: 162). Following, I will discuss the politics of heritage in Chubut, as well as the avenue I envision for collaboration between the two
are remnants of a very European tradition to collect and display materials of community significance (Pearce 1999). The Welsh in Argentina have harnessed the ability to document their history, experience, and influence on the region, through the preservation and display of physical documents and artifacts throughout the above-mentioned Welsh community maintained museums (Hoskins 2003). Therefore, Chubut regional tourism plainly favors Welsh cultural heritage. And yet, because both communities have been marginalized by the Argentine state at various periods and, due to this mutually subaltern positioning (though experienced very differently by the indigenous communities relative to the Welsh descendants, especially in the contemporary period due to a longer and more aggressive history of marginalization), this would be the common ground on which to create a collaborative initiative.

Ethnicity is salient to any discussion of the impacts of internal colonialism as it relates to heritage tourism industry because it is through “museumization” that certain identities have been given voice while others have been silenced (MacCannell 1984). In essence, not all groups have had the ability to access a point of productive positioning in the state-level hierarchy of identities. (de Oleaga and Bohoslavsky 2011).
While there are a few museums and monuments commemorating the indigenous experience, these sites are just a small fraction compared to those of the Welsh, and these sites tend to be much less frequently community-organized and are often in the form of stereotyped imagery that reaffirm the Argentine national, power-laden discourse that has kept these communities in a marginal position for centuries. For this reason, it is my claim, then, that the Welsh community could work with the indigenous communities to create joint cultural heritage sites, and re-brand the Patagonian cultural tourism industry as an inclusive and multicultural province that recognizes and presents the multiplicity of histories in the region.

While the move away from a singular heritage and exclusionary landscape representation is generally productive by virtue of inclusivity and accounting for hybridity and generally helping to make the network more productive, multicultural heritage representations for a single place or landscape are not without tensions, of course. Narratives, even when layered, are often still created in a way to fit dominant, power-laden ideologies that undoubtedly result in hierarchical valuing of the multiple identity-narratives in a locality (Graham et al. 2000). Given the historically marginal position of both groups, as far as Argentine history goes, it could prove to be a productive move for the indigenous groups and the Welsh to begin representing history in a mutually respectful, productive manner that tells an alternate story to Argentine national history.

Discussion
Recent heritage and tourism scholarship has sought to capture the nature of stakeholder involvement in heritage tourism development, planning, and management. This public interest focus has sought to approach the heritage industry from a bottom-up community engaged approach, as opposed to the traditional top-down commercial approach, to better engage those who are directly affected by and involved in heritage tourism, in destinations all over the world. The intent of such collaborations would be to minimize potential future conflicts arising from mismanagement of heritage resources and misrepresentation of stakeholder groups (Porter and Salazar 2005). Collaboration within the tourism and heritage industry is not unheard of, and in fact, Aas et al. note that, due to the common goals stakeholders often have in creating a viable tourism destination, collaboration is not only possible, but ideal (2005). Collaboration is highly positive, from a human rights
perspective, because opinions from different communities and groups are often heard and accounted for, rather than being overlooked. Additionally, resources are put toward the collective goal, which can help elevate more marginalized groups, and create a more egalitarian destination vis-à-vis capital gains and shared ownership (Aas et al. 2005). This is not to say, however, that equilateral relationships are a direct consequence of collaboration. Rather, this unequal historical balance of power needs to be explicitly addressed, or could lead to continued imbalance. Such would most certainly be the case with the Welsh descendant community, if they were to collaborate with the indigenous groups.

While it is certainly not my intention to make the claim that the Welsh are an indigenous group for the region, so to speak, or that their experience can be truly compared to that of the indigenous communities, their own marginal status at points in their 150 history in the nation [to a different degree] does provide a source of allegiance. In fact, throughout many of the Welsh museums currently, the Welsh highlight a productive and friendly relationship between themselves and the indigenous communities who lived in the region when the Welsh arrived and established their settlements. In some instances, they even include artifacts that would have been used by indigenous groups in an earlier era, though these artifacts are often presented devoid of any context or interpretive description (de Oleaga and Bohoslavsky 2011). While it is not inconceivable that the Welsh could rework their own museum narratives to better recount the indigenous experience, the narratives as they currently stand are problematic because they do not account for the complexity of the relationship between the Welsh settlers, the indigenous groups, and the Argentine government. In fact, as Gonzalez de Oleaga and Bohoslavsky claim, these museums preclude the possibility of any other perspectives, notably those of the indigenous groups, as they currently stand (2011). It is interesting to consider this because, in some ways, the Welsh have been complicit in maintaining the subordination of the indigenous communities within tourism industry narratives, especially considering Wales’ own internal colony status as a member of the ‘Celtic fringe’ (Hechter 1977). Though, this is just indicative of the hierarchical nature of ethnic groups within large nation-states and stratified societies. Another interesting point to consider here is the relative absence or mention of Argentine nationalism and identity throughout the Welsh community museums, which
implicitly demonstrates a lack of direct affiliation/association with this narrative, by the Welsh descendant community. Lack of direct affiliation with the Argentine government, then, could be precisely the commonality between the two groups to begin collaborating and developing a jointly vetted/corroborated heritage.

Creating a mutually inclusive narrative, to be promoted through the tourism and heritage industry in Chubut, by incorporating the indigenous communities into the cultural heritage tourism network in the province (currently Welsh dominated), would bolster the territorial and heritage claims of both groups and could be used to re-construct the historical image of both the Welsh and the indigenous, in order to shape contemporary understanding/experience of the Chubut province (Kelly 2010). While not necessarily with the intent of reclaiming autonomy or liberation for either group, escalating both groups’ heritage would have positive impacts for both communities, if not moreso for the indigenous groups. That is, the indigenous communities have more to gain in the way of both material benefits and elevated status to access basic rights. Accordingly, it would stand to reason that consolidating heritage to create and inclusive historical narrative would enable both communities to re-signify the landscape and productively rework provincial memory.

One foreseeable problem with this strategy could be that, as has been demonstrated by other movements, universalizing discourses, often in the name of human rights or things like indigenous movements, while useful approaches to gain political momentum, this can simultaneously and often mean the loss of specificity within the movement, by particular sub groups (van Baar 2010). However, due to the nature of each respective group’s history, in this case, it is conceivable that these processes would not be as significant of a concern. I would argue that it is still possible to accurately, appropriately, and sensitively represented both groups’ histories, experiences, and perspectives without them being in contrast or contradiction to one another. That is, the intent would by no means be to erase the historical wounds experiences more deeply by the once more prevalent indigenous communities, but rather more equitably move forward, through the strategic harnessing of the heritage tourism industry.

Through this model, both groups would have ownership over self-representation and participate in tourism development/heritage performance/provincial tourism. This would enable both groups to renegotiate their relationships with
Due to the anthropologist’s likely positioning as an outsider to both groups, their role could potentially be more easily received on either side of the arrangement. This individual would also be in a strategic position to understand the current ways in which heritage for either group is presented, and make recommendations for how to construct new and rework existing heritage sites and accompanying narratives. The possibilities for such a collaboration are extensive, but could ultimately lead to more inclusive understanding of heritage for groups around the globe.

**Conclusion**

While the indigenous groups do not have European ancestry on which to call or garner resources to maintain a heritage network in the same way the Welsh have, resource sharing between the provincial heritage tourism network would ultimately mean increased economic gains for the network. The Welsh, who have already established a local heritage tourism network, could incorporate indigenous groups into the network in order to ensure their participation and mutual gain from the network. For the Province, diversifying the tourist experience would likely mean an increase in tourism dollars. It is for this reason that such a transition could be ‘sold’ to the provincial ministry of tourism. In this way,
the very same globalizing forces that have acted as threats and tools of oppression to many indigenous groups, including those in Argentina, could actually be used to assist these communities in reclaiming access to much needed resources with the development of a lucrative tourism destination, marketable to both domestic and foreign tourists. The grassroots infrastructure is already in existence in many ways, and presents the potential for benefits for all. Promoting a more culturally inclusive tourism destination would align with global trends toward multiculturalism and inclusivity and, again, create a more viable and desirable destination for national and international tourists and begin to plant the seeds of cultural equality in Chubut Province.

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Good ethnographies can be reinterpreted a thousand times. Evans-Pritchard’s Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic among the Azande (1976)\(^1\) is a good example which, though originally written with structural-functionalism in mind in the 1930s, has been re-examined from multiple perspectives since its first publication (e.g. Winch 1964; Graeber 2015). This is what I do here. Drawing on and adapting Durkheim’s notion of society with ‘an essentially religious – “godly” – core’ (Durkheim 2008; Strenski 2015: 134) and Bakhtin’s (1981) literary critique of the 2\(^{nd}\) century Latin-language story, The Golden Ass (Apuleius 1992), I suggest there is a deeply embedded theme of redemption in the way Azande deal with witchcraft. ‘Redemption’ here means the discontinuation of wrong-doings, and these wrong-doings can be towards others. On one hand, this definition draws on the original Latin word redimere’s meaning ‘to buy back’ (Klein 1971: 623) which I take to imply a restoration to an original state where no wrongs are done. On the other hand, taking into account the Zande logics of witchcraft which will be detailed later, I add an intersubjective dimension to ‘redemption’. That is, while the usual Christianity-influenced notion of redemption tends to be self-centred, being about redeeming oneself, I propose to understand the Azande we need to see how one can redeem ‘to’ others. In this sense, if I discontinue doing wrongs to you, then I say I redeem to you. Among the Azande, while accused witches redeem to the bewitched, the bewitched also redeem to something I call the ideal of sociality in the indigenous ‘sociologistic metaphysic’ (Evans-Pritchard 1956: 313). This ideal of sociality, or reified social norms, is

\(^1\)It should be noted that the copy of the book that this article refers to throughout is the 1976 abridged version edited by Eva Gillies. Also, to help the flow of the prose I use present tense throughout when talking about the Azande, which doesn’t imply that the Azande never change.
what ‘those whom we would call good citizens’ and ‘rich’, ‘powerful’ people embody, such as good neighbourship, generosity and open-mindedness (Evans-Pritchard 1976: 52). From a western perspective such ideal of sociality may be interpreted to have a similar status that a Durkheimian sacralised society does. Ultimately, the bewitched themselves are to blame for their victimisation as they provoke such ideal in the first place.

I’ll first explain how I adapt and use the Durkheimian notion of a ‘godly’ society (Strenski 2015: 134). Evans-Pritchard actually criticises it in his Nuer Religion (1956: 313): ‘This postulate of sociologistic metaphysic seems to me to be an assertion for which evidence is totally lacking. It was Durkheim and not the savage who made society into a god’. He seems right in pointing out that the Durkheimian society-god relationship is only a western heuristic which we shouldn’t reduce the local logics to, but his representation of Durkheim here may be too caricaturistic. Durkheim does talk about how society may invoke nonmaterial feelings, but it may risk being reductionist and unsubstantiated to say Durkheim simply collapses ‘society’ and ‘god’ into one thing without much caution and acknowledgement of the complexity of both, which Pickering (2009: 232-235) and Strenski (2015: 134-135) did a good job to demonstrate by a careful reading of Durkheim’s original texts. However, to circumvent Durkheim’s notion of ‘religion’ loaded with western dichotomies such as the natural/supernatural, sacred/profane divides, here I adopt Evans-Pritchard’s phrase ‘sociologistic metaphysic’ (1956: 313) to talk about ways local people conceive of nonphysical things such as witchcraft in relation to their society. Azande’s logics of witchcraft are part of their sociologistic metaphysic. I argue that sociality, the quality of being in a society, may be revered and idealised to a considerable extent, which looks like people worshipping their society from a Durkheimian perspective.

My discussion begins with Evans-Pritchard’s classic description of Azande’s belief in witchcraft (mangu) (Evans-Pritchard 1976: vii) and then his analysis. In Zandeland, witchcraft is part of normal everyday life and everyone’s common sense (Evans-Pritchard 1976: 1, 31). An ‘innate, inherited ability to cause misfortune or death’ (Niehaus 2012), witchcraft, in theory, could only be practiced by those who were born with an oval blackish ‘witchcraft substance’ in their belly (Evans-Pritchard 1976: 1-2). However, since it is impossible to know this, a practical assumption in Zandeland is everyone is potentially a witch (Evans-Pritchard 1976: 55). Witchcraft depends upon feelings...
of ‘hatred, envy, jealousy, and greed’ towards a victim and a grievous witch may cause misfortune or death to their victim without being aware of it (Evans-Pritchard 1976: 45, 56-64). If one carries out ‘an activity’ such as hunting elephants ‘according to traditional rules of technique’, any ensuing misfortune such as death does not happen by chance but result from a witch’s ill will (Evans-Pritchard 1976: 18-19, 30). Azande use a hunting metaphor to illustrate the relationship between the direct cause of their death (e.g. the elephant) and witchcraft. Given that Zande hunters traditionally kill a game with (at least) two spears, people would say that ‘the elephant is the first spear and that witchcraft is the second spear and that together they killed the man’ (Evans-Pritchard 1976: 25-26).

Azande suspect witchcraft anytime misfortune happens, and consult oracles or witch-doctors to discover the witch’s identity when concern compels them to do so (Evans-Pritchard 1976: 33-34, 66). Though angered and annoyed by witchcraft, which everybody frowns upon (Evans-Pritchard 1976: 19), according to convention the victim nevertheless needs to treat the alleged witch kindly in the hope that the witch’s grievance will stop (Evans-Pritchard 1976: 34, 43). As a traditional procedure, the alleged witch is required to blow out some water to show they would harbour no further grievance and practice no further witchcraft even if they were the witch (which they often deny) (Evans-Pritchard 1976: 43-44). While the Azande aren’t very interested in analysing the social-wide implications of their witchcraft belief, Evans-Pritchard is. Presenting the overall pattern of witchcraft accusation, Evans-Pritchard (1976: 51-52) points out that so-called ‘good citizens’ and the ‘rich’ and the ‘powerful’ are ‘seldom accused of witchcraft’, while the accused are often ‘glum and ill-tempered’, ‘dirty’, ‘unmannerly’, ‘spiteful’, ‘offensive’, greedy, ‘mutilated’, et cetera. From a structural-functionalist perspective, Evans-Pritchard (1976: 54-55) concludes, as anti-social behaviour is the witch’s mark, witchcraft in Zandeland functions as ‘a valuable corrective to uncharitable impulses, because a show of spleen or meanness or hostility may bring serious consequences in its train’. In Evans-Pritchard’s narrative, the theme of the witch’s redemption is seen thus: the witch is supposed to discontinue doing wrongs towards the bewitched, that is, stop harbouring grievance which leads to witchcraft.

However, although this process only involves the redemption of the witch, a deeper theme of Zande witchcraft might actually be the victim’s redemption to the ideal of sociality or what Durkheimians would
call a godly society. What draws my attention to this is Bakhtin’s (1981) analysis of Apuleius’ (1992) classical 2nd-century witchcraft-related story, The Golden Ass. Apuleius was a Berber from what is now Algeria and lived under the Roman Empire. As Bakhtin (1981: 121) states, ‘corresponding mythological equivalents might be found for all the narrative motifs in The Golden Ass’. Though I do not take this statement mechanically, I suggest that Apuleius’ story and Bakhtin’s analysis provide useful heuristic tools.

The Golden Ass tells of a ‘frivolous’ ‘voluptuary’ (Bakhtin 1981: 117), Lucius, who seeks the excitement of witchcraft and applies to himself a wrong potion due to recklessness, falls its victim and is transformed into an ass (Apuleius 1992: 47). He is thus punished for his pleasure-seeking life. After enduring much hardship, in the last chapter he prays to Isis, a goddess of Egyptian origin referred to as the ‘supreme of Divinities’ and asks for the restoration of human shape, but ‘if any offended deity oppresses me with inexorable cruelty [i.e. doesn’t grant him the human shape], may it at least be lawful for me to die’ (Apuleius 1992: 193-194). After fulfilling Isis’s demand of ‘highly detailed purifying rituals and askesis [i.e. severe self-discipline]’ (Bakhtin 1981: 117), Lucius becomes a human again and later a cleric worshipping Isis. His regaining human shape is based on his redemption, or discontinuation of being an impure, reckless voluptuary. Given that ‘human affairs were entirely governed by her [Isis’s] providence’ (Apuleius 1992: 192), Isis may be in some way responsible for not only Lucius’ redemption but his initial metamorphosis into an ass too, which he seems conscious about when he mentions offending divinity (perhaps by seeking pleasure and playing with witchcraft recklessly) in the prayer to Isis. Bakhtin (1981: 118) summarised this story with a four-step formula: ‘guilt->punishment->redemption->blessedness’.

I suggest that the witchcraft’s power among the Azande may be essentially the same thing as Isis’ power in The Golden Ass. Why? If we start with the famous Durkheimian argument about how society may have a ‘religious’, or ‘godly’ core be the chief responsible supernatural force because she’s the only omnipotent deity present in the immediate context of Lucius’ metamorphosis.
After the initiation rituals, there are ‘a conflux of the people... honouring’ him and ‘banquets’ (Apuleius 1992: 207-208). It is because of Isis that Lucius is transformed from the ‘private and isolated’ individual (or donkey) (Bakhtin 1981: 119) to a person with significant sociality only in the story’s last few pages. Isis may thus be a goddess in charge of sociality.

The Zande notion of witchcraft is also saturated with sociality which a ‘godly society’, as the Durkheimians would say, would concern itself with. Misfortune is due to people’s ubiquitous social grievances towards each other, not because of natural causes outside of the human society (Evans-Pritchard 1976: 18-19, 43, 53). Just as sociality is an abstract, impersonal notion rather than referring to any concrete relationships, witchcraft is understood to operate ‘impersonally and apart from any particular witch or witches’ (Evans-Pritchard 1976: 13). Usually you can only be bewitched by people who are physically close, share roughly the same social status, and have concrete social ties with you (Evans-Pritchard 1976: 12, 47, 49).

These three conditions are all about increased sociality. If one becomes bewitched they know someone hates them (Evans-Pritchard 1976: 24), meaning their sociality doesn’t work well. Bewitchment is essentially a punishment for bad sociality. To
would call a godly society. This godly society is double faced: it punishes with witchcraft for bad sociality and spares those cultivating good sociality. It is like a cat-and-mouse game, the society being the cat and the individual being the mouse. It uses witchcraft to repeatedly threaten and torture individuals when they do not conform. Hence, it can be said the witchcraft victim redeems to the ideal of sociality in their local sociologic metaphysics like Lucius redeems to Isis. Although on the surface witches are blamed by victims and the general (godly) society, which Evans-Pritchard suggests in his analysis, the real logics of witchcraft are deeply victim-blaming: if you are not sociable, you get attacked by witches through whom the godly society manifests itself (see Picture 1).

Therefore it can be said that in Zande witchcraft, although on the surface we see witches’ redemption to the bewitched, on a deeper level the bewitched redeem to the ideal of sociality. An important line of inquiry could begin from seeing how such victim-blaming logics in Zande witchcraft may in some way resemble some similar logics in the west to ‘make the familiar strange’ (Blum 2013: 1). One example can be how western scholars interpret the massive early modern European witch-hunts where we can view the accused female witches as victims

![Diagram](image-url)
who suffer tortures and burnings (as opposed to the Zande and Roman cases where the bewitched are victims) (Federici 2004). Though in modern scholarly works their persecutors are clearly said to be wrong, that is, in need of redeeming to these victims, we can see a hidden ‘tendency to blame the victims’ as ‘social failures’, such as, according to 20th century psychiatrists Franz Alexander and Sheldon Selesnick (1977), ‘perverts’ who ‘enjoyed teasing their male inquisitors with their sexual fantasies’ (Federici 2004: 164). It is therefore implied that their persecutors may in some way represent a godly society to which these ‘perverts’ should redeem themselves. This is but an example of such victim-blaming logics if we turn the gaze upon the Azande to the west.

Acknowledgements
I am greatly indebted to all those who kindly advised me on how to revise the paper. They are the Student Anthropologist’s anonymous peer reviewers, editors, and Dr Geoffrey Hughes and Dr Mathijs Pelkmans at the London School of Economics.

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Anthropologists, the co-creators of stories

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The practice of participant–observation is the anthropologist’s primary tool to find what they are looking for in a specific setting and context. One thing included is that we listen to what individuals say, their experiences, their life stories. This is an essential part of our method. When anthropologists talk about interviews or the practice of listening to interlocutors it is usually about the setting of the interview, not the practice or the process itself. Davies writes about ‘structured’, ‘semi-structured’, and ‘unstructured’ interviews, which describes the structure and setting in which interviews take place (Davies 2008: 105-6). These terms are used to define how stringent the interviewer is in following pre–elected questions, and if the interview is scheduled beforehand or is conducted spontaneously. However, this does not explain what happens during interviews, which processes are at play, and in what way interviewers or listeners actually affect the story being produced, in other words: the power relations included (Eastmond 2007). In arguing for the anthropological use of narrative theory—an interdisciplinary line of thought—I propose a way to attend these questions: Why and how the stories that we write down are produced by our interlocutors in relation to our presence. As Raine (2013) writes, narrative theory offers via its diversity in methods and approaches a ‘fertile ground for innovation to those willing to consider a range of perspectives.’, and this I argue we should. In this paper I focus on how narratives as life stories are created and by which approaches we can access these. I base the discussion on my own fieldwork among Syrian refugees in Sweden between January and February 2015.

Collecting life stories

Our discussion will focus on life stories—a story told by the interlocutor, about the interlocutor. The story is based on lived experience, a part of the interlocutor’s history (Johansson 1999, 7). Skott (2004, 39) suggests that anthropologists should use narrative theory to study individual stories as part of the
ethnography—descriptions of culture. The stories told by interlocutors can be used as verbal descriptions of the society wherein they have been lived, thus providing a narrative of a society other than which can be observed by the ethnographer. Life stories can for example provide one medium of lived experiences of Forced Migration and are therefore an important tool for many researchers in this field (Eastmond 2007). The importance of life stories is further elaborated on by Duna Kristmundsdottir (2006, 165) who suggests that collecting life stories always been part of the anthropological endeavor. Further, Hamersley and Atkinson (2007, 98) writes that spoken accounts—such as life stories—can be viewed as parts of the context that constructed them, and as such not only mirror the culture, but providing a piece of it to include in analysis. Malkki (1995) illustrates this in her work on Hutu refugees from Burundu, in how they created narratives based on their lived histories and their current situation.

When collecting life stories Chase argues that the researcher should invite the interlocutor to ‘import’ their stories. The interlocutor should be allowed to retell their story freely, with minor intervention by the researcher, leading to a real life story, not a report on the researcher’s questions (Chase 2003: 282). However, the researcher will still have some impact (Hamersley and Atkinson 2007, 101). The issue how a researcher affects the narrative being produced is problematic and has been addressed mainly since the 80is by a number of anthropologists (Eastmond 2007). Appadurai (1988) address it mentioning that researchers can by directing questions, or reading a story in a certain way, alter the meaning of a story. Further, Appadurai (1988, 17) suggests that it is a problem about voice, ‘who really speaks for whom?’ Chase’s suggestion of letting go of control in the setting of an interview is one way to tackle the issue about altering the story, however, it does not address the aspect of voice. Davies (2008, 106) suggests that when an interlocutor is allowed to tell their story freely it gives the researcher the opportunity to discover new leads to follow, which could be done by ‘usual’ anthropologic interview techniques such as semi–structured interviews. However, it is important to remember that not all interlocutors will simply tell their story, but instead use it as an opportunity to act their own agenda. This is a reason to why I propose using open–ended interviews in combination with more structured ones that allow posing direct questions. This is especially important when research is conducted among groups or individuals whose stories might be contested—as was the case with my interlocutors—stories might
not be made up, but focus within them can be changed to better fit new circumstances, as will be shown below.

Alf Arvidsson (1998: 25-26) advocates using a schematic approach to narratives where a story contains three different, not ordered parts which I read as Chronologic, Descriptive, and Triggering. Dividing a life story into these parts allows the structure of the story to be spelled out, and thus making the work of analyzing easier. I will provide some examples: A Chronologic sequence is when my interlocutors explained why they had to escape Syria, being hunted by the regime for political reasons, or for defecting from the military. Continuing with how they crossed the border to Turkey, and from there travelled to Greece. In Greece they got hold of fake documents with which they could travel to Sweden. It is a story with a clear order that follows the development in time. A Descriptive part is when the interlocutors explained in detail how they crossed the border between Turkey and Greece. How failure to cross the border resulted in a violent treatment by the Greek border guards. They were beaten and sent back to Turkey. Or how my interlocutors were arrested in Greece and held in a prisonlike building without beds or food for weeks as a punishment for being in the country illegally. This part focus on detail and is to be analyzed as a story in itself, before pulling the conclusions into the wider analysis. The Triggering part is a sequence that focus on a specific triggering moment, and a solution to it. For my interlocutors the triggering moment is the start of the civil war in Syria and the solution a possible residence permit in Sweden. This part provides the life story with momentum; it makes the researcher to point out the various moments that makes the story go forward, it also opens up a possible discussion around the concept of liminality1 (Turner 1966). A threshold being passed followed by a situation in flux, as for my interlocutors en route to Sweden from Syria, before again reaching stability in Sweden. An approach often used in relation to border crossings (e.g Andersson 2014, 120; Khosravi 2010a, 27; Inda 2007, 149).

The creation of a life story
Creating a story is a intersubjective social process, it is created in the interplay between teller and listener, and therefore each story is unique, being created by the combination of personalities, experiences, and behavior of the teller and the listener (Rodineliussen 2016). When we tell a story it is to convey a message, in order to do so someone must understand this message. In a
viewing not only the ‘extra–ordinary’ but also the ‘ordinary’ allows an understanding ‘beyond the ascribed status of being a refugee’, especially in a Forced Migration context—as is the case with my Interlocutors. Understanding interlocutors and their behavior includes more than the hardships they have endured. It is important that we as researchers are cautious about our role in creating stories, and of how we later represent them in text, in order not to harm or miss-represent anyone (Eastmond 2007).

The interlocutors can talk about things that matter to them and which they believe will affect their current situation—giving them agency within the interview. This perspective of the interlocutor can be placed in relation and contrast to other life stories, processes, and contexts within existing literature. And by so doing render visible the correlation, or lack of it, between how our interlocutors explain things and how we ourselves view them. In this interplay between the interlocutors story, our own perspective, and the perspectives of our colleagues I believe there is much to be found—such as illustrate how interlocutors chose between the ‘extra–ordinary’ and the ‘ordinary’ in their storytelling, other sources might provide the other angle.

The story being told must fit a specific context in order for the
Another replied like this:

“I have not changed or altered anything; I told my story the way that I remember it. Nothing more or less.”

Two different interlocutors, two different ways of thinking about how they told their story. Both have provided similar stories of hardships, war, and the need of fleeing their country of birth. These two accounts point out why a researcher must be vary about the agenda of interlocutors, and the power relations affecting them, which must be taken into account in order to construct a narrative of their stories that build on reality as it is, not as it is narrated.

Further, stories can be part of creating a myth about a refugee destination. Following a discussion I started elsewhere (Rodineliussen 2016), I want to discuss the Swedish Dream as an example of this myth creating process. Refugees already in Sweden tell those back home about this new amazing country in order to assure those at home that their journey was worth all the trouble and that they now are safe. They tell things in a way that does not correspond with reality and thus make other individuals who start their travel to Sweden believe that the country they are going to will provide them with things that it actually will not. The Swedish Dream.
should use open-ended methods instead of, let's say 'semi-structured interviews'. I propose that they be used in combination, life stories can provide a lived context to the social processes being observed, and as such provide material for more structured interviews.

Stories does not only fit, explain, or abide to contexts, they create them as well. This is clear in the case of the Swedish Dream. The context created more or less forces refugees to abide to the myth about the dream destination in order not to disappoint their loved ones. This forcing effect of the myth can be viewed as a double bind (Bateson et al. 1956), meaning a situation where your every step will be wrong. You either expose the myth, this would then lead to your family and friends understanding that you have not got to the country you left for. Or you can coup with the myth, but by so doing allow for others to make a similar miss-informed decision.

Thus, improved awareness of the way stories are created, and the role of the researcher as co-creator is important because that self-awareness on behalf of the researchers allows for reflexivity within the process of interviewing. And this is vital for making 'good' and reflexive anthropology. Using open-ended interview methods in combination with 'ordinary' techniques is one way

Summing up the reason to rethink the way we listen
In this paper I have used narrative theory, especially with focus on collecting life stories, to argue for the use of more open-ended interview techniques. This in order to allow more agency to the teller within the setting of an interview. To me, open-ended interviews are in pair with participant-observation because when we observe social practices we do not know what will come next, and this not knowing play part in sharpening our attentiveness to what we observe. I believe the same rationale goes for interviews. Further, I do not suggest that we
exemplifies a failed dream by those coming being disappointed of the reality meeting them, but since they do not want to disappoint those left behind they build upon the myth of the dream destination. In this way the myth is recreated and strengthened for each refugee arriving in Sweden. This phenomenon does not only apply to Sweden, but to many other destinations for refugees (e.g. Lindquist 2009). One way to research processes such as the Swedish Dream is by collecting life stories, these are often capable of inviting researchers to understand different aspects of, for example, migration that the researcher has not been able to observe in person (Eastmond 2007).
to widen the scope of anthropological research methods.

Notes
1. Victor Turner develops the concept of liminality from Arnold van Gennep. Liminality is explained to be the second step in a rite of passage. The first step, separation, is when the individual is separated from a known environment. Step two, liminality, is a state of not knowing—where anything can happen. The final step is incorporation, when the individual once again gains a distinguished role in society. The concept of liminality has been used by scholars interested in rituals, border studies, and many other areas.

2. Double Bind means to describe a situation wherein there is a dilemma in communication. The individual who are put in the dilemma will however he or she act be acting wrongly due to the double binding effect of the dilemma based on conflicting messages that negates each other.

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The co-creators of stories


Pregnancy in Practice: Expectation and Experience in the Contemporary US by Sallie Han.

The Transplant Imaginary: Mechanical Hearts, Animal Parts, and Moral Thinking in Highly Experimental Science by Lesley A. Sharp.

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Contemporary works have begun to navigate the intersections between Medical Anthropology and the Anthropology of Science and Technology, shedding light on the ways people interact with non-human actors and processes in complex ways. Two recent publications, Pregnancy in Practice by Sallie Han (2013) and The Transplant Imaginary by Lesley A. Sharp (2014), investigate the relationships between different types of technologies and human bodily experiences, through the lenses of pregnancy and experimental organ transplantation respectively.

Each text evaluates these relationships in different ways. Han focuses on the experiences of women who engage with literary materials and medical technologies on a personal level. Sharp turns her attention to bioengineers and scientists, whose experimental efforts may one day redefine the boundaries between the human and non-human. From these vastly different starting points, both Han and Sharp provide the reader with insight into how certain practices come to be normalized and viewed as part of the routine experience of living as a human in the modern world. They also each serve as examples of how anthropologists can ethnographically represent the ways human interactions with technology and material culture shape views on
In *Pregnancy in Practice*, Sallie Han examines the ways that “practices,” which are considered a normal part of the experience of pregnancy in the US, create categories of persons, such as the expectant mother and the unborn child. Han also attempts to demonstrate how expectations surrounding pregnancy are socially constructed through these activities. Her text is divided into six chapters, each of which revolves around a specific type of practice. The chapters (on literacy, belly talk, ultrasound images, material goods, and baby showers) are organized chronologically, tracing the pregnancy experience from fertilization to childbirth.

The strongest sections of Han’s text revolve around the use of technologies in the imaginative creation of children and mothers. Discussing the significance of home pregnancy tests, Han argues that women have begun to view themselves as pregnant, and to actively construct the personhood of an unborn child at earlier and earlier dates. Drawing upon previous work by Layne (2009), Han claims that these tests, which identify the presence or absence of a particular hormone (hCG) work to create a shared experience of the “beginning” of a pregnancy. Likewise, tests, which can be taken as early as the first day of a missed period, change what might have once been experienced as a delayed menstrual cycle to a miscarriage or “lost” pregnancy (Han 2013, 13). In Chapter 3, Han analyzes the ways pregnant women view fetal ultrasound images as “pictures.” (92). She illustrates how these images allow expectant parents to imagine a fetus as a particular baby that can participate in the familial practice of being photographed. Both the pregnancy test and the fetal ultrasound are utilized by women to dream about their future self as a mother, as well as the future “being” of an unborn child.

*Pregnancy in Practice* is the result of fifteen months of ethnographic fieldwork. The most significant shortcoming of the text is the limited demographic focus. Out of the core group of 16 participants, 15 were white, middle-class, married women with advanced educations. While Han acknowledges her participants do not represent all demographics of women within the United States today, she still feels their stories and experiences are highly significant as “ideal types” (7) that are often held up as an exemplar of a “normal” pregnancy. However, the reader is left wondering what an “ordinary” pregnancy for a working class woman, or a single mother-to-be, might look like.

While *Pregnancy in Practice* focused on the lived experiences
of people who utilized medical technologies, *The Transplant Imaginary* by Leslie A. Sharp, delves into the world of the engineers and scientists responsible for the construction of said technologies. In her previous ethnographic works, Sharp (2006, 2008) analyzed the ways commitments surrounding human life, scientific advancement, and economic gain become intertwined during organ transplantation. In *The Transplant Imaginary*, Sharp expands upon these accounts by investigating the experiments of transplant “experts.”

Sharp focuses on two central themes. The first revolves around how researchers within the fields of both xenotransplantation (the use of organs from “donor” animals) and bioengineering (building artificial organs) are working toward an imagined future. Utilizing Guyer’s (2007) notion of “prophetic” thinking, Sharp convincingly asserts that scientists define their work through a future-oriented temporal framework. They justify their currently unsuccessful, sometimes radical efforts at body “tinkering” (Sharp 2014, 106) through the promise of an ideal future, one where people will not have to suffer and die from a scarcity of organs.

This leads into the other significant and interrelated theme of the text. Transplant science is not implicitly neutral. On the contrary, Sharp demonstrates that the moral sentiments and values of researchers have significantly shaped trajectories of transplant science. An example of this is presented in Chapter 2, when Sharp traces the increase in the use of the “promissory pig,” in xenotransplantation (80). Pigs have become the most commonly used animal within this field. Many xenotransplantation researchers now claim to favor pigs as “more appropriate” transplant matches for humans than primates (82). However, as Sharp illustrates, the “appropriate” pigs in question were painstakingly genetically engineered to be useful for research, because of an ethical desire to move away from primate based experimentation. This sort of reimagining of the pig and the moral beliefs that drove that reimagining are ignored if one only focuses on the use-value of the animal.

For Sharp, the moral thinking embedded within transplant science is essential to understand because these supposedly “neutral” experiments impact the lives of human patients. Researchers claim they desire to alleviate future suffering, yet often ignore the living beings, both human and animal, which take part in the experimentation process. This becomes even more complicated when one considers the potential ways that xenotransplantation
and bioengineering transform the boundaries between human bodies, animals, and machines.

*The Transplant Imaginary* and *Pregnancy in Practice* differ in scope and focus. Sharp’s text represents the culmination of a multi-sited ethnographic project carried out over almost a decade, and can be situated among contemporary anthropological projects on elite cultures of expertise (Guyer 2007; Helmreich 2009). Sharp operates within highly technical realms, to which the majority of people do not have access. On the other hand, Han’s text is a localized account of what she calls “ordinary” practice among average people. The events she documents (e.g. fetal ultrasounds, baby showers) occur throughout the United States on a daily basis.

Despite these differences, *Pregnancy in Practice* and *The Transplant Imaginary* revolve around common themes. Each tells a story of how bodies and categories of personhood are redefined and reoriented temporally toward an imagined future through the use of technologies. Taken together the two texts can be viewed as pieces of a larger story. Sharp argues individual people create new medical practices and technologies that re-shape human lives. Han’s book provides an ethnographic example of those technologies at work and demonstrates how they come to be viewed as an “ordinary” part of human experience.

The significance of Han’s text lies in her ability, in the tradition of classical works of anthropology, to demonstrate the contingent nature of what we assume to be “normal” life experiences. Since the practices she describes are now routine rituals of pregnancy, they do not shock us, in the way experimental forms of transplant science might. However, technologies like home pregnancy tests did re-define the pregnancy experience – turning a woman into a “future mother” at an earlier stage in time. They also complicated our understanding of the human body and its boundaries. When does a fetus become a “child,” an independent living being, as opposed to an extension of the pregnant woman? Ultrasound technologies have allowed people to imagine this occurring much earlier, forcing people to address questions surrounding bodily autonomy and the beginning of life.

In short, the use of these technologies have, in fact, led to significant changes in the ways people view the human body and the relations between one’s “self” and other living beings. These are the same relations Sharp feels are being questioned and redefined through transplant technologies. Sharp argues these experiments allow for a “hybridity”
between humans and animals, of an almost “monstrous nature,” (2014, 173). While the notion of utilizing ape or porcine organs to extend lives may sound strange or even discomforting to us at the moment, it is possible that one day, xenotransplantation will be as normalized as fetal ultrasounds. Certainly this is what transplant scientists themselves envision occurring in the ideal future they are actively working to create (149).

Both Pregnancy in Practice and The Transplant Imaginary would be excellent additions to courses in Anthropology at all levels that focus on health, the body, bioethics, or science and technology. I would also recommend these texts to graduate students as examples of different methodological approaches to ethnographic research.

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How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology beyond the Human by Eduardo Kohn.

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I became interested in the posthumanities when I learned of the Whanganui River in New Zealand, which in 2012 was granted legal personhood: it was recognized as a living whole with rights and interests that deserve protection under the law (Fairbrother 2012). This realization that a river might be a person, a thinking-self concerned with its own continuity and integrity, led me to wonder what it would take to make visible other persons, other selves, obscured by the dualistic assumption that humans are exceptional and therefore fundamentally separate from the world. In doing so we necessarily come up against a crisis of representation – how are we to represent living nonhuman selves without using ill-defined terms like intention, agency, and representation? Does this mistakenly read human qualities in fundamentally different beings? This is the central concern of Eduardo Kohn’s 2013 book How Forests Think: Toward an Anthropology beyond the Human, recipient of the 2014 Bateson Prize from the Society of Cultural Anthropology. Kohn’s primary aim is to contribute to posthuman critiques of the ways in which we have treated humans as exceptional by developing an analytical framework for understanding human relations to nonhuman beings. Kohn’s theory is informed by his ethnographic work with the Quichua-speaking Runa of Ávila, a village in Ecuador’s Upper Amazon. The Runa are intimately involved with the complex ecosystem of the forest, yet their world is also informed by a long and multilayered colonial history.

Kohn asserts that posthuman critical approaches such as Latourian science studies suffer from assumptions concerning the nature of representation. Kohn argues that a central concern of science and technology studies has been creating an analytical framework that can include humans as well as nonhumans (Kohn 2013).

“Given the challenges posed by learning to live with the
proliferating array of other kinds of life-forms that increasingly surround us – be they pets, weeds, pests, commensals, new pathogens, “wild” animals, or technoscientific “mutants” – developing a precise way to analyze how the human is both distinct from and continuous with that which lies beyond it is both crucial and timely” (2013, 9).

As Kohn says, sociocultural anthropology as it is practiced today takes attributes that are distinctively human in order to create the tools to understand humans, and in the process the analytical framework becomes isomorphic with the analytics (2013, 6). How Forests Think is an attempt to break open this closed circle and free ourselves to think with the world – to “decolonize thought”, as Viveiros de Castro puts it (2013, 41). Was Kohn successful? I think so. While some read his attempt as elevating symbolic (and therefore human thought) above other relational logics and therefore reinforcing the nature-culture divide Kohn seeks to dissolve, this oversimplifies his argument. To me one of the most powerful facets of his argument is the attention paid to form and hierarchy. His account of the rubber boom economy and the many nested self-similar levels of form that came together to constitute it demonstrates the sort of analysis his anthropology beyond the human can enable, empowering us to recognize the iconic and indexical living logics otherwise obscured by ethnographic methods that only allow for observations within a human/sociocultural/symbolic context.

The six chapters of the book are arranged thematically. Chapter 1, “The Open Whole”, is about learning to see beyond the symbolic (and therefore distinctively human) mode of representation. Kohn aims to “open” our thinking to the semiotic modalities that we humans share with nonhuman biological life. Chapter 2, “The Living Thought”, considers implications of the claim that life thinks and thoughts are alive. Life distinguishes itself from the inanimate physical realm through processes of sign production. Wherever there are living thoughts there is also a self, which Kohn conceives of as a waypoint in semiosis – both the origin and the product of an interpretive process. Self is the locus “of a living dynamic by which signs come to represent the world around them to a ‘someone’ who emerges as such as a result of this process” (2013:16). Chapters 3 and 4 examine ethnographically how the Runa go about relating to those different beings inhabiting this vast “ecology of selves”. Chapter 3, “Soul Blindness”,

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is about the general problem of how death is intrinsic to life. It deals with death of the self. This may happen when an organism dies, but there are other ways for a self to dissolve, become “objectlike” or disembodied. Chapter 4, “Trans-Species Pidgin”, deals with how to safely and successfully communicate with other kinds of beings. Much of the chapter focuses on the semiotic analysis of human attempts to understand and be understood by their dogs. For the Runa, dreaming is a privileged mode of communication that allows contact between radically different kinds of beings via souls. There exists a hierarchy of perspective which is inhabited at the highest level by the spirit masters of the forest, below which the Runa situate themselves, at the same time inhabiting a higher level than their dogs.

In Chapter 5, “Form’s Effortless Efficacy”, Kohn explores the peculiar properties of form – whether it is the “twigginess” of walking stick bugs, whirlpools, or political-economic systems such as the rubber boom economy. Kohn uses the term “form” to refer to the particular manifestations of generals: “Emergent phenomena are generals. Habits or regularities are generals. All of these, in some way or another, are the result of constraints on possibility (see Deacon 2012)” (2013:159). The hunters of Ávila harness form; they do not hunt animals directly. They are rather attuned to the configurations of constraints that shape the spatial and temporal distribution of game meat. One of these constraints is the fruiting resources that attract these animals. Fruit-eating animals amplify this pattern of resource distribution. The rubber boom economy was able to emerge as an amplification of the overlapping patterns of rubber tree and river distributions. Here, Kohn’s anthropology beyond the human seeks an understanding of how these essentially amoral hierarchical patterns nonetheless lend themselves to all-too-human emergent properties such as the highly exploitative nature of the rubber extraction economy. “The Living Future (and the Imponderable Weight of the Dead)” is the sixth and final chapter in which Kohn turns to a particular interpretive dilemma involving the dream of a villager: is he predator or prey? At the heart of this dilemma is the concern for how to continue as a self and what such continuity might mean in the ecology of selves in which the Runa live. Kohn illuminates a special kind of self-reference among the Runa in which the self is also a lineage – a “projective I”. Signs represent a possible future state of affairs. All kinds of signs in some way or other re-present what is not present. What one is as a semiotic self, then, is constitutively related to what one is not. Living futures are
always “indebted” to the dead that surround them.

How Forests Think is a groundbreaking text, demonstrating the conceptual tools it might take to properly apprehend the complex non/human systems that mediate our experience in and as part of the world. Kohn’s work revolutionized my thinking about the scope and perspective of anthropological inquiry. This book is most useful for students interested in a more philosophical anthropology and ethnographic methods that attend to a “deeper level” than the sociocultural that is the traditional domain of anthropological inquiry. Kohn’s method of noticing everyday encounters between the Runa and the other beings that inhabit the forest, and how he unpacks these encounters to reveal other modes of representation beyond the human-symbolic, shows a way forward in attending ethnographically to that which lies beyond the human.

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Entrepreneurial Selves: Neoliberal Respectability and the Making of a Caribbean Middle Class by Carla Freeman.

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In Entrepreneurial Selves: Neoliberal Respectability and the Making of a Caribbean Middle Class, Carla Freeman examines affective economies, or economies of emotion that have become a part of the labor process, and the ways in which middle class subjects of neoliberal capitalism are constructed (and re-constructed) through them. As she states, “this is a story about what it means to be respectable and middle class,” but her ethnography not only invites readers inside the lives of those who are newly defined as such (2014:1). Freeman also tells a broader story. Her research project is both a complex study of the changing global political economy and a nuanced examination of the lives of Barbadian entrepreneurs. A richly detailed analysis of the interconnections between political economy, labor, and affect, Freeman’s book is set in a time of neoliberal expansion on the island of Barbados, and she reveals how the new entrepreneurial self under study has been fashioned in relation to this specific time and place. While arguing for the wide-reaching effects of neoliberal transformation on new understandings of selfhood, she never overlooks the cultural particularities under which her research subjects have been constructed, and her thoughtful consideration of the competing influences of gender, race, and class in the post-colonial Caribbean context runs throughout her analysis. Freeman’s unique approach succeeds in illustrating neoliberalism as a fluid and unresolved process, while engaging with her argument for the agency of individual actors in middle class formation and the need for researchers to re-examine understandings of self and society in light of emergent economic opportunities and social structures in the Caribbean.

Freeman argues that entrepreneurialism, more than simply a path to self-employment, is becoming a form of self-making. She introduces her research site – Barbados – as relatively small in size, but complex in terms of the ordering of social life along lines of race, class, and geographic difference. She contends that like all Caribbean nations, Barbados
is a “combination of other nations and peoples” forced together by its formation roughly 300 years ago and molded by its histories of colonialism and transnational migration, highlighting how this origin story complicates distinctions between “the local” and “the global” (2014:10). While Freeman’s own history of work in the region (see Freeman 2000) strengthened her attention to local stages of social life, she presents Barbados as a nation that remains deeply intertwined with the global economy, allowing for a study of neoliberal affect writ large. Over ten years of ethnographic research, she assembled a broad and diverse research population, including those who stepped outside of gendered expectations through their labor, like women in the construction industry and men in fashion, and her methods combined historical accounts and archival research on representations of business with participant observation in new spaces of leisure and an extensive interview phase with over 100 new entrepreneurs. As was evidenced in her first book, *High Tech and High Heels in the Global Economy: Women, Work, and Pink Collar Identities in the Caribbean* (2000), Freeman’s sensitive ethnographic engagement is facilitated by her investment in the region and her intimate awareness of the daily rhythms that structure the lives of her informants there. Drawing on articulations of entrepreneurialism within the distinctly Caribbean framework of “reputation/respectability” popularized by Wilson (1973), she situates the complicated history of neoliberalism within the region’s historic involvement in global capitalism through (forced and voluntary) flows of labor and goods. By detailing the transformation of labor and affect, or “the embodied expressions of emotions and feelings” in contemporary Caribbean nations, she leaves readers with a sense of what it means – and how it feels – to be a member of the middle class in neoliberal Barbados (2014: 3).

Applying an anthropological lens, Freeman analyzes neoliberalism in the post-colonial context by re-imagining the “reputation/respectability” framework. This re-imagination interrogates how the same social practices that were once associated with resistance to capitalism (or “reputation”) can now be linked to the neoliberal turn. Social practices of “reputation” are therefore being applied in new ways and re-shaping the construction of differentiation related to class, race, and gender through an emergent emotional economy. As the island of Barbados undergoes dramatic shifts in its own socioeconomic sphere, it is leading to a rise in service sector work and entrepreneurship. While it is not difficult to identify similar shifts underway in other parts of the world, *Entrepreneurial*
Selves raises the question of how we can recognize these shifts on an individual, and therefore more intimate, level. Freeman asks if entrepreneurialism shapes how subjects structure their daily lives, choose the types of work they want to engage in, and even how they choose their marriage partners. Can we examine new forms of selfhood through the goods and experiences that are sought, from new modes of dress and personal training sessions, to new patterns of speech and trending electronic devices? Freeman pushes readers to grapple with the effects of global shifts towards contemporary capitalism and the decision to re-make oneself according to the demands of the entrepreneur. By bridging political economy and affect studies, she moves the research focus from the macro to the micro and places the figure of the new Barbadian entrepreneur – or as she suggests, the very embodiment of neoliberalism – in center-stage. As readers, we do not simply observe this figure from afar. We come to know this figure on multiple levels as Freeman moves between offices, churches, schools, homes, and places of leisure. According to Freeman, these are various realms in which middle class entrepreneurial subjects are being constructed. She argues that the rising global interest in service sector work and entrepreneurialism is shaping more than the global economy, as it also molds the emotional landscapes of the individual subjects involved. The effects of this shift are therefore not relegated to offices and cubicles, but can be seen and felt in the private and public spaces that structure daily life. Marriage, child-rearing, religion, education, and leisure all become key points of observation and analysis, serving to illustrate the entrepreneurial in the everyday.

Through the project of “self-making” (and re-making) the subjects of Freeman’s research re-draw lines of distinction between traditionally public and private, male and female spheres of life (2014:48). The narratives of women like Ashanti and Lilliana illustrate how domestic spaces and privatized offices have both long been linked to the private and the feminine, making them the appropriate spaces for middle class women in postcolonial settings. However, Freeman has followed in the tradition of feminist scholars who have theorized and critiqued the distinctions between private (female) and public (male) spaces (see Freeman 2001, see also Pateman). In this book, she illustrates how affective labor flow between home and work situate the entrepreneurial self between both spheres, thereby dissolving or at least muddling, the distinction between public and private, male and female spaces of employment and leisure. Following the work of other scholars
(Bourdieu 1998, Rouse 1992, Illouz 2007, and Walkerdine 2003), she explores how the entrepreneurial self remains continually in the making, and how this is indicative of society’s shift towards neoliberalism. Like the “flexible self,” neoliberalism demands a fluid and flexible globalized marketplace (Freeman 2014). The work of making an entrepreneurial self therefore becomes one other “grid of power” on which identity is constructed, re-shaping the ways in which individuals experience daily life and with time, re-shaping the very structures of social life within their communities (Gupta and Ferguson 1992).

By linking global political economy to her study of social and cultural impact, Freeman has created a book of wide-reaching interest to scholars and students alike. An important contribution to the studies of neoliberalism and affect, Entrepreneurial Selves also makes a substantial contribution to Caribbean scholarship by exploring a socioeconomic shift with great sensitivity to the historical landscape and cultural particularities of contemporary Caribbean society. Her book complicates the study of neoliberalism and enlists future researchers to consider the construction of the entrepreneurial subject in studies of neoliberal expansion. As a subjective and emotional state influenced by gender, class, and race, entrepreneurial self-making is presented as a work that will remain forever under construction. Freeman succeeds in weaving together critical analysis with compelling case studies, creating an ethnographically rich and theoretically sophisticated text.

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Poverty and the Quest for Life: Spiritual and Material Striving in Rural India by Bhrigupati Singh.


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When Giorgio Agamben (1998) put forth the notion of “bare life,” a concept demarcating expendable forms of being that lie at the heart of modern power, anthropologists responded critically and concertedly. A wealth of renewed attention has been focused onto sovereign powers and the politics of life itself. In his debut ethnography, Poverty and the Quest for Life, Bhrigupati Singh makes profound contributions to this area of study.

Singh conducted his field research in Rajasthan, India with Sahariya tribe members, people overwhelmingly characterized as living in “unthinkable” poverty. With his ethnographic insights, Singh mounts a sustained inquiry into what it might mean to conceive of “quality of life” beyond normative indicators, such as caloric intake and consumption expenditure. “The most important qualities of life cannot be counted,” writes Singh (97). Far more than just an uplifting moral platitude, this statement provides an entry point into Singh’s overarching ambition: to develop an analytic view of power and ethics that sees beyond material lack to find “waxing” and “waning” vitalities that transcend binaries through the monist ontologies of Giles Deleuze (2001) and Friedrich Nietzsche (2003, 2009, 2013). Singh follows the monist rejection of dualisms and discrete quantities in favor of a view of singular but agonistic forces, in order to suggest that the abstracted indicators and measurements of impoverishment need to be understood in their fundamental relationship to other abundances.

That is, he responds to work within postcolonial studies that has problematized the secularizing assumptions of Western historiography (see Chakrabarty 2007), while at the same time embodying his arguments regarding the connections between many modes of life at different thresholds. This stance segues into the first two of eleven chapters, which are primarily focused on laying out a “political theology of sovereignty” (55). In the
first chapter, Singh seeks to account for the important vitality of spirits in an Indian context. Quoting Jean Langford (2009), Singh points out that, “Agamben’s idea of ‘bare life’ precludes sociality in the existences imagined for the dead” (41). This specific foreclosure, Singh argues, exposes a more general need for a framework that is attuned to the movement of intensities and vitalities across different thresholds of life. As he explains later in the text, “quality of life’ cannot be measured only by a static minimum indicator such as caloric value, since what is good at one threshold, such as food, may be harmful at another, such as water” (282).

In the second chapter, Singh reimagines Michel Foucault’s (2010) framework of governmentality and revises how to think of the state, state failure, and the art of governing. Rather than looking dichotomously at the unintended consequences of state development projects where failures produce state violence in spaces of state care and violence and care are rendered as fundamentally separate categories, Singh calls upon Mitra-Viruna as deities of sunrise and sunset to think about violence and care as companion forces. He applies this new model in the subsequent chapter, “Who Ate Up the Forests?” to analyze forestry management policies in India. Instead of total state control or absence, Singh finds varying degrees of state involvement, confusions, and ambivalences (102).

In chapter four, “The Coarse and the Fine: Contours of a Slow-Moving Crisis,” Singh goes on to analyze food politics of Shahabad in the aftermath of the Green Revolution, a momentous phase of agricultural intensification in the Global South resulting from the widespread adoption of high yielding seed varietals biotechnologically engineered in the so-called West. In a post-Green Revolution Shahabad, a general preference for cultivating and consuming wheat instead of traditional strains of millets took hold. This preference has depleted the water table, as wheat cultivation requires irrigation where millet is rain-fed. A standard frame of analyzing these dynamics already exists, wherein the importation of ecologically inappropriate technologies would be criticized, and the on-the-ground resistance to the importation would be emphasized. Instead of following this program, Singh suggests it holds an “inadequate picture of people’s desires” (112). That is, his interlocutors live with an ever-present sense of threat and crisis, and yet, also prioritize a sense of taste. Wheat is seen as more “fine” and thus valuable. Rather than being either good or bad, Singh argues, wheat should be understood as alternately life-giving and life-denying, to enhance
Singh develops his thoughts on agriculture in the following chapter, “Contracts, Bonds, and Bonded Labor.” Looking to livelihood creates space for Singh to address the multiform ways Sahariyas create value beyond monetary measures. He looks to potencies – defined as potential and actual life force (134) – in grain economies and the affective intensity of non-alienated work. In this way, he amplifies forms of life that are rich in life force, that are abundant, despite being poor in money and commodities. This, in turn, opens a discussion on ethics and power, which Singh argues are structuring themes for the text. Singh states: “If we call this abundance good, then we can say that it may be possible to live a good life within this milieu. And if we were to inquire further into these possibilities of life, then a new set of conceptual concerns opens up – not only relations of power but also questions of ethics” (135). Ethics, Singh goes on to explain, are ways of being that involve agonistics, defined as forms of contestation that bring us closer to life by increasing vitality; they are contestations that reject life-denying ideals and embrace “nobler” forms of life (162, 281). Quoting Deleuze (1997), Singh affirms, “for me to be true to life means an aversion to ‘high’ morality as ideals of piety and virtues and rules and oughts subtracted from the ‘imperfections’ of life” (138). Drawing upon perspectives from Hindu women’s erotic devotional songs, this definition of ethics, Singh suggests, implies that sacred and profane might be closer than imagined (144). Moreover, Singh examines the adoption of a new deity, Tejaji, by neighboring communities to also look at the way ethical being also involves the simultaneity of intimacy and antagonism so long as this “adds to” lively vitality (185).

This mode of analysis, of finding unity in place of dualism continues across diverse subjects – including human-animal relations, the life of local deities, and ascetics – for the remainder of the book. If this is at times a dizzying reading experience, as each chapter is potentially a book of its own, Singh was deliberate in how he structured the text. On one hand, the book is a nod to classic ethnography in its focus on a single village, Shahabad. On the other, Singh’s focus is far from simple, straightforward or singular. In a forum dedicated to Poverty and the Quest for Life in Somatosphere, Connolly (2015) describes the work as “nomadic,” in the sense of being informed by “a way of inhabiting the planetary condition in which the study is set” (Connolly 2015). As nomad, Singh achieves an attention to locality without resorting to flat-footed localism precisely by an
unblinking and unremitting refusal of binaries. Instead, we are asked by Singh to roam, return, and rethink.

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The Land of Open Graves: Living and Dying on the Migrant Trail by Jason De León (Photography by Michael Wells).


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In The Land of Open Graves, Jason de León explores illegal migration along the Sonoran desert in Arizona, on the border between Mexico and the US, through the use of ethnographic, archaeological, linguistic, forensic, and photographic methods. De León’s main argument is that U.S. immigration policy purposely utilizes the desert as a form of violence that kills and erases migrant bodies. De León’s mixed-method approach renders visible the role of the desert to create a critical ethnography.

Chapter 1 introduces the Prevention Through Deterrence (PTD) strategy, which was created as a response to high migration levels following the Mexican corn crisis. PTD proposes high policing of urban points of entry, channeling migrants towards the desert. In Chapter 2, we see the desert as a “space of exception” (Agamben 2005) where human rights are suspended in the name of security. Furthermore, this deserted space has its own logic. De León appropriates Callon and Law’s (1995) concept of the “hybrid collectif” to argue that nature and animals are agents that contribute to violence as much as deportation agents. Drawing inspiration from actor-network theory, he calls those agents actants, or “sources of action that might be human or non-human” (De León 2015, 39). His goal is to show the role that the non-human, that is, the desert, plays in the migrant process. A combination of burning temperatures, vultures, ruthless smugglers, and patrol officers are assembled together to form that hybrid collectif. “Border Patrol draws on the agency of animals [...] while simultaneously absolving itself of any blame connected to loss of life” (43). Other ethnographies of the border have reported stories of crossing (Spener 2009) or have focused on the role of economic flows in shaping migration and structural inequalities (Bacon, 2004; Gomberg-Muñoz 2011; Holmes 2013). To add nature as an actant complements those accounts. In Chapter 3, De León moves on to
define the violence of the desert. He coins the concept “necroviolence” to describe the violence that is outsourced to the burning sand and heat to make corpses disappear. In order to evidence the violence that occurs in the desert, De León uses pigs to replicate the decomposition of bodies in the desert.

To begin Part 2 ‘El Camino’, Chapter 4 tells the story of Memo and Lucho, two immigrants who have repeatedly been deported back to Mexico as a result of several DUI charges in the US. Like many other deportees, Memo and Lucho have built lives in the US and find themselves trapped in a circle of deportations and desert crossings to return to their families. Chapter 5 shows them working temporarily in the migrant shelter Juan Bosco, earning money to purchase the backpacks and water gallons needed to survive the desert. In Chapters 6 and 7, De León’s team follows those objects and employs excavation and use-wear analysis to examine this material record left behind on the trail. Use-wear analysis is an archaeological technique that documents the modifications people make to objects by wearing or repairing them. A pair of shoes “kept together with a bar strap” (181) offers an insight into the harsh conditions that crossers endure. Given that the desert can erase all evidence, forensic science and the “archaeology of the contemporary” (170) are used to render visible what nature makes invisible. De León uses archaeological methods to “provide a different and perhaps safer approach to the excavation of these hidden narratives” and undoubtedly succeeds in showing the on-going relevance of archaeological approaches in contemporary social anthropology (170).

In Part 3 ‘Perilous Terrain’, Chapters 9 and 10 focus on rendering visible the deadly effects of Prevention Through Deterrence. During fieldwork, De León’s team finds the body of Maricela, a deceased Ecuadorian crosser. Her story is brought into the book to illustrate the brutality of necroviolence on those who do not survive. In Chapter 11, José, a relative of Maricela disappears in the desert. The theme of visibility and invisibility continues to be explored through the consequences of his death on his family. “The absence of physical evidence […] prevents them from mourning. Necroviolence is eternal and inescapable” (275). These three chapters also shift the focus towards Central American crossers, an under-explored but vulnerable group that faces further exploitation during their journey in the hands of Mexican smugglers.

Both Parts 2 and 3 demonstrate that De León’s methods are underpinned by his desire to
place migrant voices at the center. Most interviews are transcribed as dialogues, so that his informants' experiences remain central. Visual methods are generated in a participatory fashion, including pictures Memo took of his own crossing. Unfortunately, the female dimension of migration is only partially developed in this book, but the author himself recognizes this. De León attributes the uneven representation of male and females crossing experiences to his lack of access to female crossers, and reconstructs accounts of gendered abuse and violence through conversations with other informants.

De León’s mixed-methods approach, which combines ethnographic vignettes and forensic-archaeological analysis, serves to fully illuminate his argument: the use of the desert and all its elements (animals, Border Patrols, temperature) as a weapon. Archaeology is used to uncover the devastating effects of the hybrid collectif on crossers. De León’s team collects abandoned water bottles, photos, shoes, and creates a typology of sites and camps across the desert (190-1). Archaeology has always sought to understand past cultures by reference to their material culture. Now those artifacts and sites tell us about the current evolving strategies migrants use to survive excruciating natural conditions. For example, archaeological research points towards the use of black water bottles; and then interviews reveal that crossers paint plastic bottles to conceal them, while in fact darker surfaces attract more sunlight, warming up what little water they carry in the desert. This particular blending of social anthropology and archaeology provides a new perspective on the border.

One traditional concern with equating non-humans with humans is that one might alleviate the burden of responsibility that lies with humans (Callon and Law 1995). However, De León’s ethnography succeeds in making a clear distinction between a theoretical discussion about agency and political responsibility. De León states that “although [he is] sympathetic to the ontological turn towards nonhumans as key political actors, [he is] not ready to disconnect human agency from the brutal boundary enforcement strategies” (61). He does not allow the ontology of the desert as an actant to stop him from adhering responsibility to the US administration for mass deportation, remaining critical of its policies. De León’s achievement is to fully exploit the explanatory power of Callon and Law’s concepts while retaining a critical angle.

The book also raises questions about how to best depict violent realities in ethnography. His
description of decomposition is graphic, accompanied by photos of the half-eaten pigs and vultures. He also includes a shocking picture of Maricela upon discovery. De León uses this forensic evidence to denounce the brutality of US policy (213-214) while at the same time remaining mindful of the possibility of immigration pornography (5) and the use of senseless violence for its dramatic effects, which evokes Bourgois’s concept of pornography of violence (2001). While those graphic images are powerful, mundane objects receive less attention. Readers looking to find out more about routine objects such as everyday water bottles or bag packs should read about the Undocumented Migration Project (UMP), the wider project on which De León has worked. The UMP aims at documenting routine archaeological evidence left behind by the crossers to better understand this process.

The Land of Open Graves skillfully makes aspects of migration across the Mexico-US border visible, despite the erasure that occurs in the Arizona desert. The desert as hybrid collectif challenges our conventional understanding of agency by moving beyond the human/ non-human binary. Archaeology complements narrative accounts of human experiences with the Mexico-US the border. Both undergraduate and graduate students will benefit from reading De León’s work – it is engaging, while methodologically ambitious. The Land of Open Graves is an innovative ethnography exploring not only Mexico-US migration, but also what archaeology can reveal about contemporary issues.

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Parenthood between Generations: Transforming Reproductive Cultures by Siân Pooley and Kaveri Qureshi, eds.

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Pooley and Qureshi’s volume consists of ten ethnographic studies—the authors of which come from a myriad of disciplinary backgrounds including anthropology, sociology, and history—intended to illustrate a qualitative analysis of generativity (which includes the struggle of defining “generation” as well as studying its conceptual interplay with parenthood) and what they call “intergenerational transmission,” a core process in the making of a parent. This process is an integral component in a “reproductive culture,” and Pooley and Qureshi focus on what constitute such cultures by exploring how ways of being, thinking, knowing, and remembering are transmitted from one generation to the next.

However, taking into account agency of the youth themselves—that their memories can be remembered selectively, intentionally or otherwise—one finds that transmission is altered and that “people transpose, rather than replicate their pasts,” leaving room for revision (Pooley and Qureshi 2016, 9). As such, Pooley and Qureshi imagine reproduction as something more than a simple passing of the torch but as “a site where replication and innovation are inextricably intertwined” (Pooley and Qureshi 2016, 9). In other words, intergenerational transmission is not simply passing culture on, but an act of re-creation that is dependent on the recipient’s (being an active agent in this process) memory and subjective interpretation. This sort of innovation has become more noticeable in contemporary times and in areas where expert authorities in parenting now provide a viable alternative to historically-based understandings of parenthood, such as in Michala Breengaard’s chapter concerning intergenerational practices and relations in contemporary urban China.

The book itself contains twelve major sections: ten chapters and a comprehensive introduction and conclusion in which Pooley and Qureshi provide their own analyses. In their commentaries, Pooley and
Qureshi offer four processes through which they argue intergenerational transmission occurs: implicit normative expectations, moral judgement, habituation, and memory. The editors briefly describe in their introduction how each of the subsequent studies demonstrate various processes of intergenerational transmission which is noteworthy as the presence of these processes are not readily apparent otherwise.

Chapters are grouped into eight categories according to which of the four processes of transmission is being exhibited and whether or not the process is considered the “primary process” or a “secondary process.” The process of differentiating between the two isn’t always self-evident and sometimes appears to be a largely subjective evaluation; their presence is perhaps more important than their priority. Pooley and Qureshi stress that these processes should not be understood as operating in isolation but engaging one another in a dialectic (Pooley and Qureshi 2016, 22). Pooley and Qureshi state that implicit normative expectations are the primary process of transmission at work in Pralat’s, Doyle’s, and Breengaard’s studies; moral judgement is the primary process present in Hertog’s and Pooley’s studies. Habituation is the primary process present in Qureshi’s and Rahman’s studies; and memory is the primary process in Davis’s, Chowbey and Salway’s, and Heron’s studies (Pooley and Qureshi 2016, 22).

Pooley and Qureshi highlight the differences between their four processes of intergenerational transmission in their introduction, often including relevant examples from the later ethnographies. Implicit normative expectations are defined as seemingly vague questions of “what should be done,” and can be used to take into consideration the opinions of one’s parents (Pooley and Qureshi 2016, 22). For example, in Robert Pralat’s chapter on gay parenthood, parents and children rarely explicitly discussed their reproductive expectations, but children took into great consideration what they believed their parents’ opinions were. Moral judgments are more explicitly stated and function similarly but “parents communicate moral judgments in ways that are less worked-out than the concept of morality implies” (Pooley and Qureshi 2016, 25). Habituation draws upon Bourdieau’s *habitus,* or more specifically, a critiqued version of it by Ingold that rejects the internalizing processes as a method of acquiring skills and know-how; Pooley and Qureshi view this critique to be less deterministic than the manner in which habitus has been used concerning the “inescapability of a person’s early constitution” (Pooley and Qureshi 2016, 27). Instead, Ingold,
as quoted by the editors, theorizes that such knowledge is “generated within contexts of experience in the course of people’s involvement with others in the practical business of life” and regrown in specific environments rather than simply recreated (Pooley and Qureshi 2016, 27). As for memory, Pooley and Qureshi approach this process in much the same way they approach generativity. Memory is not a “straightforward retrieval of a past experience but a dialogue between a person’s past, present, and future self” (Pooley and Qureshi 2016, 29). Similarly, generativity, as used by Pooley and Qureshi, is conceived of as a both vertical and horizontal phenomena (both as a family lineage and as a socially constructed origin with which others come to identify), but also as a self-referential narrative of change shaped by a discourse between earlier ways of being, knowing, and thinking and new information dispersed by expert authorities (Pooley and Qureshi 2016, 12-17).

Despite being made up of predominately ethnographic accounts, the volume lends itself well to social theory in the domain of parenthood, especially with Pooley and Qureshi’s commentary on parenting studies in the introduction. The authors’ interest in intergenerational relationships means that the chapters all focus on older parents raising adult children. However, the chapters are diverse in subject matter and span the globe, ranging from illegitimate pregnancies in contemporary Japan in Hertog’s chapter to Rahman’s exploration of the Waraka’s style of perinatal care in Northwestern Amazonia. Pooley and Qureshi’s focus on adult children—who are simultaneously young parents—is a refreshing break from ethnographic studies focusing on rearing youth. With prospective grandparents and their adult children, questions of generativity and continuing the family line become more explicit in the minds of those involved. In her own chapter, Pooley highlights the increasing relevance of intergenerational narratives and grandparenthood, pointing to the increased life expectancy over the years and how grandparents play a more central role in family relations. This is undoubtedly true for her informants: English parents in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Whether the same trend in life expectancies can be observed in families elsewhere is doubtful; such inductive fallacies are understandably dangerous when talking about sweeping generalities such as “modern parenting.”

Any student of kinship studies will find this volume a departure from more matricentric or child-centered studies that gloss over the socially constructed meanings we assign
to terms such as “parenthood” and even “personhood,” meanings that are transmitted from one generation to the next and now from external authorities legitimized by the state as well. Pooley and Qureshi’s emphasis on using reproductive cultures as the lens with which to examine family relations and the social construction of parenthood proves to be an excellent method in answering what they believe is the “neglected question of how parenthood is passed on” (Pooley and Qureshi 2016, 277; their emphasis). In their own words, Pooley and Qureshi do not aim to “be destructive” by rejecting simple linear narratives (i.e. rejecting “global theories of demographic transition, of the decline of extended family..., or of ever more child-centered affective cultures across the last century”) but offer a framework in which generativity and the transmission of reproductive cultures can account for the intergenerational transposition of ways of being, knowing, remembering and, as shown in this volume, culturally inflected understandings of parenthood (Pooley and Qureshi 2016, 277).