We would like to remind our readers that, strictly speaking, we are not reviewing the books and articles presented here (in the sense of giving a critical assessment of their contents) but intend to draw the readers’ attention to the publications that are of particular interest for those who are engaged with both—anthropology and mission. The material in the bulletin partly consists of quotes taken from the presented books and articles.

Review of Books
(by Vinsensius Adi Gunawan and Othmar Gächter)


Aimed at a wide audience of readers, “The Anthropology of Catholicism” is the first companion guide to this burgeoning field within the anthropology of Christianity. Bringing to light Catholicism’s long but comparatively ignored presence within the discipline of anthropology, the book introduces readers to key studies in the field, as well as to current analyses on the present and possible futures of Catholicism globally. This reader provides both ethnographic material and theoretical reflections on Catholicism around the world, demonstrating how a revised anthropology of Catholicism can generate new insights and analytical frameworks that will impact anthropology as well as other disciplines.

David Morgan: A first-rate collection of insightful essays by leading anthropologists and historians that vastly enrich the study of Catholic practice and belief. The creative scholarship featured in this book will also serve as a model for the study of religion far beyond Catholicism.


“Translating Catechisms, Translating Cultures” explores the dimensions of early modern transcultural Christianities; the leeway of religious negotiation in and outside of Europe by comparing catechisms and their translation in the context of several Jesuit missionary strategies. The volume challenges the often assumed paramount European-ness of Western Christianity. In the early modern period, the idea of Tridentine Catholicism was translated into many different regions where it was appropriated and adopted to local conditions.

Missionary work always entails translation, linguistic as well as cultural, which results in a modification of the content. Catechisms were central instruments to communicate Christian belief and, therefore, they are central media for all kinds of translation processes. The comparative approach (including China, India, Japan, Ethiopia, Northern America, and England) enables the evaluation of different factors like power relations, social differentiation, cultural patterns, gender roles etc.


Interchange between anthropology and biblical scholarship began because of perceived similarities between “simpler” societies and practices appearing in the Hebrew Bible. After some disengagement when anthropologists turned
mainly to ethnographic fieldwork, new cross-disciplinary possibilities opened up when structuralism emerged in anthropology. Ritual and mythology were major topics receiving attention, and some biblical scholars partially adopted structuralist methods. In addition, anthropological research extended to complex societies and also had an impact upon historical studies. Modes of interpretation developed that reflected holistic perspectives along with a sensibility to ethnographic detail.

This essay illustrates these trends in regard to rituals and to notions of purity in the Hebrew Bible, as well as to the place of literacy in Israelite society and culture. After discussing these themes, three examples of structuralist-inspired analysis are presented which in different ways take into account historical and literacy-based facets of the Bible.


L’anthropologie religieuse nous enseigne que l’homme n’est homme en tant qu’*homo religiousus*, celui en qui religion et culture ont la même matrice pour jaillissement. Cette matrice culturo-religieuse offre à voir un homme vagabondant hors de la boucle de la clôture de la nature. En cela, l’anthropologie religieuse étudie l’homme, constructeur et manipulateur des symboles, dans son rapport à ce qu’il estime être le surnaturel ou le sacré, pour autant que pour l’homme religieux la nature est, non pas exclusivement « naturelle », mais toujours chargée de valeurs religieuses et est, de ce fait, imprégnée de sacralité.

La notion de sacré semble donc inséparable de l’expérience de l’institution du religieux, c’est-à-dire des relations de l’être humain avec un plan de la réalité supra-sensible, invisible, divin. Le sacré, ainsi que l’avance M. Eliade avec pertinence, peut être considéré comme une maladie originaire de l’*homo religiousus* universel.

Mais, pour autant, faut-il confondre sacré et religion ? En d’autres termes, quel est le champ de l’anthropologie religieuse d’une part et, d’autre part, quelle est la nature du sacré ? Le présent livre, manuel de cours pour les années de Maîtrise notamment, essaie d’y répondre.


While the importance of the relationship between anthropology and contemporary art has long been recognized, the discussion has tended to be among scholars from North America, Europe, and Australia; until now, scholarship and experiences from other regions have been largely absent from mainstream debate.

“Alternative Art and Anthropology” rectifies this by offering a groundbreaking new approach to the subject. Entirely dedicated to perspectives from Asia, Latin America, and Africa, the book advances our understanding of the connections between anthropology and contemporary art on a global scale. Across ten chapters, a range of anthropologists, artists, and curators from countries such as China, Japan, Indonesia, Bhutan, Nigeria, Chile, Ecuador, and the Philippines discuss encounters between anthropology and contemporary art from their points of view, presenting readers with new vantage points and perspectives. Arnd Schneider draws together the various threads to provide readers with a clear conceptual and theoretical narrative.

The first to map the relationship between anthropology and contemporary art from a global perspective, this is a key text for students and academics in areas such as anthropology, visual anthropology, anthropology of art, art history, and curatorial studies.


Revêtue de significations multiples, la nature a longtemps formé le pôle principal d’une série d’oppositions dans la pensée européenne: nature et culture, nature et surnature, nature et art, nature et esprit, nature et histoire...

Des études de plus en plus nombreuses, dont ce livre se fait l’écho, mettent en doute la généralité de ces catégories et leur pertinence. L’effritement des limites de la nature est-il total, ou doit-on reconnaître la persistance de certaines discontinuités fondamentales entre humains et non-humains?

Issu du colloque de rentrée qui s’est tenu au Collège de France en octobre 2017, ce livre propose une réflexion interdisciplinaire sur les questions soulevées par les déplacements et les brouillages de frontière entre déterminations naturelles et déterminations humaines.

Le seuil critique que semble avoir atteint l’anthropisation de la Terre, dont le réchauffement global n’est peut-être qu’l’exemple le plus criant, donné à ces questions une actualité nouvelle.


“Statageography” – the ethnographic exploration of relational modes, boundaries, and forms of embeddedness of state actors – offers crucial analytical avenues for researching state transformations. By exploring interactions and negotiations of local actors in different institutional settings, the contributors explore state transformations in relation to social security in a variety of locations spanning from Russia, Eastern Europe, and the Balkans to the United Kingdom and France. Fusing grounded empirical studies with rigorous theorizing, the volume provides new perspectives to broader related debates in social research and political analysis.

Didier Fassin: “Statageography” opens a new line of research in the growing field of the ethnographies of the state. Resolute to bridge the gap between cultural
representations and actual practices, and attentive to the relational dimensions of street-level bureaucracies, the authors outline a comparative approach to contemporary states.


This wide literary anthology invites the reader to encounter current developments at both the “global” and “local” levels, called glocal contexts, through the model of Christian missionary discipleship in its present-day context. Part I surveys some key prerequisites for the glocal context: globalization, digitalization, migration, postmodernity, and ecology. Part II is primarily devoted to biblical, theological, and missiological, intercultural, spiritual, formalizational, and philosophical responses. Part III narrates and discusses the missionary experience of and involvement in missionary discipleship by Divine Word Missionaries, Holy Spirit Missionary Sisters, and their lay partners in mission.


Ce livre est le fruit de la recherche ethnologique de l’auteur qui s’est déroulée au Ghana, et pour des courtes périodes en Côte d’Ivoire, de 1989 à 2013. Mariano Pavanello a passé 35 mois en pays Nzema; il a étudié la culture locale en participant à la vie sociale et politique. Il a observé la vie économique, le système de pouvoir coutumier, la justice coutumière et a même participé à des conseils des anciens de villages pour l’arbitrage de cas et de litiges. Ce livre donne un aperçu très dense sur la vie sociale des Nzema, sur les croyances locales, la sorcellerie et les formes de pensée. Les deux derniers chapitres présentent les thèses de l’auteur sur le système de parenté, l’origine des matriclans et sur l’organisation hiérarchique de la société.


“Working the System” offers key insights into the politics of the everyday in twenty-first-century dominant party and neo-authoritarian regimes in Africa and elsewhere. Detailing the many ways ordinary Angolans fashion their relationships with the system – an emic notion of their current political and socioeconomic environment – Jon Schubert explores what it means and how it feels to be part of the contemporary Angolan polity.

Schubert finds that for many ordinary Angolans, the benefits of the post-conflict “New Angola,” flush with oil wealth and in the midst of a construction boom, are few. The majority of the inhabitants of the capital, Luanda, struggle to make ends meet and live on under $2.00 per day. The “New Angola” as promoted by the ruling MPLA, Schubert contends, is an essentially urban, upwardly mobile, and aspirational project, premised on the acceptance of the regime’s political and economic dominance by its citizens.

Schubert traces how Angolans may question and resist the system within an atmosphere of apparent compliance. “Working the System” will appeal to anthropologists and political scientists, urban sociologists, and scholars of African studies.

Marissa J. Moorman: Jon Schubert unpacks the complex, dialogic relations between state and society and thus the co-production of hegemony in what he, echoing his informants, calls “the system.”


To justify the plundering of today’s Democratic Republic of the Congo, U.S. intellectual elites have continuously produced dismissive Congo discourses. Tracing these discourses in great depth and breadth for the first time, Johnny Van Hove shows how U.S. intellectuals (and their influential European counterparts) have been using the Congo in similar fashions for their own goals. Analyzing intellectual as diverse as W.E.B. Du Bois, Joseph Conrad, and David Van Reybrouck, the book offers a theorization of Central West Africa, a case study of normalized narratives
on the “Other”, and a stirring wake up call for all contemporary writers on international history and politics.


In “Cooking Data”, Crystal Biruk offers an ethnographic account of research into the demographics of HIV and AIDS in Malawi to rethink the production of quantitative health data. While research practices are often understood within a clean/dirty binary, the author shows that data are never clean; rather, they are always “cooked” during their production and inevitably entangled with the lives of those who produce them. Examining how the relationships among fieldworkers, supervisors, respondents, and foreign demographers shape data, Biruk examines the ways in which units of information – such as survey questions and numbers written onto questionnaires by fieldworkers – acquire value as statistics that go on to shape national AIDS policy. Her approach illustrates how on-the-ground dynamics and research cultures mediate the production of global health statistics in ways that impact local economies and formulations of power and expertise.

Vincanne Adams: This is not a simple revelation story in which we learn that data in research projects is socially contingent. It is a cultural study of demography research in the field, and the end product is the best we can do in anthropology – familiar things are made unfamiliar, conditional, and fragile. Crystal Biruk’s work is quite simply fantastic.


“Anthropology of Law in Muslim Sudan” analyses the hybridity of law systems and the plurality of legal practices in rural and urban contexts of contemporary Sudan, shedding light on the complex relation between Islam and society. It is the outcome of the international research program ANDROMAQUE (Anthropologie du Droit dans les Mondes Musulmans Africains et Asiatiques), funded by the French ANR (Agence National de la Recherche) between 2011 and 2014. Crossing two disciplinary perspectives, anthropology and law, the present volume contains original fieldwork data on contemporary urban and rural Sudan. Focusing on two major domains, land property, and courts, several case studies demonstrate the relevance of an approach based on “legal practices” to underline, first, the plurality and hybridity of law systems and the relative role of the Islamic reference in Sudanese society, and, secondly, the reshaping of legal behaviors and norms after the breaking point of South Sudan’s independence in 2011.


D’une grande figure héroïque belge, Léopold II est devenu le méchant de l’Histoire, jugé coupable de crimes contre l’humanité. Croqué par la plume, le crayon et fixé sur la pellicule, le Roi est de plus en plus réduit aux traits romanesques et caricaturaux de sa vie comme de son règne. Ce livre aborde pour la première fois le fonctionnement de l’État indépendant du Congo et le rôle de Léopold II en vue de mieux comprendre les atrocités liées à la récolte du caoutchouc ainsi que les actions du souverain.

Enrichie par de nombreux témoignages inédits, de documents confidents et même d’anecdotes, cette étude nuance notre vision du Congo léopoldien, tout en n’évitant pas les questions qui fâchent, telles le nombre de victimes, la responsabilité de Léopold II ou encore son enrichissement personnel.


The failure to manage cultural diversity in Morocco and Equatorial Guinea in an egalitarian manner has been linked to the hallmark of colonialism. First, because the policy practiced upon Arabs and Morrocan Imazighen since the French colonization comprised one of the reasonings employed to justify the pro-Arab policies developed after independence. Second, because the discriminatory policy deployed by Spain in Equatorial Guinea, was overridden by the installation of a dictatorship that established a system of Fang predominance. This book clarifies the degree to which the Spanish colonization is responsible for the present-day management of cultural diversity in both countries.


“Land Reform Revisited” engages with contemporary debates on land reform and agrarian transformation in South Africa. The volume offers insights into post-apartheid transformation dynamics through the lens of agency and state making. The chapters written by emerging scholars are based on extensive qualitative research and their analysis highlights the ways in which people negotiate and contest land reform realities and politics. By focusing on the diverse meanings of land and competing interpretations of what constitutes success and failure in land reform Brandt and Mkodzongi insist on looking beyond the productivity discourses guiding research and policy making in the field towards an informed view from below.

Endres, Kirsten W., and Chris Hann (eds.): Socialism with Neoliberal Characteristics. Halle: Max Planck
Since the 1980s, market-oriented reforms have transformed the socialist economies of China and Vietnam, but concomitant changes in social and familial relations remain poorly understood. The anthropologists who present the results of their field research in this Report confirm that the “contract” between state and society has changed significantly. In conditions of increasing mobility, competition, and inequality, support and care are negotiated in more individualized ways by persons who aspire to become self-relying middle-class consumers. Yet these trends are deeply marked by specific regional – of the first decades of socialism, and of patriarchal ideology and practice over countries.


Since the turn of the century Singapore has sustained a reputation for both austere governance and cutting-edge biomedical facilities and research. Seeking to emphasize Singapore’s capacity for “modern medicine” and strengthen their burgeoning biopharmaceutical industry, this image has explicitly excluded Chinese medicine – despite its tremendous popularity amongst Singaporeans from all walks of life, and particularly amongst Singapore’s ethnic Chinese majority. This book examines the use and practice of Chinese medicine in Singapore, especially in everyday life, and contributes to anthropological debates regarding the post-colonial intersection of knowledge, identity, and governmentality, and to transnational studies of Chinese medicine as a permeable, plural, and fluid practice.


Given China’s size and its long and varied cultural history with its many different cultural strands (not only from the 55 officially recognized minorities), it is surprising to see that comparatively little has been published in terms of ethno-musicological research. On the other hand, it needed UNESCO’s initiative of the “Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity” to remind the Chinese of the values of their own traditions. China participated from the very beginning in the initiative – with success: As of November 2016, China has inscribed almost 30 different traditions into this list, plus another seven into a “List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding”, which has led to a surprising and radical change in the perception of traditional arts and crafts in China itself.

This book looks at some of these traditions: at the changing tastes and attitudes towards the guqin zither and at a musical transfer at the end of the 18th century, at the minority music of the Naxi and Uyghur people, at developments in the 20th century such as Li Jinhui’s children operas in the 1920s or at the interdependence between music and power under and after Mao Zedong. Stepping into the 21st century, a new folk song movement and the careers and success of glittering girl bands are examined, as are the ways Chinese in Taiwan look at their old motherland. Two music-related themes are Chinese shadow play and the folk dance genre yangge, and last not least we also can read an advice for Westerners how to open their ears for Chinese music. The book comes with an 80-minute audio CD whose 17 tracks give sound to the papers in this publication.


Migration has been a life event for many Afghans during the past decades, with mass exoduses due to war, insecurity, and poverty. This book explores how Hazara migrant women reinterpret their narration of “self”, ventilates opinions of their migratory lives and analyses ways Afghan immigrant women experience life in Germany. It presents an understanding how they experience sociocultural change as a consequence of their migratory experiences. It identifies contradictions in how Afghan immigrant women negotiate identity, belonging to and acquire status in the new society.


Im Laufe der Geschichte haben sich unzählige Geldformen aus unterschiedlichen Materialien wie Metallen, Federn, Glas, Gewürzen, Papier usw. gebildet. Welche Funktionen und Definitionen aber muss ein Objekt erfüllen, um als Geld bezeichnet zu werden?


The relationship between customary land tenure and ‘modern’ forms of landed property has been a major political issue in the ‘Spearhead’ states of Melanesia since the late colonial period, and is even more pressing today, as the region is subject to its own version of what is described in the international literature as a new ‘land rush’ or ‘land grab’ in developing countries. This volume aims to test the application of one particular theoretical framework to the Melanesian version of this phenomenon, which is the framework put forward by Derek Hall, Philip Hirsch, and Tania Murray Li in their 2011 book, Powers of Exclusion: Land Dilemmas in Southeast Asia. Since that framework emerged from studies of the agrarian transition in Southeast Asia, the key question addressed in this volume is whether ‘land transformations’ in Melanesia are proceeding in a similar direction, or whether they take a somewhat different form because of the particular nature of Melanesian political economies or social institutions. The contributors to this volume all deal with this question from the point of view of their own direct engagement with different aspects of the land policy process in particular countries. Aside from discussion of the agrarian transition in Melanesia, particular attention is also paid to the growing problem of land access in urban areas and the gendered nature of landed property relations in this region.


A sophisticated, state-of-the-art study of the remaking of Christianity by indigenous societies, Words and Worlds Turned Around reveals the manifold transformations of Christian discourses in the colonial Americas. The book surveys how Christian messages were rendered in indigenous languages; explores what was added, transformed, or glossed over; and ends with an epilogue about contemporary Nahuatl Christianities.

In eleven case studies drawn from eight Amerindian languages – Nahuatl, Northern and Valley Zapotec, Quechua, Yucatec Maya, K’iche’ Maya, Q’eqchi’ Maya, and Tupi – the authors address Christian texts and traditions that were repeatedly changed through translation – a process of “turning around” as conveyed in Classical Nahuatl. Through an examination of how Christian terms and practices were made, remade, and negotiated by both missionaries and native authors and audiences, the volume shows the conversion of indigenous peoples as an ongoing process influenced by what native societies sought, understood, or accepted.

The volume features a rapprochement of methodologies and assumptions employed in history, anthropology, and religion and combines the acuity of methodologies drawn from philology and historical linguistics with the contextualizing force of the ethnohistory and social history of Spanish and Portuguese America.

Felipe Fernández-Armesto: These [essays] help show what happened on some of the most daunting frontiers of cultural exchange, where distinctive forms of Catholicism emerged. Creative misunderstandings, tense collaborations, fruitful contention: every type of encounter is represented here, with vivid evocations.


La Constitution indienne de 1952 donne les mêmes droits aux femmes et aux hommes. Gandhi et Nehru ont donné leur chance aux femmes indiennes, les ont encouragées à sortir de chez elles, à travailler... Il n’empêche que cet accès aux mêmes droits que les hommes doit être nuancé. Si le corps féminin est l’objet d’une véritable vénération à travers la sculpture (les temples de Khajuraho parmi d’autres en sont un exemple par excellence), la danse, le vêtement (le sari qui met en valeur son corps), il peut aussi être méprisé... Selon que l’on appartient à une caste élevée ou non, que l’on est brahmane ou intouchable (au bas de l’échelle de pureté), le sort des femmes indiennes n’est pas le même. Certaines femmes vont subir des violences psychologiques, physiques... des viols, voire être « tuées » par les belles-mères (à cause du système de dot remise lors des mariages). Encore aujourd’hui, on observe ce genre de crimes. Les associations féministes font tout pour changer en profondeur les mentalités d’une société patriarcale.


In “The Cow in the Elevator” Tulasi Srinivas explores a wonderful world where deities jump fences and priests ride in helicopters to present a joyful, imaginative, yet critical reading of modern religious life. Drawing on nearly two decades of fieldwork with priests, residents, and devotees, and her own experience of living in the high-tech city of Bangalore, Srinivas finds moments where ritual enmeshes with global modernity to create wonder – a feeling of amazement at being overcome by the unexpected and sublime. Offering a nuanced account of how the ruptures of modernity can be made normal, enrating, and even comical in a city swept up in globalization’s tumult, the author brings the visceral richness of wonder – apparent in creative ritual in and around Hindu temples – into the anthropological gaze. Broaching provocative philosophical themes like desire, complicity, loss, time, money, technology, and the imagination, Srinivas pursues an interrogation of wonder and the adventure of writing true to its experience. This book rethinks the study of ritual while reshaping our appreciation of wonder’s transformative potential for scholarship and for life.

Arjun Appadurai: This book is about the politics of wonder in the ritual life of a Hindu neighborhood in a major Indian city. The book itself is a wondrously written treatment of the saturation of neoliberal lives by a radical cosmology of performance, affect, and technicity, through which ritual life transfigures the pains and puzzles of modernity. It should be read by all students of ritual, affect, and emergent practices of globalization.

Co-written by an anthropologist and a reindeer herder (BRISK project co-researcher) on the basis of their field materials, this book offers documentation and analysis of complex traditional environmental knowledge. After discussing the methodology of the Evenki community-based transdisciplinary observatory for monitoring climate and environmental changes with herders (2012–2016), the book reveals some of the results of this co-production. It presents the emic typologies and concepts the Evenki use for understanding norms and anomalies, observing and predicting changes, and adapting. Conceived together with the herders, the book’s structure combines analytical texts (traditional in anthropology) and other forms of presentation, such as abstract diagrams with explanations in Evenki, Russian, and English; diagrams on pictures, and encyclopedic entries with pictures and trilingual explanations from the herders.


In “Dynamics of Difference in Australia”, Francesca Merlan examines relations between indigenous and non-indigenous people from the events of early exploration and colonial endeavors to the present day. From face-to-face interactions to national and geopolitical affairs, the book illuminates the dimensions of difference that are revealed by these encounters: what indigenous and nonindigenous people pay attention to, what they value, what preconceived notions each possesses, and what their responses are to the Other. Basing her analysis on her extensive fieldwork in northern Australia, the author highlights the asymmetries in the exchanges between the settler majority and the indigenous minority, looking at everything from forms of violence and material transactions, to indigenous involvement in resource development, to governmental intervention in indigenous affairs.

Merlan frames the book within the current debate in Australian society concerning the constitutional recognition of indigenous people by the nation-state. Surveying the precursors to this question and its continuing and unresolved nature, she chronicles the ways in which an indigenous minority can remain culturally different while simultaneously experiencing the transformative forces of domination, constraint, and inequality. Conducting an investigation of long-term change against the backdrop of a highly salient and timely public debate surrounding indigenous issues, Dynamics of Difference has far-reaching implications both for public policy and for current theoretical debates about the nature of sociocultural continuity and change.

Diane Austin-Broos: This book reveals with analytical clarity the underside of Australian politics in relation to indigenous peoples – the denials, self-delusions, sleights of hand, and inevitable misdeeds of the empowered majority. Francesca Merlan achieves this not so much through the flagging language of postcolonial critique but rather through the demonstration of consistencies across different times and places and on local and national levels. The cumulative evidence is compelling.


How is cultural change perceived and performed by members of the Bena language group, who live in the Eastern Highlands of Papua New Guinea? In her analysis, Knapp draws upon existing bodies of work on ‘culture change’, ‘exchange’ and ‘person’ in Melanesia but brings them together in a new way by conjoining traditional models with theoretical approaches of the new Melanesian ethnography and with collaborative, reflexive and reverse anthropology.

Sabine C. Hess: This book is a rich ethnography of Bena people in the Eastern Highlands of Papua New Guinea and their cultural focus on exchange relationships.


Combining personal narrative and ethnography, “Identity, Development, and the Politics of the Past” examines cultural change in a rural Ecuadorian fishing village where the community has worked to stake claim to an Indigenous identity in the face of economic, social, and political integration. By documenting how villagers have reconstructed their identity through the use of archaeology and political demarcation of territory, author Daniel Bauer shows that ethnicity is part of a complex social matrix that involves politics, economics, and history.

Residents in the coastal community of Salango pushed for formal recognition of Indigenous identity while highlighting their pre-Hispanic roots in order to make claims about cultural continuity and ancestrality. Bauer considers the extent to which the politics of identity is embedded in the process of community-based development, paying close attention to how local conceptions of identity and residents’ ideas about their own identity and the identities of others fit within the broader context of Ecuadorian and Latin American notions of mestizaje. He emphasizes ethnogenesis and the fluid nature of identity as residents reference prehistory and the archaeological record as anchor points for claims to an Indigenous ethnic identity.

This book moves beyond existing studies that center on questions of authenticity and instead focuses on the ways people make claims to identity. This book makes a significant contribution to the growing body of literature on the
Ecuadorian coast and directs scholars who focus on Ecuador to expand their focus beyond the highland and Amazonian regions.

*Alan Sandstrom:* A significant contribution to the anthropology of Ecuador, as well as to our understanding of general processes of ethnicity, ethnogenesis, and economic development.


Siendo el número 57 de los “Studia Instituti Anthropos”, el libro se propone analizar las mutaciones culturales del hombre a partir de sus fases iniciales de cazador-recolector, hacia la constitución del homo religiosus. Desde hace seis mil años, la región denominada “Andinoamérica Equatorial” (actual Ecuador) estuvo ocupada por sociedades agroalfareras las que, desde entonces, manifiestan la sacralidad del misterio de la vida vegetal paralelo a la fertilidad humana. A la par del culto a los antepasados y a los fenómenos naturales, en la búsqueda del conocimiento de lo numinoso ha sido importante el uso de “plantas sagradas” dentro de ritos chamánicos, lo que ha perdurado y es perceptible en el resurgimiento de una religiosidad cósmica.


“Transborder Media Spaces” offers a new perspective on how media forms like photography, video, radio, television, and the Internet have been appropriated by Mexican indigenous people in the light of transnational migration and ethnopolitical movements. In producing and consuming self-determined media genres, actors in Tamazulapam Mixe and its diaspora community in Los Angeles open up media spaces and seek to forge more equal relations both within Mexico and beyond its borders. It is within these spaces that Ayuujk people carve out their own, at times conflicting, visions of development, modernity, gender, and what it means to be indigenous in the twenty-first century.


This book explores the importance of heroes through the analyses of heroic figures, some controversial and alternative, from the Maya area. Contributors examine stories of hero figures as a primary way through which Maya preserve public memory, fortify their identities, and legitimize their place in their country’s historical and political landscape. Leading anthropologists, linguists, historians, and others incorporate ethnographic, ethnohistoric, and archival material into their chapters, resulting in a uniquely interdisciplinary book for scholars as well as students. The essays offer a critical survey of the broad significance of these figures and their stories and the ways that they have been appropriated by national governments to impose repressive political agendas. Related themes include the role of heroic figures in the Maya resurgence movement in Guatemala, contemporary Maya concepts of “hero,” and why some assert that all contemporary Maya are heroes.


“Creating Dialogues” discusses contemporary forms of leadership in a variety of Amazonian indigenous groups. Examining the creation of indigenous leaders as political subjects in the context of contemporary state policies of democratization and exploitation of natural resources, the book addresses issues of resilience and adaptation at the level of local community politics in lowland South America.

Contributors investigate how indigenous peoples perceive themselves as incorporated into the structures of states and how they tend to see the states as accomplices of the private companies and non-indigenous settlers who colonize or devastate indigenous lands. Adapting to the impacts of changing political and economic environments, leaders adopt new organizational forms, participate in electoral processes, become adept in the use of social media, experiment with cultural revitalization and new forms of performance designed to reach non-indigenous publics, and find allies in support of indigenous and human rights claims to secure indigenous territories and conditions for survival. Through these multiple transformations, the new styles and manners of leadership are embedded in indigenous notions of power and authority whose shifting trajectories predate contemporary political conjunctures.

Despite the democratization of many Latin American countries and international attention to human rights efforts, indigenous participation in political arenas is still peripheral. This book sheds light on dramatic, ongoing social and political changes within Amazonian indigenous groups. The volume will be of interest to students and scholars of anthropology, ethnology, Latin American studies, and indigenous studies, as well as governmental and nongovernmental organizations working with Amazonian groups.

Jonathan D. Hill: A must-read for anyone hoping to understand the new forms of leadership and conceptualizations of power emerging among indigenous peoples of lowland South America in the twenty-first century.

Gusinde partió desde Santiago el día viernes 5 de diciembre de 1919 en un tren rápido hasta Valparaíso, adónde se embarcó al día siguiente en el “Vapor Chiloé”, para llegar 12 días después a Punta Arenas. Señaló que el viaje fue incómodo, debido a la gran afluencia de personas que viajaban hacia el sur en verano. El detalle del recorrido lo registró en el diario: Valparaíso, Talcahuano, Coronel, Canal de Achao, Puerto Montt, Huícha, Castro, Quellón, Golfo de Penas, Canal Messier. El 16 de diciembre, antes de desembarcar en Punta Arenas registró: “Arreglé todo con Eberhardt, con Torres de Porvenir y Martínez en Pto Eugenia, frente a Harberton. Todo augura buen éxito para mi viaje.” Aunque no todas sus expectativas se hicieron realidad durante el viaje, la familia Eberhardt las sobrepasaría con creces durante el último tramo de su viaje.

Como se aprecia en el mapa, Gusinde realizó un recorrido diferente al del primer viaje; en dirección suerte viajó a través del Paso Brecknock, para alcanzar Río Douglas en Isla Navarino. Durante el viaje en el “Yelcho” Gusinde conoció a Carlos Crooke, secretario del consulado español en Punta Arenas, quien se dirigía a su estancia en Río Douglas, Isla Navarino. La propiedad había servido como sede para las últimas misiones anglicanas a cargo del reverendo Williams. En el diario Gusinde refiere a su conversación con Carlos Crooke el día 21 de diciembre, que lo impulsó a desembarcar en Río Douglas el día 22 de diciembre de 1919. Nuevamente lo fortuito se conjugó con los destinos de investigación que consideró importantes y posibles. En su informe señaló que buscaba encontrar a grupos yaganes que podrían pasar por la estancia para ocupaciones laborales temporales en la hacienda. Sin embargo, no encontró a nadie. También hizo excavaciones arqueológicas en el cementerio de la misión que fueron un fiasco: “Después de almuerzo, comienzo a trabajar en el Panteon. Agotador, ya que estoy completamente solo. Solo obtengo 1 cráneo. El
suelo está muy lodoso, la tumba y el sarcófago aún conservado lleno de agua, por lo mismo hay malas perspectivas.” Al día siguiente, en vísperas de navidad, se termina por convencer de la imposibilidad de su empresa de excavaciones: “Hoy día es Nochebuena, pienso en mis queridos parientes. Por la mañana todavía hago intentos en el cementerio, sin éxito, desisto del trabajo.” Se quedó cuatro días recorriendo los alrededores. En estos días adquirió una canoa que estaba a medio hacer e hizo fotografías del territorio. La fortuita aparición del Yelcho el día viernes 26 de diciembre de 1919, le permitió cruzar el Beagle hasta Puerto Remolino, estancia ubicada en la costa sur de la Isla Grande de Tierra del Fuego.

Escribió un sentido constante entre las múltiples actividades cotidianas de Gusinde. El ejercicio de la escritura diaria fue parte de su formación en la cultura clerical católica alemana. Escribir cada noche fue parte de una disciplina y una forma de ejercicio solitario que precisó de una capacidad de síntesis para recapitular el día a día a través del medio escrito. Con letra pequeña, pero clara, escribió en alemán. El cuaderno del segundo viaje como objeto, es un indicio material en el archivo de dicha praxis corporal y mediática particular que le permitió a Gusinde fijar sus experiencias y percepciones durante el viaje.

En cuanto al itinerario y rutas que siguió Gusinde para el segundo viaje, el diario permite apreciar la importancia de lo fortuito y de las casualidades oportunas que determinaron algunos destinos nuevos. Ello refuerza una idea que ya se presentó para el primer viaje de investigación y que dice relación con la importancia de las redes sociales en la improvisada y dinámica configuración de los itinerarios de sus primeros viajes. Las redes de contacto que Gusinde armó durante el primero se extendieron y reforzaron durante el segundo periplo según se aprecia de su paso por Punta Arenas y sitios que visitó por segunda vez: Puerto Remolino, Río Grande, Río del Fuego, Lago Fagnano, destinos que tenía ya trazados, pero que realizó en dirección opuesta. En cada uno de estos lugares retoma y profundiza contactos que había realizado en el primer viaje, entre ellos por ejemplo la familia Lawrence, Nelly Lawrence, Dalmasso, Zenone, Zanchetta. Al mismo tiempo, queda claro que buscó nuevos destinos y que se acomodó a las posibilidades de movilidad y transporte que se ofrecieron durante el viaje gracias al encuentro con actores locales – Carlos Crooke y los Eberhard por ejemplo – que influyeron en sus destinos de viaje no previstos: Río Douglas y la Cueva del Milodón.

El misionero e investigador se representa gravemente conmovido ante la condición humana y de existencia de la otredad. En relación a la ceremonia de iniciación se explotó en un discurso introductorio en relación al deber ser del antropólogo, que se entrega por completo a la experiencia del encuentro para asegurar la confianza de los sujetos en estudio y una completa entrega de sus conocimientos. La renuncia a las comodidades era parte de los sacrificios necesarios para su empresa, lo que resulta exagerado si se contrasta con la información del diario. Gusinde no convivió con la comunidad compartiendo sus condiciones de vida durante la mayor parte de su estadía como se vio.

Gusinde afianzó en el segundo viaje su contacto con familias de pioneros, colonos, estancieros, administradores extranjeros – en su mayor parte alemanes, ingleses, italianos – en un contexto de violencia colonial marcado por agitaciones sociales en Fuego Patagonia. En efecto, algunos de administradores y estancieros que contactó, fueron agentes activos en el proceso de explotación ganadera, colonización y extinción selk’nam.


Since the beginning of the 1990s, an increasing number of dismembered bodies of murdered women have appeared in Mexico’s border region with the United States. When considered alongside the massacres (in which bodies were also cut into pieces) and violent abductions in Mexican states that have high proportions of “rebellious” indigenous population groups such as Chiapas, where in 1997, 45 people including children and pregnant women were massacred while attending a prayer meeting, or in Guerrero, where a group of 43 male students from Ayotzinapa in Iguala were kidnapped while on a college trip in September 2014, it becomes evident that these tragic events have something in common. Considering feminist theories on sexualized violence and nation (building), the author found the link in concepts of sexed bodies, gendered attributes of sexuality, ideal citizens, and violence as a means to secure social hierarchies and the exploitation of people, land, and other “resources” by transnational capitalist enterprises.

She outlines nineteenth-century European dualistic gender models (of German-speaking regions, to be exact) and their relevance for the newly created nation-states. She will show that there were close connections between the perceptions of the male and female body as well as sexuality and the sociological concepts of verletzungsstärke (being capable of violation) and verletzungssoffen (being open to violation). The second part is dedicated to Mexico and how statesmen there adopted the European concepts of “nation” and the (national) “citizen” for their own ends. Symbolic figures such as Malinche, the Virgin of Guadalupe, as well as the stereotypes of the Mexican macho and of the related caudillo, documented Mexico’s distinctiveness in comparison with European countries and the USA. The resulting clichéd gender relations persist in contemporary culture and send powerful messages to Mexican men and women.

“Sexualized violence” is a concept defined by feminists that focuses on the patriarchal power relations and political relevance of this type of violence and views it not primarily as a form of aggressive sexuality but rather as an expression of power and aggression by sexual means. It denotes any intentional assault and abuse aimed at the violation of the intimate parts of a person in order to humiliate them. As a form of violence, it is subject to the tension between emotive and etic views: what is seen as violence (and thus also what is seen as sexualized violence) differs between societies, ethnic groups, classes, etc.

Although sexualized violence is not exclusively physical, as it also includes psychological, symbolic, verbal, and
other forms of humiliation, it is closely related to concepts of the sexed (and gendered) body. If we define “body” in a phenomenological way, the animated body combines matter and mind, whereby matter itself is subject to interpretation and is relational. The body is some kind of memory aid for people’s basic convictions. Thus, bodies always consist of a web of symbols and cultural meanings, which, because created by humans, are historical, that is, changeable. Therefore, we always also have to consider the emic view of the body and its possibly sexualized as well as gendered forms and meanings. The author looks at some widespread perceptions of the (gendered and sexualized) body and the related representations (and legitimizations) of sexualized violence, primarily in the form of rape. She also considers important aspects of the hegemonic interpretation of the gendered body related to sexuality — in particular the “cultural marking of desire,” and the related sexual desire and gendered being of an individual — in European and Mexican history.


In 1864, the Marquis de Vibraye dug up a small female figurine near Laugerie-Basse in the French Dordogne. It was an armless and headless sculpture of approximately 8 cm in length with a strongly incised vulva. The Marquis named her “Vénus impudique,” or the indecent Venus. She was the first in a long line, which since have been recovered in an area stretching from southwest France to the Ukraine. The figurines were produced during the Upper Palaeolithic era from approximately 40,000 to approximately 11,500 b.p., a time span of nearly 30,000 years. These Venus figurines are usually described in a fairly generalist way as an image of fat, naked women with voluminous breasts, large buttocks, and a prominent pubic area. Further mentions are made of missing or rudimentary faces and that little attention has been paid to shaping the limbs. Although these generalizations are not totally wrong, there is still a considerable variation in shape amongst the figurines. It was only from 1990 onwards that the differences received more attention. The number of Venuses excavated until today amounts to 200 and more.

The interpretations, which have been formulated up to now, vary from fertility or religious rituals to pornography. The figurines are said to be the archetypal “Great Mother” or prove the existence of a matriarchy. Venuses are said to have been important in (mating) networks, have served as instruction materials for pregnant women or played a role in initiation rites. Former scientists also saw the representation of the various races in the figurines. The figurines were also seen as carriers of “time-factor” symbols and some scientists claim that the meaning and function of the Venuses never can be established with complete certainty. The most recent, original interpretation of the Venus figurines was published in 1996 by the American art historian LeRoy McDermott. In his opinion, the Venus figurines were created by women as a form of self-representation.

The Upper Palaeolithic Venus figurines had a threatening and repelling, warding off and calming, or apotropaic meaning and function. This stems from our biological heritage, which can be traced back to the last common ancestor, which we share with nonhuman primates. This heritage has been the feeding ground from whence symbols have been able to develop. The Venus figurines fulfilled the purpose warding-off the existential angst of Palaeolithic people, which primarily can be seen in the presentation of genitals, buttocks, and breasts.

Primate behavior concentrated on breasts, genitals, and buttocks is aimed at reassurance, appeasement, reconciliation, tension regulation, and aggression. This behavior assumes its meaning predominantly in relation to other individuals. These behaviors belonged to the repertoire of the last common ancestor which Homo sapiens shares with nonhuman primates. In the Upper Palaeolithic Age, the meanings of the behaviors mentioned were transferred to the Venus figurines. The fact, that meaning could be transferred to an object, can be ascribed to the increasing ability of Homo sapiens in regards to symbolic thinking. This ability was well developed from approximately 40,000 b.p. onwards. As is stated in the introduction, the Venus figurines could then communicate threatening and repelling, warding-off and calming, otherwise known as apotropaic messages. The central question, as to which extent insights from primatology can serve as an explanation for the function and meaning of the Palaeolithic Venus figurines, as such seems to have been answered positively.
Warding-off evil is the engine behind all cultural expressions including religion, rituals, and art, according to the German cultural theorist Abraham Warburg. The Austrian human ethologist Irenäus Eibl-Eibesfeldt and the Swiss art historian Christa Sütterlin devoted a monograph to angst and apotropaic symbolism in 1992. This work shows many examples of figurines (mainly from the Neolithic period) with an apotropaic meaning. In his “Biologie des menschlichen Verhaltens” (Biology of Human Behavior) (1995) Eibl-Eibesfeldt refers explicitly to our ancestor shared with non-human primates when understanding human behavior. This is true, for example, regarding the calming effect of (showing) the female breast. Eibl-Eibesfeldt, however, does not refer to comparative behaviors in nonhuman primates when it comes to anal and genital warding-off or threatening. According to him, anal threatening has developed in various cultures independently from one another, because people find faeces dirty. He assumes an older phylogenetic source for female genital threatening. However, he does not mention, which behavior is connected to this phylogenetic source. Both of these forms of threatening draw on socio-sexual behavior, which can be traced back to the last common ancestor we share with nonhuman primates.


The works of Fr. Wilhelm Schmidt – a Roman Catholic priest and member of the missionary Society of the Divine Word (SVD), anthropologist, and student of religions – are well-known in Russia though still insufficiently examined. This is caused not only by the “mosaic structure” of our notion of history of religious studies in general, but also by the fact that the peculiar character of the history of Russian religious studies made a calm academic discussion of his ideas very difficult. Thereby, even a short survey of the history of perception of Schmidt’s theories in Russia can be very useful for understanding both his thoughts and the history of Russian science of religion.

The main ideas of W. Schmidt concerned the theory of primitive monotheism (*Urmonotheism*), diffusionism, and the notion of cultural circles. Guided by the conceptions of the outstanding German scientist and geographer Friedrich Ratzel, as well as ethnographers Leo Frobenius and Fritz Graebner, Schmidt marked out the “ethnologically most ancient” cultural circle of tribes that knew neither cattle-breeding nor farming (*Urkultur*). Unlike the more developed ones, the peoples of *Urkultur* had a pretty sophisticated idea of one God who was the creator, eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, and morally good. Although it is unlikely that such a sublime idea “could have been acquired from human experience”, this fact suggested to Schmidt that divine revelation could have been its original source, as God’s answer to men’s questioning about the sense of their existence. In more complex cultures – matrilineal-agricultural, patrilinear-totemic, and patriarchal-pastoral – the concept of a supreme God become more or less degraded and obscure, or it even faded away forced by different forms of totemism, animism, magic, etc. The vast empirical evidence supporting his theories, gathered by Schmidt and his colleagues from the “Anthropos Institute” (Vienna, Fribourg) and the Missionary Ethnological Museum (the Vatican City) (both of which he founded), was explained by him on the basis of a systematic reflection conducted on the ground of history, ethnology and religious studies, with the application of rigorous methodology of ethnological research.

The idea, which considered belief in one single God to be the original form of religious consciousness and the view that the subsequent development of religion, was a degradation of that original, “pure” idea can be also found among Russian theologians and philosophers of religion of the 19th century. The most detailed one was formulated by Evgeny G. Kagarov (1882–1942) in his review of the first volume of Schmidt’s opus magnum, published in the journal of the Moscow Theological Academy Theological Bulletin. It is obvious that the author’s aim was to give readers of that theological journal a general idea about the development of religious studies and especially about then actual issues concerning religion rather than just present Schmidt’s conceptions. Schmidt’s work, which gave a conceptual survey of philological, ethnological, and theological ideas, suited perfectly to this purpose. Kagarov points out to “the talent, clearness, and fascination” of Schmidt’s account (1913), and states that his work “is of undoubted interest as a bright and true picture of modern attitude to the sphere of religious studies”. As the main deficiency, Kagarov identifies not Schmidt’s “Catholic point of view,” but rather his “australocentrism” which, nevertheless, may be forgiven because of the specificity of Schmidt’s own interests in that area of the world. He further argues that Western theologians have a “too neglectful attitude to
animistic theory, weak grounding in ethnology and absence of accuracy and distinctness in criticism towards theory of animism.” In this statement, we can also see Kagarov’s implicit suggestion that Russian theologians of his time should pay more attention to the general problem of relations between theology and ethnology. Kagarov argues in this context that “animism, which is understood in a proper way, doesn’t have to contradict to the teaching of the Church.”

The Perception of Schmidt’s Ideas in the Religious Studies of the Soviet Period was characterized by the gradual imposition of “scientific atheism” — the term, which was used in the USSR for the description of the Marxist current in the areas of philosophy of religion and religious studies. The premise of such perception was developed in the works of the first generation of representatives of the Soviet “militant atheism”: Emel’ian Yanoslavsky, Ivan Svetoskrvatin and Anatolij V. Lunačarsky. They precisely formed the theory of an areligious state and the principle of negation of the history of religion as an independent process, they made the conclusion of its total social-economic determination, formulated key attitudes to the alternative concepts, and created fundamental elements of an Soviet scientific ethos. In their opinion, the question of the origin of religion has been resolved in general. Possessed by the pathos of exposure of the Church and its malicious effect on science, they examined the idea what “the primitive religion of savages is degeneration of the earlier religion, which God himself gave to Adam or first people” as “the ordinary bunch of different sophisms and finesses” summoned “to protect the prestige” of religion from blows of science. They were the first who invented the argument popular in the future of a spoiling of the original ethnographic materials by “pious Christian researchers of everyday life of savages” They formed “the canon” of authors to be considered as “classics of Marxism-Leninism” having indisputable authority in every question. They also claimed the incompatibility between religion and science. Their followers would take for granted all these ideas and would define their perception of ideas of a “Catholic Pater Schmidt” who dared to criticize Morgan, whose “writings about primitive societies were studied by Marx and used by Engels.”

From this point of view the theory of a primeval monotheism, to which Lukačevsky reduces Schmidt’s ideas, appears certainly as “a masked proof of God’s existence” (1934), a reactionary phantom conception emerged on the background of some economic relations in the process of class struggle. It was so clear for Soviet authors that such an idea needed irony and exposure rather than thematic criticism. Marxist researchers of that time usually went even further pointing out not only the theological but also the social intention in Schmidt’s concept: from their point of view, it was indeed called to justify “the initial essence of private property and monogamous family” — the pillar of the bourgeois system.

Religious studies in Russia always have been closely connected with ethnographical researches. The evolving attitude of Soviet ethnographers in the 1920s to the 30s towards Schmidt’s ideas deserves a special examination because of its illustrativeness. Precisely here, we can find the unique case of a correct narrative and objective analysis of the German scientist’s ideas, i.e., the writings of researchers of the senior generation: Lev Y. Sternberg and Petr F. Preobražensky.

Sternberg examines Schmidt’s ideas in the context of a criticism of evolutionism from the position of the diffusion theory. Ignoring the problem of “primeval monotheism” and pointing at the “tendentiousness” of the German author, he still highly appreciates his works in the sphere of “ethnolinguistic interrelations” and studies of the “psyche of a primitive man” (1926), stresses the influence of “Anthropos Institute,” and ponders carefully and objectively advantages and disadvantages of “the new school.” Diffusionism, as “every new concept, gives the impression of pursuing new ways” and opening new perspectives in the study of “the history of ancient cultural migrations.” However, in general in Sternberg’s opinion, it yields to evolutionism: in fact, “anti-evolutionists themselves began to invent stages of evolution, giving to them only new names of historic-cultural stages”, but their ideas have a partly tendentious and speculative character. Being fond of these speculations the representatives of this new movement, as the Russian anthropologist suggests, distract the thought from vital problems of the genesis of certain cultural phenomena.

The “Course of Ethnology” by P. F. Preobražensky is written in the same objectivist manner. The author speaks about Schmidt as a representative of “the cultural-historical school” of Ratzel, Frobenius, and Graebner. The criticism of the “Anthropos” ideas has a clear scientific character. First of all, it is directed to the idea of “a cultural circle” whose characteristics in the author’s opinion “suffer from the absence of inner connection between separate elements of cultural unity” (1929). He points at the “museum origin” of the theory, whose representatives “too fervently look for similarity where its existence is doubtful.” As an evolutionist, the Russian scientist appreciates the significance of diffusionism and even primeval monotheism. The source of the image of the supreme deity he finds in the answer to the question of the origin of the world, which is given on the ground of the “analogy with a man-creator of things, a man-magician, a maker of magical effects.” Both authors are based on an idea of the existence of an objective inner logic of the development of scientific ideas and, in spite of the prevailing view in Soviet science, exclude social and political conditions as factors of this development.

However, the attitude of ethnographers changes in the 1930s. The representatives of the younger generation — Aleksandr Zolotarev (1907–1943) and Sergey P. Tolstov (1907–1976) — descend on this theory with tough criticism, which includes an explicit political component. In their perception the theory of cultural circles, developed by Graebner and continued by Schmidt, is ranked together with racism and fascism, and “evolves into full-fledged fascist ideology,” “militant anti-evolutionism,” and fideistic apologetics of capitalism. Embracing this officious rhetoric, they accept that specific ethos imposed by it, even though they show the high technical level and culture of scientific work inherited from the older generation.

The Perception of Schmidt’s Ideas in Russian Religious Studies in the Years 1950–1980 may be characterized as
“The Falsification of Ethnographic Materials.” In the post-war science, we do not find any trace of an objective approach to Schmidt’s ideas neither among official religious scholars nor among ethnographers. The burst of polemics starts at the end of the 1950s and the beginning of the 1960s, when Schmidt’s arguments become the target for criticism in a number of articles and monographs.

Precisely at this time, Vladimir F. Zybkovets the idea of an areligious period, and in two of his monographs one can also find a thorough criticism of the hostile concept. However, eventually this criticism is a sum of standard rhetoric figures and accusations in “falsification of ethnographic materials” (1959). The only effort of substantive polemics – the examining of the question about the religion of Tasmanians – turns out to be an attempt to prove his own thesis about their primordial irreligion and leads as a result to a simple opposition of two equally metaphysical concepts.

Yosif A. Kryvelev studies the concept of primeval monotheism in the context of debates concerning world’s outlook between Christianity and atheism and the philosophic discussion between idealists and materialists. Indeed, in these contexts “churchmen” “need ethnographical and historic-cultural grounding” (1960) of the theory considered. Therefore, Kryvelev directs his main efforts to the criticism of the empiric basis of Schmidt’s concept: “a vast number of ethnographical materials gathered by Schmidt is in inverse proportion to scientific quality of the latter.” Giving to readers the evidence of falsehood of certain of some Schmidt’s factual statements, he certainly does not implement any serious discussion of the German scientist’s methodology as well as a value of this material as a whole. The recognition of the limits of his conception by the German thinker and the reconsideration of some of his essential theses by his followers are taken by Kryvelev as demonstration of weakness of the whole theory and understanding by Catholic scientists its “tendentiousness and allegation.” This polemics revealed the initial premises of scientific atheism, which were taken for granted by Soviet scientists when Kryvelev’s article appeared: a strong belief in the existence of an absolute truth attainable by scientific methods, identification of this truth with roughly “scientific” truth. Schmidt’s views in general and to their interpretation of those “primitive” religious complexes which claim to be informative complex, diversity, and openness for various interpretations of those “primitive” religious complexes in which the idea of “One God” is always incorporated (2002). Clearly, any serious attempt to reconstruct the idea of primeval monotheism should take these arguments into account.

G. E. Markov in his “German Ethnology” pays the central attention not to the concept of primeval monotheism and its discussion in the sphere of religious studies but to the description of Schmidt’s views in general and to their place in the history of German ethnological thought. In this respect, his study proved to be the most detailed and of high-quality among all contemporary Russian attempts of this type. He gives a review of the main works and ideas of the German scientist (2004), a detailed account of the scheme of cultural circles and he claims, pointing at Schmidt’s theological premise, that treatment of primeval monotheism as the result of the original revelation and the history of religion as degradation is the most disputable part of his theory. At the same time, he appreciates Schmidt’s contribution to the ethnological study of family and property; he recognizes that Schmidt is partly right in his argumentation against Morgan, Engels, and straightforward evolutionism. Markov resolutely rejects all accusations of Schmidt in racism mentioned above and points at “the empiric orientation” of the scientific school founded by Schmidt.

Today, the most important examination of Schmidt’s concept in the context of the history of religious studies is
given in the book “Methodological Problems of Religious Studies” by A. N. Krasnikov (2007). The theory of religion, its history, and the approaches to its study suggested by the German thinker are described there in relation with his diffusionistic ideas and the theory of cultural circles. The idea of a primeval monotheism appears here as only one means of criticism of evolutionistic approaches and less important than the diffusionism. Krasnikov has a strong theoretical background (he accepts Thomas Kuhn’s theory of science and supposes that there is “the original conflict” between theology and religious studies) and this in general is an advantage of his work. But in that very case it turns to be its weakness, as they lead him to the negative estimation of the examined concept, which he considers one of the main means of “destruction of the inherited paradigm of religious studies” and, consequently, to an under-statement of its role in the development of this kind of research.


Though the article traces the phenomenon of family erosion in historical perspective focusing on the beginning of the 20th century, when the migrant labor system began to be implemented on a bigger scale in South Africa and neighboring countries, it also addresses the current problem. 63.6% children born in South Africa in 2014 were registered without details of the father.

“It is no overstatement to say that the long-term consequences of migrant labor in the African family have been devastating in South Africa and neighboring countries. It contributed, for example, to the extremely high HIV rate in the region. Men’s long absences strained and eventually destroyed marriage and family life. Migrant labor and urbanization eroded the three-generational family pattern traditional in African societies without allowing for the nuclear family model, promoted by the missionaries and colonial agents, to take its place. Today marriage is the exception rather than the norm amongst the poor in many parts of South Africa. Non-marital cohabitation is uncommon. As a result, generations of children are raised by single mothers” (439).

The author examines “the manner in which the phenomenon of family erosion inscribes itself in history. When and why did fathers, and not only young men saving money for iloobolo (bridewealth), begin to stay away from home for long periods of time? What role did the migrant labor system play in the process of breaking down the African family in the early years of its development? How did the absence of fathers affect intergenerational relations and male identity?” (440).

“This article looks at how religious authorities including white missionaries, black ministers, and leader of African independent churches who witnessed the erosion of family life in southern Africa took interest in the problem and tried to address it. […] The paper argues that, when dealing with the challenges faced by African families, the missionaries and church leaders who expressed opinions on the ‘Native Question’ during the first decade of the twentieth century were trapped in the ‘ambiguities and paradoxes of conquest and modernity’ […]. On the one hand, they thought in terms of the rural society they knew in Europe, a society where good Christians are not exposed to the perils of urban life. All that the missionaries and church leaders wished for was a mode of social organization, which kept the converts apart from the ‘irrational’, ‘ignorant’, ‘superstitious’ beliefs and despotic rule associated with African kingdoms. On the other hand, they espoused the colonial view that the economic development of the colony was of utmost importance and that it was therefore a good thing to force African men to work in the mines and other industrial centers, far from their wives, children, and relatives” (440–441).

“A few [missionaries] recommended the establishment of married quarters near the centers of labor. The only respondents who criticized, in measured terms, the assumptions that the sending away a ‘surplus’ labor was necessary, were black. All the others failed to see that the heavy emphasis on the economic needs of the colony that characterized the work of the South African Native Affairs Commission, and the high value that all the white settlers (missionaries included) placed on labor served, under the pretext of Christianity and civilization, colonial interests and had a huge human cost to African communities. When the Commission spoke of family matters, they chose to focus their attention on matters such as polygamy and iloobolo. In that sense one may speak, even at this early stage of history of the migrant labor system, of pastoral myopia. They claimed to take at heart the well-being of African families but failed to see that their support for migrant labor threatened the very foundation of these families. Some missionaries opened missions for migrant workers on the Rand in the first decade of the twentieth century, but their aim was to evangelize and moralize these mine workers, not to reduce the negative impact of migrant labor on these men and their families. It would take half a century for social activists, some of whom were linked to the churches, to take the full measure of the damage to family cohesion caused by the migrant labor system” (460).


“This article pursues a broader view of Pentecostal preaching from a pedagogical angle, more precisely from the standpoint of its transmission to apprentice ministers at Anakago Bible and Ministry Training Centre, a Bible school connected to the transnational Ghanaian denomination Lighthouse Chapel International (LCI). I am particularly interested in how mimetically acquired rhetorical skills, eventful performances, and charisma are articulated at this school, and how they become entangled with the power driving LCI as a discernible institutional node in a reticular, heterogeneous, and contentious religious
movement. My focus on pedagogical ‘backstage’ institutions, such as a Bible school, is aimed at complementing representations of Pentecostalism in Ghana centered on church services, everyday church life, or the public sphere and popular culture.

I start by gathering a conceptual toolkit that allows me to consider the pedagogical and charismatic dimensions of Pentecostal preaching jointly, and also showing how the riddle of how charisma and learning can be coordinated is far from alien to Pentecostals themselves. This is especially the case in a context of unruly religious entrepreneurship, in which widespread concerns with authenticity have brought to the fore more emphatically than elsewhere the tensions affecting mimesis as both a necessary component of ethico[sic] religious learning and a strategy trickstery and deceit. I argue that by challenging the prospects of institutional stability, this context requires more authoritative forms of transmitting this ambivalent spiritual art to newcomers, lending a strategic role to formal training grounds” (73).

“By passing through recursive and concentric links of spiritual kinship, charismatic power is distributed in an orderly way across LCI’s pastoral body by equipping leaders-followers with tools to equip other leaders-followers with the capacity to continue this process. We realize that as an organization LCI can be mechanical, depersonalized, and governmental as much as organic, familial, and spiritualized because charisma flows and connects instead of condensing into a monolithic center à la Weber. This power dynamics has concrete effects. Whereas other Ghanaian churches have headquarters that receive larger audiences than Heward-Mills’ The Qodesh, no other Pentecostal-charismatic denomination hosts nearly as many church branches as LCI. Over time, Anagkazo has been able to train a number of ministers that exceeds the membership of most Ghanaian churches, and it has a much greater capacity to incorporate non-Ghanaian and non-African neophyte missionaries than other megachurch Bible schools I studied in Accra.

This power strategy requires a specific type of leader, one able to ‘centripetelize’ his disciples by delegating power while providing them with recipes, scripts, and maps on how to tap into this originary source: the anointing. In this sense, while not a Weberian charismatic leader, LCI’s meta-father, is also not a ‘big man’, a leader who accumulates social capital by keeping followers in an eternal state of dependence. As students are ordained and go to mission fields in Northern Ghana, Papua New Guinea, urban and rural areas of Kenya, the outskirts of London, and many other places, they submit their skills and gifts to another Anagkazo norm: being responsive and answering to their flock’s needs. By engaging dialogically with their audiences, they will develop their own niches within this discursive environment. Moreover, like their denomination, LCI pastors are never simply disconnected from the movement at large; this double citizenship is vital to tempering their transposable style with singularities. This is visibly the case with more experienced preachers, such as reverends and bishops, who publish their own books and audiovisual materials and weave their own interdenominational networks, becoming relatively autonomous regional poles of exemplarity and authority. The fact that Anagkazo receives students from other churches testifies both to the non-authorial detachability of its Christian methods and to the accumulative nature of spiritual kinship.

The centripetal and hierarchical allegiances of spiritual kinship are a safety net since they provide LCI’s missionaries with religious, political, and economic autonomy to recontextualize their style of Pentecostalism across the globe without making it merely a reflex of local demands. This is closely accompanied by strategic and centrifugal leeway for inner-differentiation, which prevents church schisms by lending to this discipleship model a good dose of plasticity. To be a spiritual offspring of LCI is not to be a homogenous copy of the church head, but to simply flow in tune with it. As such, I believe the power norm in this denomination remains apostolic rather than patrimonial, even though, as with any norm, it may eventually misfire along its implementation” (100–101).


“This discussion contributes to ongoing explorations of the centrality of ideas about relatedness and personhood to local explanations of social and economic inequality by taking up the insights offered by debates about the mutuality, multiplicity and political nature of their expression. Drawing on my research with the ritual specialists and initiates of the three Adzima shrines in Kilkor, a township in the southeastern Volta region of Ghana, I examine how these ideas are produced, debated, and legitimized at the interface between two religious systems that have a complex, dialectical, and often oppositional relationship to one another. The Adzima ritual specialists regularly confront varying perspectives on the appropriate relationship between persons embedded in lineage structures and with deities since diverse sets of people throughout the Volta Region and parts of Togo and Benin are drawn into hierarchical relations with the Adzima deities through the shrines’ fiasidiwo (sing. fiasidi) initiates. Of the particular concern to the shrines’ ritual specialists is the potential for Neo-Pentecostals to adversely affect the socioeconomic well-being of the fiasidiwo initiates due to the discursive emphasis on severing lineage responsibilities towards deities and ancestors. I show how the threat to the initiates’ well-being is mitigated within ritual contexts where ritual specialists emphasize the embeddedness of the fiasidiwo in their lineages’ successes while also authorizing the fiasidiwo’s future economic independence.

Despite some key differences, the fiasidiwo are popularly understood to be the ‘Anlo-Ewe’ variant of a female religious affiliation to specific ‘Tongu-Ewe’ shrines known as trokosi (pl. trokosivo). Since 1990 initiations of trokosivo and fiasidiwo have been the subject of an abolitionist campaign consisting of Christian-based NGOs and government agencies, which have successfully criminalized the affiliation and organized ‘liberations’ and rehabilitations of the initiates. Protagonists of the abolition
campaign argue that *trokosiwo* and *fiasidiwo* are illegitimately initiated to specific shrines based on an offense committed by another lineage member acting as a perpetual figure of restitution, to be replaced by another initiate at death. They also contend that the practice constitutes a form of female ritual slavery by translating *trokosi* as ‘slave of the god’ and arguing that the initiates are sexually and physically abused by shrine priests, used as labor without compensation, ostracized from their families and the rest of the community, and prohibited from attending school or medical facilities.

The ARM [Afrikania Renaissance Mission] and the Adzima shrines’ ritual specialists characterize the abolition campaign as one of neo-colonial cultural domination, spearheaded by Ghanaian and foreign Christians against practitioners of traditional religion. They maintain that the Christian-based NGOs involved in the campaign are intentionally misleading the public with their fraudulent representation of *trokosiwo* and *fiasidiwo* as slaves in order to procure support. Protagonists of the abolition campaign vehemently deny this accusation and protest that positioning them as instigators of religious conflict and conversion is illegitimate because of the reported human rights violations. However, for the Adzima shrines’ ritual specialists (and the ARM), the abolition campaign is one aspect of a larger conflict over ongoing negative constructions of traditional religion and, more importantly, shifting perspectives on the appropriate relationship between persons and deities. In light of this understanding, the Adzima ritual specialists’ comments about these issues are central to the meaning they ascribe to the *fiasidiwo*, as key figures in the national debates and in relation to local practices and social relations” (191–193).


Piwowarczyk’s book “Transforming Africans into Cog-wheels of the Imperial Machine” (Fribourg 2017; *Studia Instituti Anthropos* 56) was already presented in “A&M 56 – December 2017”. This article is a summary of the argument developed in the book. Those interested in the topics of colonial studies, the history of the areas making the present day Togo and/or the history of the SVD missionary involvement but who are not ready to take up a challenge of reading the book, have a chance of acquainting themselves with the results of Piwowarczyk’s findings in the article.

“Drawing primarily on Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of practice, I argue that the colony was not only a political entity but also a ‘disciplining mechanism’ composed of two main sectors – political/economic and cultural/symbolic – that cooperated in the process of appropriation of natural, human, and even symbolic resources in that part of Africa. In particular, I concentrate on the role of ‘symbolic-ritual complexes’ in that process, including the ultramontane Catholicism represented by the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD)” (154–155). The final section of the article contains five short biographical notes on Togolese subjects and their reaction to the colony.


“African politics is often described as heavily influenced by ethnically based clientelism. Political parties organized along ethnic lines tend to redistribute to their ethnic group rather than provide public goods, the argument goes, and citizens tend to vote for candidates who represent their group. This article investigated the commonly assumed link between ethnic divisions and clientelism in African politics, exploring the role of both contextual ethnic divisions and specific ethnic affiliations for attitudes towards clientelism in a large multi-country African sample.

Our empirical findings, drawing on data for 38,293 respondents across 25 African countries complemented by field interviews from Kenya, suggest important country heterogeneity, highlighting that single country experiences with ethnically based clientelism cannot be seen as representative of a wider African pattern, but also highlight some general tendencies. First, while the empirical estimations indeed suggest that there is a relationship between individuals’ attitudes to clientelism and local ethnic divisions, they do not support the simple positive association suggested in our first hypothesis. Second, and as hypothesized, considering ethnic links to the country’s top political leadership appears relevant for attitudes to clientelism. However, it is the ethnic composition of the population in the area of residence rather than the individual’s own ethnic affiliation that stands out as important; individuals living in regions populated by more presidents co-ethnics tend to be more supportive of clientelism, irrespective of their own ethnic affiliation” (645–646).


“For a group of Wayao street vendors in the city of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, kinship relations were simultaneously an advantage and a hindrance. Over the years, the group had grown to more than forty young men who shared a backyard in the inner city as their *kijiweni* or meeting point. This was their workspace, where they prepared the second-hand shoes they obtained from the market before reselling them on the streets” (S51).

“For the Wayao at the *kijiweni*, their kinship relations were laden with culturally constructed notions of intimacy, dependence, contempt and mistrust. The complex meaning that being related entailed for them, analyzed here as a narrative construction of kinship, show that kinship relations cannot be understood only as cultural constructs, but that the everyday experience of being related may be full of contradictions that need to be constantly navigated in specific situations.
At the atmosphere of constant mistrust at the kijiweni, any deviance from the expected egalitarian sameness was frowned upon and often commented on via an idiom of uchawi [witchcraft]. Accusing a fellow shoe vendor of uchawi meant charging him with ‘anti-social sentiments’ and action that contradicted the group’s shared value system. Thus, when the shoe vendors suggested that a colleague’s performance in the market had been enhanced by the illicit use of uchawi, they were commenting not only on his ‘magically’ mediated relation to the market, but also on his relationship to them. In this way, they accused him of claiming more for himself than was legitimate, of striving for pre-eminence when he was expected to stay in line with his colleagues.

Kinship relations at the kijiweni were full of contradictions. While the shoe vendors were bound together through tight and multiplex social relations as kinsmen, Wayao, fellow villagers, colleagues and neighbors, their close social proximity frequently flipped into a disintegrative social force that blew them apart. However, the negative sentiments of mistrust, jealousy and disdain that found their most dramatic expressions in uchawi accusations were not opposed to an otherwise harmonious notion of being related to one another. In fact, they sprang from the same sources as the binding forces of sociality. Thus, paradoxically, such allegations that, at first glance, appeared to be directed at the disassociation of social relations ultimately revealed an integrative social force” (S66 –S65).


The Beothuk of Newfoundland and Labrador have been extinct since the early nineteenth century, but skeletal remains of twelve Beothuk individuals are in storage at Memorial University in St. John’s, Newfoundland, and those of another ten are in the archives of the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau, Quebec. However, the best-known and most widely discussed Beothuk remains reside in the stores of the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh. These are the skulls of Nonosabasut and his wife Demasduit, both of whom came to untimely ends. While the shoe vendors were bound together through tight and multiplex social relations as kinsmen, Wayao, fellow villagers, colleagues and neighbors, their close social proximity frequently flipped into a disintegrative social force that blew them apart. However, the negative sentiments of mistrust, jealousy and disdain that found their most dramatic expressions in uchawi accusations were not opposed to an otherwise harmonious notion of being related to one another. In fact, they sprang from the same sources as the binding forces of sociality. Thus, paradoxically, such allegations that, at first glance, appeared to be directed at the disassociation of social relations ultimately revealed an integrative social force” (S66 –S65).


In the first decade of his Northwest Coast fieldwork (1886–1897), Franz Boas made and commissioned a series of research drawings of the Kwakiutl objects held by museums in Berlin and elsewhere. Using them as elicitation tools, Boas added primary fieldnotes (in German, English, and Kwakiutl) directly onto them, providing a basis for his earliest publications on anthropological theory and methods as well as Kwakiutl art, song, and ceremony. Until recently, however, these visual field notes – long relegated to the archive – have been severed from both the museum collections and Boas’s foundational ethnographic research.
In this essay, the author discusses the drawings in the context of current collaborative efforts to document historic ethnographic materials with the Kwakiutl, who are recuperating such anthropological and archival resources in support of current cultural production and ceremonial revitalization.

Thus, in the fall of 1885, Norwegian mariner Johan Adrian Jacobsen began a tour of Germany with nine Nuxalk (Bella Coola) men from British Columbia under the auspices of Carl Hagenbeck’s Völlerschauen, or commercial displays of exotic peoples. In multiple venues, the Nuxalk performed dances, produced and used tools, interpreted ceremonial objects displayed nearby, and carved masks and other small items for sale. The group received considerable scholarly attention—particularly in Berlin, where Adolph Bastian organized a special performance for ethnologists, including Rudolf Virchow, Aurel Krause, and Franz Boas. Boas had been working for Bastian, cataloguing Jacobsen’s earlier collection of Northwest Coast material at Berlin’s Royal Museum of Ethnology, and his few weeks spent with the Nuxalk provided linguistic materials for his first tentative articles on coastal cultures.

Boas’s popular account of the tour published in the Berliner Tageblatt (January 25, 1886) foreshadowed his career-defining interest in humanist aesthetics, the relation of art and material culture to religious belief, the role of “ethnic conceptions” and culturally specific modes of thought, and the importance of salvage-oriented research. Looking back on this formative encounter decades later, Boas summarized what had become his moment of conversion from Inuit to Northwest Coast studies: “My fancy was first struck by the flights of imagination exhibited in the works of art of the British Columbians as compared to the severe sobriety of the eastern Eskimo .... I divined what a wealth of thought lay hidden behind the grotesque masks and the elaborately decorated utensils of these tribes” (1909). By the summer of 1886, Boas had set sail for his first field trip to British Columbia and made his initial steps toward becoming a foundational figure in both Northwest Coast studies and North American anthropology.

Although he focused this first field season on linguistic reconnaissance, Boas wrote to John Wesley Powell at the Bureau of American Ethnology (BAE) of his intention “to study the masks in connection with the traditions” (that is, the mythology), and he made his own small collection in order to help offset travel expenses. With him, Boas took photographs and drawings of the Jacobsen collection in Berlin as well as of masks in London and New York that he made himself en route to western Canada. Having been dissatisfied with Jacobsen’s collection records, Boas vowed to record detailed ethnological data to accompany his own purchases. On his second day in Victoria, after meeting one of his Nuxalk friends from Berlin, Boas “showed him my drawings from various museums, and it was soon apparent that they will be very useful. I am now convinced that this trip will have the results I desire. Today I have made many notes about masks and such things.” A couple of days later, he noted that he got a “wild-dance” story to go with “a mask” in Berlin and New York.

The fact that Boas used the singular article to refer to at least two particular masks suggests that he took each to be a token of a common type and that he initially expected the narrative to refer to the generic category, not the particular object. Throughout his career—especially in his first decade of fieldwork on the Northwest Coast, Boas and his main Indigenous collaborator, George Hunt, would routinely use these and other drawings as prompts for eliciting related legends, songs, dances, and crest privileges.

This article examines, therefore, the drawings as primary visual fieldnotes in Boas’s early career and tracks the circulation of the ethnographic knowledge recorded on them through museum archives and publications in the decade before Boas commenced his serious work on art and aesthetics. Beginning with his earliest articles geared toward popular and scholarly audiences, Boas referred to material culture, along with dance, music, and poetry, as a form of aesthetic sophistication and individual variation within populations. Although he hoped such perspectives would undermine the prevalent and racist belittling of Indigenous peoples, he did not initially frame objects as “art,” per se, nor did he attempt to elucidate specific stylistic systems; these types of study came only later, around 1900. However, the drawings provide insight into the development of Boas’s inductive and field-based methodologies, his use of material (in addition to linguistic) evidence to gain access to “mental phenomena,” and his critique of Victorian museology. At the dawn of his career, Boas emphasized the historical diffusion of forms (both intra- and intertribally, especially through marriage exchange), and the need—particularly among Northwest Coast peoples—to tie objects to hereditary narratives and to their specific ceremonies and discursive contexts for performance. These two early dimensions of his material culture research were crucial strategies in his mounting assault on evolutionary explanations for cultural diversity and development.


In southern Arizona, emergency responders rescue and transport unauthorized migrants who get hurt crossing the border, either when scaling the steel fence in urban areas or taking remote and dangerous routes through the desert. Using data collected during ethnographic research between 2015 and 2017 with firefighters trained as EMTs or paramedics, the article shows how Border Patrol’s tactical infrastructure produces specific patterns of traumatic injury that are not only routine but also deliberate, allowing us to trace government’s responsibility for what it presents as the unintentional consequence of security buildup on the US-Mexico border.

This article is based on Jusinoyte’s ethnographic research with firefighters conducted on the US-Mexican border, in Arizona. The author has been working in that region since 2015 with the goal of examining the violent entanglement between statecraft, law, and topography. To trace the harmful effects of the security assemblage on those who inhabit and trespass this militarized landscape,
she takes the vantage point of emergency responders. Firefighters are uniquely attuned to the characteristics of space, and their training provides them with tactical advantage over the most challenging of environments and structural failures. Yet, along the Arizona-Sonora border, they must also navigate the complex political and legal landscapes sliced by a symbolically charged international boundary. In this article, she focuses on the material and aesthetic qualities of security—that is, how its discursive and affective dimensions are anchored in urban and desert terrains. The concept of “tactical infrastructure,” which the US government uses to describe the assemblage of structures and technologies that enhance security, draws attention to the depoliticized and legal methods of deploying state violence against unauthorized migrants. This security assemblage is made up of parts that are scattered across the landscape and includes elements of both natural and human-made environments—the totality that Jason de Leon (2015) calls “a hybrid collectif.”

In the Sonoran Desert, the four states of matter—earth, water, air, and fire—play key roles in producing “accidents” that injure and kill the unarmed. The border wall, in particular, is designed to perform what Achille Mbembe (2003) calls “demiurgic surgery,” severing the limbs of those who try to scale it. Using Eyal Weizman’s (2014) concept of “architectural forensics,” which regards the built environment as capable of structuring human action and conditioning incidents and events, the author proposes reading these injuries as state effects. Critical anthropological analysis of the patterns of physical trauma on the US-Mexico border allows us to trace the responsibility of the government for what it successfully presents as the unintentional consequences of security processes.

Indeed, many life-threatening injuries in the US-Mexico border space are not accidents. Rather, they result from structural conditions created by the escalation of violence and security enforcement. Criminalization of immigration, which took off in the 1990s, further radicalized by concerns with terrorism in the aftermath of September 11, 2001, led the US government to designate its southwestern border with Mexico as a threat to homeland security, thereby justifying amassing law-enforcement resources to protect it and waging in the borderlands what has been likened to low-intensity warfare (Dunn 1996). To deter unauthorized entry, the government has employed a combination of personnel, technology, and infrastructure, which has made crossing the border considerably more difficult and dangerous.

Despite the risks, many migrants make it across the border alive, but because of severe injuries caused by the journey, they need emergency medical care. The close relationship between securitization of the border and the increased number of trauma patients is illustrated by the following detail. Nogales International reported that in 2011, when the government doubled the height of the border fence in the city, the number of times fire department ambulances transported someone from the border spiked (Prendergast 2013). In 2015 and 2016, the Mexican Consulate registered 125 Mexican nationals hospitalized in Tucson, most of them for fractures caused by falling off the border wall (muro fronterizo), while other reasons for hospitalization included dehydration, injuries to the feet (blisters, cuts), and drinking contaminated water. The consulate also registered bites by poisonous animals, spontaneous abortions due to severe dehydration, people swept away by the arroyo during the rains, sexual abuse by human traffickers, and ingestion of cactus. The numbers may seem low, but that is because the consulate only learns about a patient when either the Border Patrol or the hospital lets them know.

**Bens, Jonas: When the Cherokee Became Indigenous.**


On 5 March 1831, the US Supreme Court began to hear the case Cherokee Nation v. Georgia. Today, it is regarded as one of the most important landmark cases in federal Indian law and is part of the famous “Marshall trilogy” in which Chief Justice John Marshall developed the basic legal principles governing the relationship between the United States and the native communities. The case resembles in many ways contemporary indigenous rights cases. It was the first time an Indian nation brought a case before the Supreme Court. It can serve, therefore, as a precedent-setting example of how the phenomenon of indigeneity took shape and continues to take shape in legal spaces, and how it is inextricably bound up with legal doctrine. In this context, the author uses the term indigenous as an analytical category to describe a certain identity formation that is based on a specific legal relationship that a native community has established with the (post)colonial settler state.

The word indigenous was not used to describe Indian tribes at the time the Cherokee went before the Supreme Court. Prior to the 1970s, the term was more or less confined to biology, used to refer to plants or animals native to a particular place. Since then, various rights movements have introduced the term into international legal forums such as the United Nations, the International Labour Organization, and the Inter-American system for the protection of human rights. Since its introduction into international law circles, indigenous has come to be used as an umbrella term that encompasses such categories as Indian, native, and aboriginal; it is now the most frequently used term inside and outside international law to signify communities whose ancestors inhabited territories in precolonial times. Recent scholarship (particularly in anthropology) has shown, however, that indigenous is not only a legal category but also an analytical term used to signify a certain type of collective identity and a designation used by Indian activists to refer to themselves and their collective attachment to their communities.

Based on his reading of the Cherokee nation’s bill to the Supreme Court, Bens argues that a native community becomes indigenous the moment it enters into a paradoxical relationship with the legal regime of the settler state. The relationship between the indigenous community and the (post) colonial legal system is paradoxical because the native community occupies a legal position in which it is at the same time incorporated into and exempt from the
(post)colonial law. This is what happened in the Cherokee Nation v. Georgia judgment. Through his reading of the case, Bens fleshes out how this paradoxical nature of indigenity became inscribed into the legal text and to indicate how the idea of the indigenous paradox might affect the way we think about native-settler relations. He suggests that the idea of the paradox is useful for thinking not only about Cherokee historiography but also about the law and politics of native-settler relations more generally. If indigenous communities manage to use the indigenous paradox produced by the rule of law of the settler state, they can open up at least some room for maneuver. Thus, the term domestic dependent nation, born in Cherokee Nation v. Georgia in all its paradoxical glory, is simultaneously a tool for legal discrimination and an opportunity for resistance against it.

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