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SUSANNE KLIEN, PATRICK NEVELING (eds.)

TRADITION WITHIN AND BEYOND THE FRAMEWORK OF INVENTION

Case Studies from the Mascarenes and Japan

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Introduction: Tradition within and beyond the Framework of Invention

Patrick Neveling and Susanne Klien

> 'What if Christmas didn't come this year
> and no one paid for Christmas cheer?
> Who would cry the biggest tear,
> the child or the store?
> Why do brides wear virgin white?
> Most do not deserve that right.
> But to choose a color of their delight
> would surely bring on the frowns.
> To defy the laws of tradition
> is a crusade only of the brave.
> Suppose the taxman, he comes to town,
> and you don't lay your money down.
> Yet Mr. Jones he killed Mr. Brown the other day.
> Well I wonder, who's gonna go to hell.'[1]

Walking through the Paris Las Vegas hotel and casino complex, like 33 million tourists do per year, one comes across the Las Vegas Eiffel Tower, which is often seen as one of the ultimate postmodern fakes. No one would assume that anyone walking along the Tower is not aware that the 'real' version is to be found in Paris. On this walk not only social scientists, but numerous members of a well-educated cosmopolitan middle class might furthermore contemplate that even the Paris original was constructed as a performance in representation and power itself in 1889 as part of the world exhibition. Many people have experienced cases of 'American Disneylands' in their immediate environments and seen them evolve into essential parts of contemporary and indeed global culture, acquiring legitimacy in the process. These global assemblages of simulacra have stimulated many thorough vivisections of mainstream considerations of the 'authentic' and the closely related notion of the 'traditional' (in the above case assumed to be embodied in French history, culture and tradition).[2]

Other people write pop songs. These songs do not only reach wider audiences than books on 'vernacular' architecture and its constant exposure to human agency (adding deconstructions of genuineness, spuriousness and authenticity as anachronistic, that have become commonplace since the 1980s). The rather poetic

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[1]   Primus, 'To Defy the Laws of Tradition'.
[2]   A contribution in this vein is for example Roy, 'Nostalgias'.

and volatile train of thought in the pop song quoted above expresses the fuzziness and contradictory nature embodied in notions of tradition within mainstream culture. This often comes hand in hand with the idea that culture could be rooted in place and social practice and thus could be a characteristic feature of social units beyond time and resisting change.[3] It is the striking persistence of actors (and not of those engaging in scientific discourses) on the rootedness of culture that Primus, the band that wrote and performed the funk-metal-jazz style song 'To Defy the Laws of Tradition' quoted above, refer to. The three band members earned their money operating on the periphery of the late 1980s and early 1990s first wave of grunge rock musicians who believed they represented a generation immune to the temptations of mainstream popular culture and social practice. Written in the same ironic style of the wagging finger and the moral sermon audible in the much more popular song 'Smells like Teen Spirit' by Nirvana, the lyrics take the presumably younger target audience through a sequence of criticisms of traditions better to be defied. These cover the realms of economy, religion, kinship and politics in the sequential order of: Christmas rituals and mass consumption, rituals of marriage and female sexual subordination symbolised by dress code (both issues raised in the rhetorical method of question-answer) as well as the call for taxpayers' disobedience of the traditional style taxman's tribute collections in villages.

'To Defy the Laws of Tradition' framed the second Primus album 'Frizzly Fry', released in February 1990, as the first and last song (an instrumental version 'To Defy (reprise)'). But our interest in these lyrics is not only grounded in the broad approach chosen to make fun of the backwardness of traditions. Another dimension is opened up when the word 'crusade' is employed to qualify the deed of defection. With this rather martial phrasing, the song targets those who oppose traditions as much as those who adhere to them. Both positions collapse in the last passage starting with the words 'I wonder'. This raises a question that seems even more absurd when taking into account the perspective of the song's most probably atheist audience – the issue of final judgement awaiting human sinners. We suggest interpreting this reflexive impetus as a testimonial to the wave of traditionalisms gaining popularity in Western countries during the 1980s (and particularly the reactionary religious beliefs in Pentecostal movements based in the United States). This reference attributes an interesting historicity to the issue of traditions, which – as we will argue in the following sections – is often missing in scientific discussions. So let us see how this perspective can be applied to both the lyrics of the song and the emergence of the 'invention of tradition' paradigm.

After all, the 1980s were not only the decade of conservative backlash, but also the decade when deconstruction was invented. But while social scientists were in-

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[3] In social anthropology and many other disciplines in the social sciences debates pertaining to related questions are numerous. For a recent debate see: Brumann et al., 'Writing for Culture'.

creasingly busy deconstructing traditions, this very activity turned out to be more and more blurred: In a global situation where ever more individuals and pressure groups relied on tradition as a means to political, legal, economic or spiritual ends, the mundane world ceased to be an arena attentive to deconstruction. Many actors instead engaged in debates of a similarly narrow complexity as embodied in the question: 'Who's gonna go to hell?'

Given this widening gap between mundane and scientific discourses in the 1980s, it is important to note that whether a material object or an immaterial social practice qualifies or disqualifies as a tradition can be decided upon in multifarious ways. The same myriad of features, on the other hand, applies to the means and ends tradition can be employed for. On the following pages we show how these myriads of features came to be implied in 'tradition' – particularly in the Janus-faced (dis-)continuity of the 'traditional' and 'tradition' with the 'modern' and 'modernity'. We argue that a given set of social practices may at the same time be perceived as continuous or discontinuous with the past and that therefore such practices for once qualify as 'tradition' and for once as 'invented tradition', depending essentially on the respective socio-political context and the interests of the actors involved. Presumably coherent social groups may well be divided on the grounds of whether a social practice actually qualifies as a tradition and whether it should be continued or discontinued. Along the same lines, if two or more groups oppose each other over rights of ownership, traditions will most likely be one of the main arenas of dispute. Thus, this edited volume seeks to emphasise that the concept itself needs to be looked at 'within and beyond the framework of invention' as the question of invention can no longer be regarded as the sole and central concern.[4] In the same vein as this introductory paper, the five papers collected in this volume reconstruct these multifarious implications along their historical trajectories and their handling in the present based on three examples from Japan and two case studies from the Mascarene Islands. But before we introduce the case studies in our second contribution to this volume, we go back to 1980s mainstream political practices in the post-'enlightened' core areas of the capitalist world economy in order to extend the framework of invention established by Hobsbawm and Ranger into the present workings of the global system.

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[4] An understanding of traditions as 'invented' was first introduced in a volume edited by Hobsbawm and Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*. Although the introduction was a single-authored text by Hobsbawm entitled 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', the analytical paradigm has since then been ascribed to both authors. As will be elaborated later in more detail, Ranger himself has retrospectively questioned the appropriateness of the expression 'invention' as coined by him and Hobsbawm, arguing that 'invention' implies a 'once-for-all' event, rather than an ongoing process, and has suggested to use 'imagined' instead since the latter term allows for multiplicity in terms of agency and time. See: Ranger, 'The Invention of Tradition Revisited'.

Traditions as Part of the Neoliberal Political Agenda in the Western World (and Beyond)

The 1980s have gone down in history as a decade of projects of social engineering. These projects have been given names as colourful as 'Thatcherism' or 'Reaganomics'. In recent years, the very same (and often rather incoherent) practices have been subsumed under the term 'neoliberalism'. Neoliberalism, if applied to the core regions of global capitalism, stands for the demolition of these regions' pillars of industrial development.[5] These pillars – mining, steel, textile, and car industries as well as a large public sector – had been of high relevance for post-World War II nation-building and were central to the accumulation of wealth and its distribution via employment of the mostly male heads of households.[6] Trade unions had their strongholds in these industries and in some cases stood up against layoffs and cutbacks in social welfare. Neoliberal governments targeted these and other forms of resistance with crackdowns on established union and any other form of emerging oppositional structures. Their actions therefore marked the end of the tripartite agreements on industrial peace between governments, employers and trade unions representing the wider public. Because these tripartite agreements had been at the very core of social contracts they needed to be replaced quite urgently with something fresh – and as we will argue below, the freshest at hand were traditions.

Neoliberalism encompasses a number of projects that are seen as having substantially altered social contracts in Western countries within less than two decades. Because of their significant effects, the success of neoliberal programs is often seen as a hallmark changing advanced capitalism altogether.[7] One argument substantiating this perspective is grounded in explanations building on macro-structural change, as the ideas that form the very core of neoliberalism '…would have seemed political suicide in advanced industrial countries for the first 30 years after the World War II [and then] became convincing arguments for "reforms"'.[8] Across Western nation-states conservative parties made successful use of such 'convincing arguments' in election campaigns and replaced social democratic governments in the late 1970s and early 1980s. This change of rulership took on the shape of a trajectory and moved from Britain to the US, on to France,

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[5] For an overview including a discussion of the varieties of neoliberal policies see: Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*.

[6] For a summary of these considerations see: Silver, *Forces of Labour*.

[7] For examples of popular analytical accounts of these considerations see: Stiglitz, *The Downside of Globalisation*; Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*.

[8] Gledhill, 'Neoliberalism', 332.

Western Germany and further.[9] A particular take on tradition and its value as a political resource was one of the driving forces behind this trajectory and made for the most convincing arguments.[10] So far, the foundations of the modern welfare state had been in line with the call 'to defy the laws of tradition'. It had been claimed that modernity should instead provide liberation from family ties, the nexus of ancestry and status as well as religion-based value systems. This call was mirrored in many 'modernist' approaches in the social sciences that supported the assumption that modern social structures would overcome those former guarantors of social coherence because they constrained individual liberty and meritocracy-based social stratification.[11] The neoliberal campaigns of Thatcher and Reagan instead portrayed values like family ties, ancestry and religion – all pre-modern from the modernisation theory point of view – in a very different and very particular light that qualified them as ideological substitutes for state-led social welfare provision. This strategy of persuasion was very much in line with the use of traditions as a means to stabilise and legitimise power employed by conservative elites across historical eras.[12]

The construction of traditional values such as family, community and social coherence grounded in ethnic and national membership played an important role in the election campaign of Reagan in the 1960s. When he ran for governor in California, his campaign '...tapped a rich conservative vein among white workers of low to moderate income'.[13] A similar conservative vein came to guide US foreign

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[9] It might be worthwhile to compare this eastward pointing trajectory to the popular 'Domino Theory' of the 1960s that pictured the threat of communist expansion as the stones in a domino game falling one by one in sequence as for example Northern Vietnam became communist, then Southern Vietnam, Cambodia and then the rest of South-East Asia (which of course never happened thanks to US and allied military interventions).

[10] One might as well argue that the ideas of a free market expressed in the writings of neo-liberalism's founding fathers (there were no women involved, see: Hayek, *Der Weg zur Knechtschaft*; von Mises, *Nationalökonomie*) are 'invented traditions' themselves, as neither a free market nor a similarly simplistic idea of such an institution had ever existed (see for example: Arrighi, *Adam Smith in Beijing*). However, to follow up this idea would go beyond the page limitations for this paper.

[11] As numerous authors have shown, this evidently did not apply to real world relations (for the problem of patriarchy see for example: Pateman, *The Sexual Contract*). But still, it worked as an ideological foundation in Western societies as long as the promise of mass consumption for everyone had not been fulfilled. Only when a sufficient part of the population had started to enjoy these privileges following the so-called 'economic miracle' of the 1950s and 1960s, did notions of family and kinship gain relevance again.

[12] Raphael, *Theatres of Memory*; Hewison, *The Heritage Industry*; Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past*.

[13] De Groot, "A Goddamned Electable Person", 430. For a thorough and elaborate overview on the shift from progressive to conservative forms of social engineering and the emerging dominance of neoliberal ideas in economics see: Bodley, *The Power of Scale*, 201–34. Of interest in the following section is mainly the ideological dimension of this period of rapid social change. Reagan rarely used the term 'tradition' itself as our analysis of his speeches shows (see: note 25).

policy during his presidency after journalist Charles Krauthammer 'invented' the Reagan Doctrine in Time Magazine on the odd date of April 1st 1985. On that day Krauthammer concluded that 'unashamed American support' for all anti-communist freedom fighters on the globe based on 'justice, necessity and democratic tradition' had been the central message of the Presidential address to the nation, given several weeks earlier.[14] Although it is questionable whether Reagan had ever had anything as coherent as a doctrine on his mind, he and his administration built their foreign policy on the declaration that the entire globe would be the backyard of the US.

What came to be called the 'Reagan Doctrine' can be interpreted as an extension of the Monroe doctrine, which dominated US foreign policy in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. This first doctrine had been set up to secure US control over the Caribbean hinterland. From 1985 on, political movements in Nicaragua, Angola, Afghanistan, and other countries enjoyed (highly diverse forms of) US support in their anti-government campaigns. These movements had their own ideas about the traditions their beliefs were grounded in and how these traditions – often perceived as lost to regimes informed by a socialist or a non-aligned movement approach to the developmental era – were to be revitalised. In most of these countries, such revitalisation measures had repercussions down to the village level and affected political agendas as well as economic strategies. A case in point is the changing concept of *gotong royong* ('mutual assistance') under the Indonesian developmental dictatorship of General Suharto. This regime had been established long before Reagan's rise to power and was one of the first to pick up the neo-liberal doctrine of the Chicago School type with the declaration of a 'New Order' (Indonesian: 'Orde Baru') in 1970. According to this doctrine, the Indonesian developmental agenda was from now on one based on populism, political repression and benefits for foreign direct investors.[15] Since the beginning of his political career, General Suharto had enjoyed strong US support. This support had been particularly useful to him and his allies when the CIA provided a list of names of known members of the *Partai Komunis Indonesia* (Communist Party of Indonesia) that facilitated the killings of more than one million 'party members' in the aftermath of a military coup in 1965. Whereas the earlier regime under Sukarno had practiced different approaches to *gotong royong*, from 1970 onward, the concept was interpreted as a means to recruit coerced labour in villages to support development programs and to turn village institutions of mutual support into top-down projects of rulership. One such project for example included the aerial spraying and fertilizer distribution by foreign companies in rural areas as one of the ends to *gotong royong*. Such and other, often religion-based, projects of inverting traditions constructed in earlier periods of nation-building have armed neoliberal regimes across the globe with substantial means to, some-

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[14] Krauthammer quoted in Pach, 'The Reagan Doctrine', 77.

[15] Bowen, 'On the Political Construction'.

times forcefully, incorporate regions, classes or social practices by establishing and enforcing 'an *intentionally selective* version of a shaping past and a pre-shaped present.'[16]

Our preceding elaborations have cast a spotlight on the important role of 'traditional' values for election campaigns in Western politics, the selective establishment of neoliberal political agendas as embodiments of 'tradition' and the repercussions of these strategies around the globe. These recent developments demand an extension of the framework of invention in order to integrate an analysis of how the notion of tradition oscillates from social practices to be overcome to social practices to be regained and strengthened in a particular historical era. Our brief account of recent world history exemplifies the historical fickleness of the tradition paradigm and thereby inverts the spatialised understanding of the traditional-modern dichotomy as established within a global developmental regime that sought to portray non-Western countries as traditional and Western countries as modern. The following section builds on this observation and seeks to reveal the systemic implicitness in the perpetuation of an evolutionist order in favour of Western hegemony that was nurtured by the traditional-modern distinction and dressed in Orientalist fictions of the other and Occidentalist fictions of the self.

Extending the Problematic Fiction: Orientalism, Occidentalism and the Unseen Traditionalism of the West

Within social anthropology debates about traditions and the problems arising from their constructed nature often revolve around the discipline's classical 'fields': Native Americans or the Maori and both people's legacies for example.[17]

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[16] Williams in Bowen, 'On the Political Construction', 558 (emphasis added). For an elaborate version of the argument on *gotong royong* see: ibid. For an account of the Indonesian killings see: Gerlach, *Extremely Violent Societies*. For the developmental regime under Suharto see: Ong, 'Graduated Sovereignty'.

[17] Native Americans and Maori have been singled out here as the major theoretical debates on the 'invention of tradition' paradigm in journals like *Current Anthropology* or *American Anthropologist* were based on related case studies. For the Maori see: Hanson, 'The Making of the Maori' and Levine, 'Comments on Hanson's' as well as Linnekin, 'Cultural Invention' and Hanson, 'Reply'. For the Chumash as the Native Americans under scrutiny in the years 1997 and 1998 see: Haley, Wilcoxon, Brown, et al., 'Anthropology and the Making'. Erlandson, King, Robles, et al., 'The Making of Chumash Tradition'. Exceptions to this dominance of non-Western regions as fields of research are of course numerous. These are, however, often concerned with remote regions (cf. Nadel-Klein, 'Re-Weaving the Fringe', Ulin, 'Invention and Representation'). Still, without having properly counted, we consider our position on the prevalence of non-Western examples in line with very recent calls to establish an anthropology of the Western world (cf. Ribeiro and Escobar, 'World Anthropologies').

Just as tradition and its construction tend to come into play when the assumed homogeneity of a cultural entity is at stake, deconstructing traditions as invented more often than not goes along with deconstructing identity politics and genealogies of presumably homogeneous groups.[18] But whereas the Western perception of others has often been dismissed as Orientalism, the idea Western societies have of themselves still needs to be 'provincialized'.[19] Crucial to provincialising the West is again deconstruction.

Referring to Thomas' work on the nexus between anthropological discourse and the rise of neo-traditional movements in Pacific societies, Carrier gives an apt analysis of two different modes of 'Occidentalism'. In the first, '…an essentialist Alien sense of self (ethno-Orientalism) is produced in dialectical opposition to the Aliens' conception of the impinging Western society (their ethno-Occidentalism).'[20] Occidentalism as practiced in the 'Occident' instead is the fiction of rationality and reason emerging as the self-imagination of Europe. But as regards traditions and their invention, the deconstructionist move has an inverted direction. The most predominant Eurocentric notion in need of deconstruction is based on the persistent fiction that first there was a development in Europe, modernity, and then there was a somewhat unfinished replica of the same development outside Europe.[21] Whereas modernity is understood as resulting in an advantage of Europeans over the rest of the world, in the case of traditions this whole process is inversed. It is the others who allegedly still stick to traditions while the Europeans have moved on, left traditional social structures behind and thereby experienced an ontological loss (sometimes portrayed as existential).

Carrier has pointed out that this fiction is particularly salient in the evolutionist distinction of societies common in social anthropology as based on either gift or commodity exchange 'that had, quite reasonably, been taken to distinguish life in

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18   This is particularly relevant for both debates referred to in note 17.

19   Carrier, 'Occidentalism'. Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*.

20   Carrier, 'Occidentalism', 198.

21   This notion has been criticised on various grounds and most of these criticisms are meanwhile canonical in the social sciences (see: Said, *Orientalism*; and numerous authors with an Indian subaltern studies background e.g. Chakrabarty, *Provincialising Europe*). But recently several new and promising pathways into a deconstruction on yet more profound grounds have been developed. One of these pathways questions the uniqueness of European enlightenment at its very core and shows how famous early 17th century writers like the Dutch philosopher Hugo Grotius built their considerations on translations of Chinese publications concerned with political philosophy (see: Gerlach, 'Wu-Wei'). Another pathway questions the reasons of the rise of the West on economic grounds. While this approach is not that much different from earlier considerations about the European dominance in the global economy emerging after 1800 (e.g. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*), it uses the same conception of European dominance in economic fields like exploitation of silver in the Americas to explicitly oppose the notion of an overall Western supremacy in developmental terms (e.g. Frank, *Re-Orient*; Pomeranz, *The Great Divergence*; Arrighi, *Adam Smith in Beijing*).

the Trobriands and the Pacific Northwest from life in Paris, London, or Chicago […, but] became an absolute, rather than a relative, characteristic of society.'[22] Referring to a substantial body of literature, Carrier points out that research carried out in the late 1970s and 1980s has shown that the perception of economic relationships among members of the same family in the USA or Great Britain was far more similar to the features of gift exchange than to those ascribed to commodity exchange based societies.[23] While this observation may not come as a surprise to many, it stands in sharp contrast to what modernisation theory assumes to be the foundational characteristics of the individual in modern times.[24]

As we have shown, to some degree a belief in this distinctiveness of social relations between the West and the rest is requisite to the neoliberal agenda too, as the return to 'American values' or the revival of – as Reagan often called it – 'the Judeo-Christian tradition' needs a point where to return to and revive from: The original loss of these values and traditions in a modernity (elflock-stricken with socialism).[25] But this notion (and invention) of original and tragic loss is not confined to the Western world in the neoliberal era. It is salient in those societies that social anthropology and many other social sciences too often set out to defend and preserve on no other grounds but their culture.

As we have indicated, the way the now seminal volume *The Invention of Tradition* has been read, discussed and applied in the social sciences involves a dilemma, which is very similar to the lyrics of the song quoted in the beginning of this paper. After all, the ubiquitous paradigm coined by Hobsbawm and Ranger contains an oxymoron in the sense that it has invited many authors to take the boundedness of populations or other entities for granted while being concerned with a notion such as tradition, which in itself is an open and fluid concept that

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[22] Carrier, 'Occidentalism', 204.

[23] Ibid., 201.

[24] For a similar but earlier observation of the same kind see: Davis, 'Gifts and the U.K. Economy'.

[25] The University of Texas offers an online archive of what they perceive as the 108 most important speeches in Reagan's political career. In 37 of these speeches Reagan uses the word 'tradition' and in six of them the concept of 'Judeo-Christian tradition'. In most cases this tradition is mentioned in regard to family structures and often the fight against abortion. In his famous 'Evil Empire' speech held on March 8 1983 at the Annual Convention of the National Association of Evangelicals in Orlando in Florida, Reagan went one step further and clearly linked religion in 'Judeo-Christian tradition' to 'traditional values and even [...] the original terms of American democracy.' According to Reagan: 'Freedom prospers when religion is vibrant and the rule of law under God is acknowledged. When our Founding Fathers passed the first amendment, they sought to protect churches from government interference. They never intended to construct a wall of hostility between government and the concept of religious belief itself.' (Reagan, 'Remarks At The Annual Convention'). Reagan is certainly correct in indicating that the US constitution was based on religion and thus the country never experienced a secular era. But this is for another paper (for the whole archive of selected speeches see: Reagan: 'Major Speeches – 1964–1989).

has been shaped by movements beyond borders, time and social entities. Hobsbawm took note of the multiplicity of actors and time periods implied in tradition appropriation and argued that one of the difficulties in establishing social cohesion by resorting to the invention of traditions was that 'larger social entities were plainly not *Gemeinschaften* or even systems of accepted ranks'.[26] But as many authors have abandoned the thorough analysis of how 'class conflicts and the prevalent ideology made traditions combining community and marked inequality in formal hierarchies (as in armies) difficult to apply', most recent research itself has rendered the entire set of problems about the nature of tradition contestable.[27]

At the same time, however, the essential issue of all cultural representations being contingent on a particular social and political context might have been neglected in the very labelling of the concept as 'invention'. In retrospect, Ranger himself has openly conceded the necessity to rethink the 'invention of tradition' paradigm, admitting the danger of 'ahistorical dualism' that the term contains as pointed out by Rosalind O'Hanlon.[28] In other words, Ranger agreed to the criticism that the distinction between 'custom' and 'invented tradition' (that is, between preindustrial and industrial European societies or precolonial and colonial African and Indian ones) could be interpreted to imply that after the stripping away of alien representations, the authentic other would emerge.[29] The implied essentialist assumption of homogeneous colonial regimes of a bounded nature wielding power and imposing certain social practices has neglected the role played by other actors in the process of the invention of tradition. In order to broaden the original narrow investigative perspective, Ranger suggested to use the expression 'imagination of tradition' instead – a proposal that came too late in 1993, when the invention paradigm had already spread ubiquitously across disciplines in the social sciences, as mentioned above.

In the following section we will map out how we intend to resolve the dilemma explained in the preceding paragraphs without losing sight of Hobsbawm's valuable reminder that traditions might very well serve an ideological purpose in any society – be it class-based or otherwise shaped by inequal division of power and wealth.

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[26] Hobsbawm, 'Introduction', 9 (Italics in the original).

[27] Ibid.

[28] O'Hanlon, 'Recovering the Subject'.

[29] Ranger, 'The Invention of Tradition Revisited', 63–4.

Furthering Our Argument: An Outline of the Following Sections

Based on the above consideration, our intention is to situate debates on traditions and their invention within the entangled histories of mundane identity politics, economic inequality and the ethics of taking sides in the humanities. In order to further substantiate the urgency of a shift in perspective, we will expand our critical analysis towards a *tour d'horizon* of the (ab-)use of 'tradition' in the social sciences in the subsequent sections. Our arguments will highlight the interconnectedness of agendas in mainstream politics and the social sciences beyond the Western sphere in spatial terms, but we will also revert to the era of enlightenment and the nineteenth century in temporal terms. With reference to the criticism, which the anthropologist Alan Hanson encountered when he deconstructed Maori culture, the following section on entangled histories will situate this debate in the wider field of politics of identification in the neoliberal era.[30] Our main example will be one of anthropology's core debates of the 1990s held on traditions, identity formations and claims to ownership. At first sight, the subjects of this debate, which we discuss under the headline 'Claiming Natives', were the 'Chumash' – a not-so-native group of self and externally declared Native Americans residing in California (at second sight the subject of this debate was the very discipline of anthropology itself). Based on the crosscutting ties between competing fractions among the 'Chumash' and among social anthropologists, we discuss the importance of political and economic orientations in shaping notions of culture, identity and tradition. This will lead us to question whether social scientists really need to unconditionally support groups who perceive of themselves as indigenous and to propose instead, that the social sciences should analyse traditions within and beyond the framework of invention by considering the ontological dimension as a prerequisite to any understanding of tradition.

In order to embark on this endeavour, we need to elaborate the 'invention of tradition' concept along the lines of the politico-economic and ideological 'inventiveness'[31] that traditions acquired as a result of the establishment of distinctions between traditional and modern societies as well as between traditional and modern social practices. These distinctions are not only rooted in Durkheimian, Maussian or Parsonian and post-Parsonian functionalist approaches in the social sciences but very much so in philosophy as well.[32] Besides the obvious roots of

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[30] For the Hanson-Maori case see: Linnekin, 'Cultural Invention'. For a first insight into a critique of the term identity and related politics of identification see: Friedman, *Cultural Identity*; Brubaker and Cooper, 'Beyond 'Identity''.

[31] Sahlins, 'Two or Three Things', 408.

[32] While this list of names is in line with Carrier who criticises the Occidentalist notion in the gift-commodity divide (cf. Carrier, 'Occidentalism', 203), we have not named Karl Marx. The reason for this deviation, which is grounded in the incommensurateness of Marx's non-essentialist ap-

these distinctions in European enlightenment, the question of the legitimacy of modernity is central to our concern with ontologies. Thus, following a section entitled 'Two Modes of Understanding "Tradition"', the next argument addresses the question of whether the distinction between something explicitly 'traditional' and something explicitly 'modern' is valid at all. To illustrate this dimension and potential intellectual repercussions of this question, we will give an account of one of the paradigmatic debates in this field. Our analysis of the dispute between the German philosophers Carl Schmitt and Hans Blumenberg will focus on both parties' understandings of the very foundations and vindications of modernity's entitlement to claim uniqueness of political forms.[33] As Schmitt and Blumenberg's opposed understandings are concerned with the permanence or non-permanence of pre-modern social and political practices in the present, our discussion thus confirms that beyond the problem of the traditional-modern distinction we are faced with the problem of contested orientations of being in the world. These are best framed in Friedman's conception of 'ontologies' guiding human action and hegemonic political formations.

In the sections entitled 'A Different Problem of Chronological Matter' and 'Enlightenment, Colonisation and the Establishment of "Legitimate" Dispossession', we therefore go on to analyse the equally contested emergence of the traditional-modern distinction. This is done in two steps. First, we discuss the efforts of a socialist-minded nineteenth century British architect to invert the value hierarchy implied in the traditional-modern distinction. William Morris opposed the renovation of Gothic buildings in the Victorian era and instead promoted the preservation of traditional architecture and craftsmanship which, according to him, were manifestations of a lost era of non-alienated labour and could thus serve the purpose of improving future labour relations. We then contrast this rather optimistic approach to the political economy of the Middle Ages with an account of the legal-political function of the traditional-modern distinction in European enlightenment and colonialism. A linear trajectory of past, present and future can neither be found in Morris' approach nor in the general understanding of tradition entertained by a Western ruling class in the aftermath of the era of enlightenment. Instead, as Hobsbawm's characterisation of the turn of the twentieth century as a period of 'mass-producing traditions' also indicates,[34] the ontologies outlined above inform both smaller and larger social units in their take on tradition and thus, their teleologies of human progress and development. We address this problem of the ideology of interlinked temporal and social progression in the section entitled 'The Present and the Virtual Present'. Those teleologies on which the label 'globalisation' as an alternative way of describing the most recent dec-

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proach to class as opposed to traditions and culture as analytical concepts, will become evident in the following sections.

[33] Schmitz and Lepper (eds.), *Hans Blumenberg, Carl Schmitt*.

[34] Hobsbawm, 'Mass-Producing Traditions'.

ades of neoliberal accumulation has been built, are our second last point of concern. To conclude, we will present a framework that seeks to overcome the ethical dilemma of deconstructing the traditions of a group, a community or whatever imagined form of identity-based social unit by making salient how the definition of and reference to traditions depend on the respective aims of and contexts in which given actors are embedded.

Entangled Histories: The Framework of Invention in the Social Sciences and Mundane Identity Politics

> 'Jean Jackson (1989) asks, in the title of an essay, "Is There a Way to Talk about Making Culture without Making Enemies?" I think that it would be fair to respond that, generally speaking, the answer is no…'[35]

This is a quote from an article by Charles Briggs published in the journal *Cultural Anthropology* in 1996. Under the title 'The Politics of Discursive Authority in Research on the "Invention of Tradition"', he discussed how anthropologists researching the respective subject – 'invented traditions' – and the respective subjects – 'the practitioners and inventors of these traditions' – are themselves actively involved in discourses as well as meta-discursive practices revolving around the social phenomenon at stake: traditions.[36]

Furthermore, the quote in the quote cited above shows how many loops the scientific discourse kicked off by the publication of the volume edited by Hobsbawm and Ranger in 1983 has taken since. Considering the vast number of invention studies across disciplines and the canonical status the book has acquired in the late 1980s – especially in combination with 'Imagined Communities' by Benedict Anderson – the different evaluations Hobsbawm and Ranger received in academic journals in 1984 come as a surprise from the vantage point of today.[37] There is Richard Handler calling the volume an '…excellent collection of essays…' in the journal *American Anthropologist*.[38] But there is also Stephen Bunker writing in the journal *American Ethnologist*: 'The authors of the European cases […] could have dealt more with social contexts, changes, and struggles than they do. [… T]hese cases have little relation to the questions […] which Hobsbawm's introduction raises. The result is that these pieces are really too disparate

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[35] Briggs, 'The Politics of Discursive Authority', 435.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Hobsbawm and Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*. Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

[38] Handler, 'Review', 1025.

to form a book.'[39] Although we are not going to discuss the individual case studies collected in the volume, the relevance of differing social, political and economic contexts will be of central concern in our following considerations.

Given our earlier remarks on the importance, which tradition was attributed in Western election campaigns of the 1960s and after, it is no wonder that academic debates in the footsteps of Hobsbawm and Ranger have not remained untouched by this revival of pre-enlightenment patterns of thought. In fact, social anthropology was one of the first disciplines to experience a crackdown on the deconstruction genre in the legacy of Hobsbawm and Ranger. At least since the public debate in New Zealand following the publication of Allan Hanson's article on 'The Making of the Maori: Culture Invention and Its Logic' in 1989, the deconstruction of cultures and their traditions has become a delicate issue. Ever since, most anthropologists working and publishing on pertaining questions may have given a second thought to their research angle so as not to end up triggering a yellow press newspaper headline like this one: 'US Expert Says Maori Culture Invented'.[40] The Hanson-Maori case also showed how important tradition and the respective claims of authenticity had become in the sphere of national and international disputes over property rights and compensation for the dispossession of land by colonial regimes. Second, it is instructive with regard to the role authority plays within the research field and shows how far anthropology and the social sciences are entangled in a web of power relations.[41]

The English royalty, targeted by Cannadine in Hobsbawm and Ranger's volume for example, would care little if confronted with the claim that the celebrations accompanying the anniversary of the British kings and queens being crowned are anything but a tradition and have been 'made up'.[42] The same would presumably hold for deconstructions of practices revolving around the English or any other national football cup finals. As the events of 1977 revealed, the British royalty and society did care, however, when a punk rock music band called the 'Sex Pistols' cruised the Thames singing 'God Save the Queen, the Fascist Regime' while the festivities of the crowning jubilee were in full swing.[43]

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[39] Bunker, 'Review', 596.

[40] Linnekin, 'Cultural Invention', 446.

[41] Cf. also Fabian, *Time and the Other*.

[42] Cannadine, 'The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual'.

[43] In fact, the song had already been banned from airplay by the BBC and other, local radio stations before the jubilee on 7 June 1977. It nevertheless reached second position in the UK single charts. When the band boarded a boat to ship down the Thames on the evening of the festivities playing this and other songs to cheering crowds, the boat was hijacked by police and band members as well as everyone else on the boat taken to jail. The event went down in British history (other than the publication of *The Invention of Tradition*) and until today features prominently on the BBC history pages on the internet alongside the description of the crown jubilee (BBC, '1977: The Queen').

Comparing the Maori and the British cases, there is an obvious – and most probably economically *and* morally grounded – difference between deconstructing traditions in the relics of the former heart of the British Empire and on the former peripheries of this and other empires, where people suffered from strategies of accumulation in similar ways as the Maori did. But as a more recent debate on the North American Chumash and their claims to tradition, genealogical ancestry, cultural authenticity, and land rights has shown, the 'indigenous' groups in focus are anything but homogeneous in the present and their composition proves to be peripheral or marginal in quite different ways than one would expect in a 'community' of so-called Native Americans.

In contrast to conventional claims by numerous anthropologists made in the 1980s, research by Haley and Wilcoxon has shown that it is (at least) difficult to substantiate whether the Chumash ever existed as a political entity – and particularly so, if they did at the time when their presumed homeland north of present-day San Francisco was colonised.[44] Instead, these authors traced the ancestry of a group that in the late 1990s claimed to be the keepers of Chumash tradition and to represent the righteous descendants of the pre-colonial inhabitants of parts of the Californian coast back to such diverse ancestors as firstly Mexican immigrants, secondly ex-hippies who 'stranded' in the area and joined the Mexicans during a dispute over the construction of a gas pipeline through the 'Chumash' territory, and thirdly back to descendants of various other Native American groups from the wider region. To complicate the situation further, Haley and Wilcoxon identified people with at least the same eligibility to claim Chumash descent. These people were in disagreement with the aforementioned group of hybrid 'traditionalists' over the use of a presumably sacred site that was worth millions of US-Dollars paid in monitoring wages since the admission of the site to the US National Register of Historic Places.[45] These three points deconstruct Chumash tradition not only on the grounds of its inventedness. When they first raised these issues in 1997, Haley and Wilcoxon thus offered an alternative to the dilemma of deconstruction as they identified numerous groups of people who could legitimately claim to be Chumash.

The latter claim is of particular importance as this is where the difference to the Maori case and the problem encountered by Hanson is most striking. Among the 'Chumash' there were several marginalised associations of people who were in anything but agreement over the grounds on which being Chumash was to be defined. These differences over identification contained wider issues that concerned overall choices of being in the world. One central point of disagreement was for example, how and whether to live one's life in continuity or discontinuity with a set of predefined social practices that secured admission to the US National Reg-

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[44] Haley and Wilcoxon, 'Anthropology and the Making'.

[45] Ibid.

ister of Historic Places paying the monitoring wages. Haley and Wilcoxon thus also made a crucial contribution to the slowly emerging bankruptcy of 'authenticity' as an analytical category in the social sciences because the case of factions among the 'Chumash' illustrated that at the very heart of the problem were different ideas about how the essence of being 'Chumash' and how 'authenticity' were to be interpreted, thus reducing the concept to the emic level of ideology, lifestyle and self-perception.[46] Extending arguments he made in relation to other places and groups to the Chumash case, Friedman has looked at the question of morality in deconstructions of tradition from a different angle and stated: 'The continuities in social life are closer to what some have called ontologies, as opposed to more variable and superficial cultural products such as particular objects, rituals, and texts. [...] it is such continuities that make movements for the establishment of cultural identities successful – the degree to which people can harness representation of the world, however contestable, to their ordinary experiences, their existential conflicts. And it is this that lies behind the formation of traditionalisms, even by the so-called entrepreneurs who exploit them in their own interests.'[47]

The Chumash case indicates the polysemic nature of traditions grounded in 'the continuities in social life' referred to in the quote above. There are varied meanings held by different groups. This shows the complex entanglement of tradition, contestation, subjectivity and human agency. Our subsequent detailed discussion of the Chumash debate within anthropology argues that traditions are always the result of diverse power constellations and that these are disguised if black-and-white distinctions of colonisers as 'perpetrators' and colonised as 'victims' are employed. As Feierman has pointed out, any location has a 'coexistence of multiple histories' and related discourses. There can be no understanding of such open locations when the main concern follows the question: 'What is Tradition?' Instead, the entangled histories and discourses within respective locations create polysemic roles adopted by and attributed to the actors involved. As there is always more than one such role to be chosen and as the roles chosen are often in conflict with one another, the challenge is to come up with a definition of social entities beyond *Gemeinschaften* and this can only be met by asking: 'Who invests a form of discourse with authority?'[48] And simultaneously it should be asked at whom the discourse is addressed.

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46 Handler, 'Comment', 780.
47 Friedman, 'Comment', 779.
48 Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals*, 29, 31, 33.

Claiming Nativeness: Traditions as Subaltern Lifelines or Subterfuge for Actors Posing as Subaltern?

It is difficult to say whether the 'invention of tradition' debate ever gained the enlightening and elucidating effect that Hobsbawm had obviously hoped for.[49] While their agenda had a significant impact on the social sciences, resulting in a veritable spate of 'invention' literature, it obviously took a while to have an impact on the various factions among the Chumash. Only when researchers made efforts to compare research by early twentieth century anthropologists to findings from the 1970s and 1980s, did it become evident that the historical continuity of Chumash polities in the region and ritual practices at the so-called Western Gate, the contested target of seeking culture-based rent income from the US National Register of Historic Places, was at least dubious. It is thus no surprise that Haley and Wilcoxon's publication set in motion one of the most extensive debates carried out in a single anthropological journal in the 1990s. Some of the replies abound in clichés of a kind that one would rather expect from the post-Hippie faction among the Chumash than from academics living on state salaries. Erlandson for example, an archaeologist with back then twenty years of research in Chumash territory calls their present-day descendants 'survivors of an apocalyptical history of European and Euro-American contact, territorial disenfranchisement, attempted cultural genocide, persecution, and prejudice [..., who] went underground with their cultural identity.'[50]

This depiction ignores the fact that the deconstruction of any presumably homogeneous cultural identity actually questions presumptions about temporal and spatial macro-level phenomena such as colonialism and its criminal ploys. Other and more complex unequal divisions of power may very well inform the very act of deconstruction and often provide a tool to unravel the stereotypes of academic and non-academic debates. Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that deconstruction is both a way to unravel the ontologies Friedman refers to in the above quote as well as an ontology informing the position of actors. One ontological trope under deconstruction might often be the emotionally appealing notion of culture as a shared container on which people rely in times of hardship. The above statement by Erlandson intermeshes notions of *cultural* genocide and underground practices of *cultural* identity to an extent that portrays the people in question as if they had nothing else to relate to but their Chumash culture. Furthermore this culture is treated as if it sticks to the actors for thousands of years without substantial change. It goes without saying that the same author then praises the work of devoted anthropologists and historians who sat down with groups of elders in '… a collaborative effort to preserve Chumash traditions for

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[49] Hobsbawm, 'Introduction', 12–13.
[50] Erlandson, 'The Making of Chumash Tradition', 478.

future generations.'[51] This notion of tradition as a container of static social, economic and intellectual practice reverberates beyond the idea that it is the elders of a 'community' who have expert and esoteric knowledge about the past.[52] This bounded concept is also based on the idea that 'anthropologists [are] trained to appreciate cross-culture differences'. What is not considered is that it might be worthwhile to abandon culture as an analytical category and rather treat it as an ontological and ideological means to invent difference.[53]

The point of this extensive reflection on debates about a singular Native (or non-Native) American group is to show the continuum established, both within mundane and scientific discussions, by a certain understanding of the nexus tradition and social structure: As has been pointed out by Comaroff, the concept of an 'ethnically ordered world' is part of the package of the neoliberal world order established in the 1980s.[54] Thus, if in the Chumash debate several anthropologists went for a role model according to which the history of this group and its members' proper conduct in terms of culture and traditions was to be derived from the memories of elders claiming exclusive rights to group membership, it might be worth asking what the difference in the worldview of these anthropologists and the one promoted by the neoliberal agenda actually was and is.[55]

The concluding remarks to this section are intended to provide possible answers to this question. Reflecting on approaches to solve this issue, it is worthwhile scrutinising the biography of one of the main proponents of the neoliberal turn. Ronald Reagan's career did not only make him the 'star' of numerous B movies portraying a very similar notion of rooted Native American culture as the one of

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[51] Erlandson, 'The Making of Chumash Tradition', 478.

[52] It should be obvious that there is always more than one account of past events and that in this case there may very well be a hegemonic and a counter-hegemonic 'Western' as well as competing versions among the subaltern groups. Secondly, it might be worthwhile considering that in many societies there are differences between people of different generations concerning norms, values and lifestyle preferences.

[53] Ibid., 483. Another of the 1998 replies to Haley and Wilcoxon claims that '…[t]he beliefs of a society should be evaluated by the members of the society, not by outside specialists' (King, 'Comment', 485). While King tries to support Erlandson's position, his above quoted statement can be read as contradicting Erlandson's praise of the heroic efforts of past generations of anthropologists to preserve the vanishing knowledge of a community. But foremost King does not seem to be aware of social inclusion and exclusion and the ensuing question of who is an 'outside specialist' and who has the exclusive right to claim membership of a society.

[54] Comaroff, 'Ethnicity, Nationalism, and the Politics of Difference'.

[55] In their reply, Haley and Wilcoxon point out, referring to Tonkin, that these elders were 'simultaneously bearers and makers of history'. See: Haley and Wilcoxon, 'Reply', 502. It might actually be even more worthwhile asking the 'fans of the elders' faction in anthropology how much legitimacy they would think the same model had when applied to White Anglo Saxon Protestant communities or the right wing factions of Germany's present-day population and if this model of inclusion and exclusion was extended to citizenship.

the traditionalists Chumash (opposed to an equally rooted culture of Western settlers and cowboys). In his time as actor, Reagan actively engaged in politics and supported the prosecution of his colleagues during the anti-communist witch-hunt of the McCarthy trials. In the years between his employment as an actor and his political career, Reagan 'acted' as public relations agent for General Electric in the 1950s. A factory run by this US-American company in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, has been well researched by anthropologists. June Nash tells an insightful story about the labour regime during Reagan's years at General Electric: In order to undercut negotiations with trade unions, achieve tighter work routines and better results in wage negotiations, General Electric had set up a labour relations department. Besides using the nationwide atmosphere of anti-communism against the unions, the company entered contract talks on the basis of preliminary surveys of workers' expectations and hopes. As this strategy regularly produced labour agreements in favour of the company, but not in favour of shop floor relations, Reagan stepped in with routine visits. Before he talked to the workers, he received briefings from the local labour relations branch pointing out the most unpopular shop floor stewards. Nash describes the next step in his performance as follows: 'In his pep talk to raise workers morale (and productivity), he targeted the unpopular supervisors in a joking manner that implied that he (and the corporation) were on their side. His promises of relief in these sessions often bore fruit in the firing of the unpopular foreman and reforms of at least the minor abuses in the system.'[56] This act of solving contests on the shop floor triggered by the wider policy of labour relations entertained by General Electric could be labelled as 'populism by scapegoating the enforcers'. Needless to say, the advantage of this strategy was that the decision makers on the higher company management level could thus maintain a low profile.

A structural similarity of this strategy can be revealed by extended interpretation of the debate revolving around the making of Chumash identity and traditions: Erlandson, following up on his position outlined above, praised collaborative efforts by the Chumash and himself contesting a pipeline project by the US oil company Chevron USA. Their claim amounted to what they portrayed as the centuries-old practice of religious rituals at the Western Gate entitling the Chumash to land rights over the territory envisaged for the pipeline project. In the course of this dispute, Erlandson and the Chumash managed to secure US $2 million, one percent of the whole investment package, for 'cultural resource studies'.[57] It should be questioned whether others claiming Chumash descent in the region would have rather wanted to see this money invested in proper housing, education or recreational activities for the 'Chumash' as this opens up an important issue: Based on the land rights claim, it was Chevron USA and the Chumash negotiating over the use of a substantial piece of land on the Californian coast.

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[56] Nash, 'Post-Industrialism', 198.

[57] Erlandson, 'The Making of Chumash Tradition', 481.

How much money might the same rights to land use concession have been worth if the Californian government (ruled by a non-neoliberal party) had been sitting at the table facing the Chevron USA delegates? And should the money rather have been invested in higher wages for the Chevron USA workers, a public beach or better health care facilities for the whole region irrespective of identities – be they constructed or real? Compared to the above description of Reagan's job at General Electrics, here we find an inverted form of 'populism by scapegoating the enforcerer' employed as an argument by Erlandson not only in the pipeline case, but also to counter the deconstruction of a hegemonic position of a certain group of people within a subaltern framework. Here, those anthropologists who have abstained from a positive and unilinear association of Native American elders, culture, and place are set up as the scapegoats. The actual act of transfering land to a multi-national company (let alone ensuing threats to the environment) is of little concern to Erlandson and those Chumash who cash in the money for 'cultural resource studies' while the natural resources of the Californian coast flood the tills of Chevron USA.

It is important to note that cases like these are highly instructive for a critical review of the common assumption that 'native' groups have been the only victims of colonisation. Neglecting the multifarious ways in which identity and traditions have been shaped by the historical development of the political economy of colonised territories, arguments are often based on a very narrow definition of culture. The traditionalist camp among the Chumash and the anthropologists involved in the debate followed such a narrow understanding ridden with essentialisms about the era of colonisation. An identity-based approach assumes that colonialism was most traumatic for certain groups of 'natives' and not for all those people who were deprived of their basic human rights and forced to sell (or less than that) their labour cheaply on the world market. Recent research has contested essentialising concepts stating that there was a 'Black Atlantic' for example. This 'colouring' of the ocean implies that the trade in human labour targeted only 'black' people. Instead, it was humans of all geographical (but not all class) backgrounds who were shipped across this ocean (and across the Pacific) to the American continent to work the lands for the large benefit of a class of capitalists. Two US historians have called these millions of people a 'many headed hydra' fighting back by means of unrest, mutiny and other ways while crossing the Atlantic, in the mines and on the fields of the Americas.[58] To retrospectively narrow histories of exploitation and dispossession down to identity issues is rather in line with neoliberal capitalist approaches to establish what Harvey has called 'weak institutions' such as cultural resource centres or non-governmental organisations

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[58] For these two positions see: Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic*, and Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many Headed Hydra*.

as opposed to strong institutions that can aim to represent a much larger number of people because of their class-based nature.[59]

Our considerations above go one step further than Haley and Wilcoxon, the initiators of the Chumash debate, went. We consider the possibility of understanding the identity-based strategy of the hybrid 'traditionalist' camp as a new form of subaltern resistance. Being made up of Mexican migrants, Native Americans and ex-hippies, this group was composed of members of those classes who had suffered most in the history of land and labour relations in the US southwest.[60] Thus, the establishment of a fictional Chumash identity might very well be read as a strategy to find economic income in a niche market emerging in California's late and post-hippie era. Secondly, claiming a Native American identity might save descendants of Mexican migrants many unpleasant experiences with local police and local bureaucracies. Although our excursus transcends the framework of the debate on Chumash traditions, it still may be read in the light of Haley and Wilcoxon's reply to the criticism by Erlandson and others resurfacing in 1998: 'There is no denying the catastrophic impact of colonialism on native peoples, but scholars rarely concern themselves with how their own practices construct a modern slot for colonialism's victims or how this slot may be co-opted by others.'[61] It is this opposition of rooted-identity based concepts of the subaltern versus class based concepts of the subaltern that could shed light on the actual political and historical ontologies informing the debate on 'Chumash' culture and traditions and their invention.[62] In the section to follow we will therefore scrutinise the contemporary and historicopolitical arguments that are evoked by such ontologies.

Two Modes of Understanding 'Tradition': Dawns of New Eras and Continuity of the Past

As has been argued above, notions of traditions like other social interactions are based on ontologies and these ontologies are subjected to contestation in political arenas. In order to delineate a framework along which (ab-)uses of the term 'tradition' can be apprehended, it is first of all necessary to deny the common characterisation of tradition as self-evident and immaterial.[63] But still, the term itself de-

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[59]   Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism.*

[60]   For the history of the exploitation of Mexican migrants see: De Genova, 'The Legal Production of Mexican/Migrant 'Illegality''.

[61]   Haley and Wilcoxon, 'Reply', 502.

[62]   Similar criticism has been raised on the issue of subaltern studies. See: Dirlik, 'Is there History after Eurocentrism?' for a critique of canonical subaltern positions.

[63]   Boyer, *Tradition as Truth*, vii.

fies easy definition due to its inherent ambiguity and 'lack of conceptual precision'. This is so because the concept oscillates (as has already been pointed out above) constantly '…from one domain of knowledge to another – say, from folklore to sociology, from anthropology to culture, from history to political economy, and from there all the way back into culture and the sciences of communication, while always carrying the "popular" as an appended tag.' Tradition is thus an 'errant […and] displaced signifier'.[64] Its elusive quality can turn tradition into a 'conceptual black hole' at times.[65]

In the social sciences two overlapping and somewhat contradictory definitions have been coined: The first opens up the question of historical continuity and discontinuity as tradition is understood here as preceding modernity. According to this line of thought, '…[t]radition […] represents a continuous cultural transmission in the form of discrete cultural practices of "the past" that remain vital in the present. The core of tradition may be strongly normative; the intention (and the effect) is to reproduce patterns of culture.'[66] This function concerns the survival of tradition as past in the present.[67] 'Tradition' has thus conventionally carried a nuance of *stasis* – often to distinguish it from the more changeable 'custom'. This has been contested since the 1970s when scholars such as Edward Shils introduced an understanding of tradition as a *traditum*, i.e. as anything that is transmitted or handed down from the past.[68] Given that the root origin of the word 'tradition' is the Latin verb *tradere* (meaning 'to transmit' or 'to give something over to another'), this 'new' understanding has found its way into the social sciences surprisingly late. The verb root suggests that tradition is not a 'thing-like vessel', but rather, that it is something that is handled and embedded in action in specific contexts.[69] This inherent dynamism was largely ignored in conventional debates about the notion of tradition until recently.

It goes without emphasis that the above-mentioned static notion of tradition has been rendered moot long ago – but although this has been corroborated by our

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[64] Rodriguez, 'The Places of Tradition', 61.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Vlastos, 'Tradition: Past/Present Culture and Modern Japanese History', 2.

[67] For a perspective on traditions as remains from the past surviving in the present: Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 115.

[68] Shils, *Tradition*, 12. Shils conceded that traditions are always changing, but nevertheless defined them as distinctly bounded entities with an unchanging essence regardless of subjective interpretations (ibid., 273), a stance that ignores the fact that social reality is inevitably constructed in the present. This element of stasis has been coupled with ritual and repetition, a combination resulting in the normative authority that constitutes an essential characteristic of tradition, its binding nature. Max Weber emphasised the habitual and automatic aspect of tradition, observing that it lies 'on the borderline of what can justifiably be called meaningfully oriented action, and indeed often on the other side.' (Weber, The Theory *of Social and Economic Organisation*, 116).

[69] Jacobs, 'Tradition is (not) Modern', 31.

introductory remarks on the importance of traditional values in the neoliberal political agenda, the very same considerations show how this static notion persists in the concept of culture and identity. As the dichotomy of traditional and modern times is grounded in a set of measurable social and political practices marking the human condition in the respective era, it is not only 'traditional societies' like the Chumash that are aggregated and homogenised in this perspective, as has often been argued.[70] Likewise, and in line with our earlier argument on the nexus of Orientalism and Occidentalism, the modern era – often referred to as 'modernity' – is aggregated, homogenised, and portrayed as a coherent set of political, economic, and social practices that are consecutively adopted throughout the world. Presumably because the latter process of consecutive adoption has never taken place, the second meaning of tradition has become more pertinent since modernisation theories have been stripped of their substance.[71]

Intricately related to the meanings of tradition that have so far been discussed is the framing of social practices along a retrospective invention of causality that makes sense of the world. Traditions thus are said to serve as a normative benchmark that permits those that perceive them to be of personal or structural significance with the possibility to resort to traditions whenever they feel the need to do so. Given the influence such tradition-related values exert on those who attribute importance to and adhere to them, the influence of these values on both collective and individual processes of identification is significant as well. Traditions, in a heuristic sense, fulfil human needs for ontological security by providing a means to organise individual and social life as well as to approach the surrounding world. The notion of tradition as legitimising practices that might otherwise be contestable emanates from Marx and Weber alike. As already pointed out above, this stabilising function of tradition within systems of rule and inequality has been one of the topics discussed most broadly throughout the social sciences and has significantly informed the 'invention of tradition' paradigm.

We have so far been concerned with the complex relationship between tradition and identification as discussed in relation to the state level rather than with the identifications of individuals.[72] However, what has been neglected in invention studies to date is the fact that the individual is not a substance, but merely a form that is not primarily and permanently identical with itself.[73] The individual is instead a highly malleable and transient socially constructed medium that reacts and adapts to changing circumstances in order to pursue its present interests informed

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[70] Vlastos, 'Tradition: Past/Present Culture and Modern Japanese History', 2.

[71] For a similar perspective on modernisation theory see: Leys, *The Rise and Fall*.

[72] For an insightful perspective on why neither collective nor individual identity are useful categories see: Niethammer, *Kollektive Identität*. In line with more recent considerations we have therefore chosen to use the more open ended term 'identification' see: Brubaker and Cooper, 'Beyond 'Identity''.

[73] Foucault, *Freiheit und Fürsorge*, 18.

by ontologies. Tradition, in this regard, needs to be understood as an instrument to implement given interests and to assert elusive identifications, rather than a fixed set of values that consistent individuals conform to in response to an allegedly natural urge. Just as the Chumash case illustrated, the controversial identification of the 'traditionalist' faction itself was informed by aims depending on a changing social, political and economic framework of neoliberal US capitalism. This observation challenges conventional assumptions about the consistency and continuity of groups and their identification over time. In this sense, the nexus of identification and tradition could best be described as the assertion of *ad hoc* attempts to produce cogent concepts of *l'ipséité*, the coherence of whatever distinguishes individuals, as Paul Ricœur referred to it.[74]

This intricate relationship between identification as construction, tradition as appropriation and the pursuit of interests along various ranges of social complexity also informs those engaging with the problematic and retrospectively questionable emergence of modernity in Western civilisation. As we will argue in more detail in the following section, the above outlined nexus of action, context and specificity is also applicable to the very idea of this and other notions of a shift from one historical era to another. In their scientific and mundane construction, historical eras have particular and homogenised sets of beliefs, practices and – more general – ways of being in the world attached to them, which are often just as one-dimensional as fictions of identification. Therefore it is no surprise that these attached qualifiers are contested in Western and non-Western settings alike. Several studies of such contests in non-Western civilisations have shown that in many cases, it is the differences in evaluations of one and the same 'historical event', which are at stake.[75] This contested identification of historical events revolves around their qualities as watersheds heralding new eras and is – for example – an essential component of the meta-narrative that Western civilisation has generated to mark the transition to modernity: Some authors identify the Peace of Westphalia and the establishment of the modern nation-state as constitutive, whereas others prefer the Lisbon Tsunami of 1755 and the end of Leibniz' theodicy.[76] As evident in our preceding arguments, we deem the connection between the event chosen as heralding the new era and the discrete qualities ushered

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[74] Cf. Bauman, *Identity*, 13.

[75] See: Errington and Gewertz, 'From Darkness to Light', for an interesting case study on performances and integrative nation-building marking the transition to modernity in Papua New Guinea. Further examples of such historical events have been identified as the advent of missionaries, pilgrims, or colonisers (Sahlins, 'The Return of the Event', Biersack, 'Introduction: History and Theory'). As we will argue in the following section one might want to include disasters of natural or human cause, the acquisition or invention of technologies, as well as the outcomes of war.

[76] This list could be extended further. For summaries of debates in various fields see among many others: Habermas, *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne* (philosophy), Grasskamp, *Ist die Moderne eine Epoche?* (art), Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World* (history).

out by this era as of critical importance. The art or profession of writing history as well as the public discourse have evidently moved on from the notion of single events initiating new eras. But our discussion of the meaning of tradition in politics, society and popular culture so far has shown that the question of distinctive markers remains relevant. Because this is so, we will delve deeper into the realm of contestations of contexts in which modernity has emerged and pertains relevance before we concern ourselves with the possible linkages and collapsing markers of the tradition-modernity dichotomy.

'To a Large Extent, Problems were of Chronological Matter' – Traditions and the Debate on the Legitimacy of the Modern Era between Carl Schmitt and Hans Blumenberg

In the preceding section, we have broadened the understanding of the context in which traditions emerge to cover a much wider temporal framework than that of immanent individual or collective political action. No matter whether our analysis is concerned with the Chumash or with the neoliberal agenda, it is exactly this wider temporal framework that informs the positions of groups striving for hegemony within tradition-related discourses. For the traditionalist Chumash, this wider temporal framework was objictified by the claim that colonisation had deprived them of their inalienable right to parts of the Californian coast. This claim was based on the saying that a religious practice had existed long ago that was discontinued by colonial dispossession. But this very idea of religious and ritual practice stemming from the mists of time was contested as empirically unverifiable. These oppositional stances were reflected in the debate between traditionalist and non-traditionalist anthropologists. At the core of these two modes of understanding was thus the issue of the historical legitimacy of traditional practices. The following considerations explore the importance of how notions of the traditional-modern dichotomy affect and shape the issue of legitimacy. We have chosen to discuss this issue by introducing the details of a debate between the German philosophers Carl Schmitt and Hans Blumenberg, which we regard as paradigmatic for Western thought on the legitimacy of the modern era. This debate was held in West Germany after the Second World War. It was thus framed by a social setting, within which particular versions of the ontologies of traditionalism and modernism were opposed to each other across all strata and classes.[77]

As the anthropologist Erik Wolf and numerous historians have pointed out, the emergence of German Fascism was anything but an accidental historical event. The repeated failure of bourgeois revolutions and the establishment of the Ger-

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[77] Examples in literature are numerous and some novels in the topic widely read: e.g. Köppen, *Der Tod in Rom*; Fauser, *Der Schneemann*.

man nation-state under the auspices of the aristocracy and the emperor in 1871 led to an attachment to presumably traditional German values among the educated middle classes, a phenomenon that was referred to as 'Bildungsbürgertum' and exceptional in Europe. Ritual practices such as the honour and shame based duel, beliefs in the determination of the German 'Volk' by blood, consanguinal kinship relations and its relation to the earth were as widespread as anti-semitism and the longing for a messianic ruler.[78] Although all these ideas were shattered by the inhuman and brutalised regime established as the 'Third Reich', large parts of West German society remained unaffected. Major enterprises like Mercedes Benz, Krupp, Bayer and Volkswagen, as well as the media, continued to be controlled by the same actors who had supported the rise of Fascism and prospered during its reign.[79] Living in this republic still struggling with the brownfields of German Fascism, the two scholars Carl Schmitt and Hans Blumenberg had very different ideas about the legitimacy of the modern era. These ideas were closely related to their biographies: Schmitt was part of the brownfield and Blumenberg part of the cleaners. Still, the two exchanged altogether fifteen letters between 1971 and 1978. Before we analyse the debate held in these letters it is important to point out that the two also were at very different positions in their career at the time of their written conversation.

Schmitt had tendered his services to the German Nazis immediately after 1933, joined the party in May 1933 and denounced several Jewish colleagues, some of whom had previously been very useful for his career. But beyond these failings, his work had been subject to criticism throughout his entire career, during the Weimar Republic, during the Nazi reign (from emigrants) and after Germany's liberation. This criticism not only targeted his political actions but also his writings, because he strongly favoured charismatic leadership as a technique of government. Furthermore, he opted for a primacy of the political over justice and consistently followed up the Hobbesian 'negative anthropology of man' as potentially evil. This negative anthropology led him to establish a concept of sovereignty that delineated the term according to the sovereign's ability to exert control over the state of emergency, a notion that has since been taken up by numerous scholars and features prominently in the writings of the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben for example.[80] Schmitt's work is thus of substantial relevance to present-day theories in the social sciences and so is his notion of the modern era's legitimacy. To Schmitt, who was a strong devotee of Catholicism, all political categories of the modern nation-state were mere conceptual continuities of

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[78] Wolf, *Envisioning Power*, 197–273; Goldhagen, *Hitlers willige Vollstrecker*, 71–106; Frevert, *Ehrenmänner: Das Duell in der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*.

[79] See: Gregor, *Stern und Hakenkreuz*; Luntowski, *Hitler und die Herren an der Ruhr*.

[80] Agamben, *Homo Sacer*. Recent work by social anthropologists referring to Agamben and the concept of sovereignty include Fassin, 'Compassion and Repression'; Redfield, 'Doctors, Borders, and Life in Crisis'; Caton, 'Coetzee, Agamben, and the Passion of Abu Ghraib'.

political categories of the pre-modern era. This led him to postulate that the secular state was doomed with an inherent logic of decay, inherent because the theological foundation of 'the political' had never been replaced, but simply rephrased. In modern times, the political thus needed to be substantiated by continuous re-utterance, a quality rendering the political unsubstantiable.[81] Schmitt concluded that the legitimacy of the modern era was of dynastical foundation and derived from the pre-modern 'political'. He therefore opted for a different analytical term – legality: 'This is why marking a justification which is based on an accentuated and "statutory" realisation not as legitimacy but as *legality* suggested itself – namely with regard to this justification's rigorous steadfastness of the "law" that neither allows for exemptions nor for rupture.'[82]

Blumenberg, who was 32 years junior to Schmitt, Catholic and stigmatised as 'Half-Jew' during the Third Reich, objected to Schmitt's argumentation in both his publications and his letters to Schmitt by declaring his reasoning to be conclusions by analogy based on categories.[83] Blumenberg defended the conceptual term of secularisation by denying the nexus of theological and rational thought as postulated by Hegel. Instead he substantiated the legitimacy of the modern era on the grounds of a 'genetic difference' between eschatology and the notion of progress: The pre-modern concept of 'Heilsgeschichte' (or Christian salvation history) did by its very own logic exclude the possibility of human ownership of the very object of eschatological reasoning – the past, the present, and the future. Humans considering themselves the subjects of history instead, saw themselves according to Blumenberg as the only actors in charge of this very totality and capable of deducing the structure of history from it: 'Only on these grounds, progress becomes the epitome for future's determination by the present and the fundament of history's predictability.'[84]

Blumenberg's concern here was not whether the future is really determined by the present or whether history is indeed predictable, he was concerned with revealing the shortcomings in Schmitt's logic. Unlike Schmitt he wanted to show that 'the profanity of the modern era is not her secure characteristic trait but her permanent critical office'. 'Office' here is an ironical side sweep at his opponent's strong Catholic beliefs, but more so a programmatic concept that denies religion the right to enter politics.[85] In summary, Schmitt, as pointed out above, identified a rephrasing of religion-based political concepts in the social contracts of modern democracies and rejected the very idea of secularisation. This meant that the modern era was based on mere legality derived from the legitimacy of pre-enlighten-

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[81] Schmitz and Lepper, 'Logik der Differenzen', 265–89.

[82] Schmitt, 'Nachwort zur heutigen Lage des Problems', 37 (Translation: P. N.).

[83] Blumenberg, 'Die Legitimität der Neuzeit', 19–20 (Translation: P. N.).

[84] Ibid., 26.

[85] Ibid., 34.

ment political structures. Blumenberg instead identified a replacement of political concepts and regarded secularisation as the initial factor for the emergence of a legitimacy of social contracts. To him, this legitimacy had previously been absent from political systems because these had been based on eschatological beliefs.

The crucial point of disagreement in the debate between Schmitt and Blumenberg was thus religion. Schmitt regarded religious belief as a source of political legitimacy because the modern era had never developed other means of reasoning – the old ones had just been rephrased. If one applies this line of thinking to the question of traditions, these positions reveal a dichotomy: Traditions are either reminiscences of the past or discontinued in the modern era. Adopting Schmitt's position means to assume that the old structures live on in the present and that modern social contracts are built on reminiscences of pre-modern ones. If there ever could be a modern era in strict terms, this was an era to be and definitely not the world in which he lived – although there is reason to assume that he had been quite positive about the legitimacy of the Third Reich. Blumenberg's concept instead is based on a twofold argument. He was first of all convinced that social contracts of the modern era had the potential to overcome the eschatological worldview of earlier political systems. Secondly, he took account of the problem of ownership when he built his cause in favour of secularisation in large parts on the dispossession of church property in the early days of enlightenment. As we will show in the following section, this understanding of political legitimacy places Blumenberg in the camp of people arguing that modernity is an unfinished project. Translated into the dilemma of traditional-modern distinctions outlined above, he understood tradition-based social practices as undesirable remains of the past that need to be overcome.

But in order to perceive of modernity as such an unfinished project, one does not necessarily have to limit the view of tradition to a delegitimised (but nevertheless still successful) means of keeping up pre-modern, religion-based hegemonic structures. In a contribution to *The Invention of Tradition*, Hobsbawm presented the rituals held annually on 1 May by trade unions and more (or increasingly less) socialist associations across the world as an example of a tradition invented to confront hegemony and to remind people of the possibility to establish a counter-culture instead.[86] Thus, the key issues that are of pertinence to us are as follows: What are the ontological frameworks that inform the establishment and perpetuation of traditions? And could these frameworks be employed to oppose hegemonic structures and to increase equality in the longer run instead? In the following section we will therefore discuss movements that try to establish a shared understanding of particular, counter-hegemonic traditions that need to be guarded and prevailed in order to ultimately improve society and achieve progress.

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[86] We need to concede that it was the German Nazis who first instituted this day's festivies before they turned into a nearly global public holiday of the twentieth century. The relevance of this, however, is subject to a larger debate. See: Hobsbawm, 'Mass-Producing Traditions', 283–91.

A Different Problem of Chronological Matter: Traditions as Means to 'Progress' and as a Way to Contest the Emerging Alienation of Labour

Blumenberg's attitude bears a resemblance with the late nineteenth century politics of revolutionary minded socialist groups who, in line with Marx's notion of tradition as a means to suppression, sought to establish a 'counter-traditionalism' to strengthen the self-perception of the working classes. In Hobsbawm's argument, the four decades before World War I are of particular importance for an analysis of the invention of traditions as, 'that one period saw them spring up with particular assiduity.'[87] In Marx's analysis of the original accumulation of capital it was the English working class that was persuaded (or persuaded itself) via education, tradition and habit to accept the capitalist mode of production's demands on humans as laws of nature.[88] In Hobsbawm's reading it was 'the work of a devoted non-socialist Republican' like Durkheim that helped to construct an alternative 'civic religion' defending France's Third Republic against the left and the right by 'deliberately annexing the revolutionary tradition' or by turning the major international ritual of socialist movements, the above mentioned May 1 gatherings, into a 'good-humoured family occasion'.[89] Here, tradition comes along with what Bourdieu a century later called 'habitus'; the translation of enculturated knowledge into everyday behaviour.[90] The traditions that Marx identified as the motors of naturalising a social relationship based on inequality and unequal access to means of production could in other words be termed expressions of false consciousness. In Hobsbawm's reading they would be invented traditions that are to be distinguished from genuine ones.[91] But if we assume that a distinction between invented and genuine traditions can be made, the question of what is actually accepted as an appropriate or an inappropriate tradition within political contestations arises again. Whereas Blumenberg's position opposed the legitimacy of traditions altogether, our following account introduces a movement of nineteenth century socialists who tried to establish a 'counter-traditionalism' as a means to unveil and criticise the ever-increasing mechanisms of exploitation and alienation in capitalist labour relations.

Calhoun, a sociologist who regards tradition as grounded less in the historical past than in everyday social practice, has analysed the intricate linkage of tradition with contemporary nineteenth century social practice. On top of approaching tradition as directly linked to everyday social relations, Calhoun questions the distinctness of notions such as 'conservativeness' and 'progressiveness' and

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[87] Ibid., 263, 283–5.

[88] Marx, *Das Kapital*, 766.

[89] Hobsbawm, 'Mass-Producing Traditions', 269–70.

[90] Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*.

[91] Hobsbawm, 'Introduction', 10.

argues that '"conservative" attachments to tradition and community may be crucial bases for quite rational participation in the most radical of mobilizations, sometimes culminating in revolutions.'[92] He claims that tradition does not *per se* give rise to insurrection but that in times of rapid change traditions might be means to make people politically radical. Other than Hobsbawm, who focused on the likeliness of the failure of such efforts, Calhoun argues that exactly this happened with the attempts of handloom weavers and other craftsmen in England and France to defend their 'traditional' crafts and communities against disruption in the early years of industrialisation.[93] After what has been said so far, it is not so much the question whether traditions can be employed by parties other than conservative elites who seek to gain or maintain power – the conventional description of tradition as 'Thatcherism in period dress'[94] – that is of interest to us. In the following section we will rather focus on a nineteenth century effort to establish an intricate relationship between material heritage and the social context framing the days of its origin and seek to show how strongly the notion of the present is shaped by an understanding of the past and by an idea of what the future should be like.

William Morris and Philip Webb who founded the British Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) in 1877 were in fact socialists.[95] At first sight, the aims of the SPAB – or 'Anti-Scrape' as it was called colloquially – as stated in its manifesto seem utterly conservative. The organisation's principal concern was the nature of the 'restoration' of ancient buildings, advocating skilful repair based on the practice of the original craftsmanship rather than contemporary Victorian-style restoration as the only way to preserve the buildings.[96] However, if one takes a closer look at Morris' reasons for this apparently anti-modernist stance, one finds that here tradition was paired with social interaction and a system of morals and values that distinguished between economic structures of different eras and the respective degree of labour alienation. Morris stated in 1888 that even if a piece of architecture was restored in technical terms to look like an ancient building, the social setting of the days of his original construction could not be reproduced. For this reason, he fiercely opposed the revival of Gothic architecture in his times.[97] His understanding of tradition was furthermore based on the idea that labour relations of the past might have been more progressive than

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[92] Calhoun, 'The Radicalism of Tradition', 888.

[93] Since Calhoun approaches traditions as a means to organise social action based on antiquity *and* on (subaltern) consensus, he emphasises the subjective meaningfulness of their universal use beyond Weber's understanding of ingrained habituation. Cf. Weber, *Economy and Society*, 25.

[94] Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, 290.

[95] Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, 288.

[96] See: Morris 'Manifesto'.

[97] Morris, *The Unpublished Lectures of William Morris*, 88. See also: Morris, 'The Revival of Architecture'.

contemporary ones. Traditional craftsmanship could be opposed to and thus linked to the present and ultimately serve as a role model for the future. The physical remains of past architectural styles were more than an abstract heritage but testimonials of a vanished sophisticated interaction of human labour and socio-economic structures. Even if one may argue that Morris in fact held an exaggerated and romanticist view of feudal craftsmen and their labour relations, his approach to material heritage being embedded in immaterial social contexts seems to be up to date and closely connected to recent considerations of the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) programme on world heritage. Morris explained his vehement opposition to the revival of Gothic elements in late nineteenth century architecture as follows: 'Here then I want you to understand once for all that the Gothic art which we have tried to revive was the work of free craftsmen working for no master or profit-grinder, and capable of expressing their own thoughts by means of their work, which was no mere burden to them but was blended with pleasure.'[98]

To summarise Morris' first concern, nineteenth century techniques of restoring ancient buildings might have been capable of imitating old forms, but the social relations which were objectified in their appearance and structure could have only emerged if the craftsmen of their first construction and their values had been brought back to life. These workers' dedication could not be found in a wage labourer working in the capitalist system.[99] In an inversion of the Victorian idea of a modernist historicism based architectural revival, the attempts to reproduce previous forms of architecture were declared pointless because the once lived set of values and norms had been more progressive in immaterial terms than the capitalist values and means of exploitation prevailing both architectural aesthetics and the construction industry of Morris' lifetime.

This seemingly conservative argument against the revival of an ancient architectural style was grounded in more than an awareness of the changing social contexts in which material heritage had been produced and was reproduced. Despite the potential semblance of 'sameness' and 'authenticity', form was to be distinguished from substance, and ancient architecture could not be reproduced merely by aesthetic reference. Morris approached ancient architecture with a sense of responsibility for something passed on by previous generations that needed to be transmitted for the future: 'It is…no question of expediency or feeling whether we shall preserve the buildings of past times or not. *We have no right whatsoever to touch them.* They are not ours. They belong, partly to those who built them, and partly to all the generations of mankind who are to follow us.'[100] This emphasis on the importance of protecting the architectural heritage added the ques-

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[98] Ibid.

[99] Cf. Morton, *Political Writings of William Morris*, 14.

[100] Morris cited in Thompson, *William Morris*, 234 (emphasis in original).

tion of ownership to his ulterior aim of drawing attention to the unequal distribution of capital and the increasing alienation of labour in the nineteenth century. Eliciting respect for ancient architecture should reawaken his fellow men to the importance of self-determined, non-alienated labour and its potentially higher quality of living (and the emergence of art) for the individual.[101] But furthermore, in an argument similar to today's policies of protecting humanity's heritage, future generations held ownership rights to the buildings under scrutiny. Morris' notion of tradition and heritage was based on an entangled static and dynamic approach that sought to preserve material and immaterial heritage, understood as inseparably connected, and was based on the need to likewise connect past, present and future generations. Thus, the inevitable passing of time served as the dynamism that justified his call for a static approach to traditions in the present.

Rather than focussing on the events and rituals to boost working class consciousness discussed by Hobsbawm, our account has shown how Morris believed that traditional labour relations could more easily be used to highlight 'negative' developments triggered by changes in class relations. Architecture constitutes the visual reminder of a time gone by here, but nevertheless embodies hope for the present and future as long as the heritage of humanity is passed on appropriately to the next generations.[102] Morris therefore broached issues that would be central to the Blumenberg-Schmitt debate decades later as he was very much concerned with the legitimacy of the modern era. His argument might be translated in the following way: It was exactly the Gothic revival of the Victorian era that he regarded as the illegitimate appropriation of 'better' times. By trying to show that this appropriation was grounded in the 'false' relations of production and therefore rendered moot, he challenged Victorian historicism's effort to legitimise nineteenth century modernity via its connection to the Middle Ages. His concept of architectural preservation therefore embodies an understanding of past, present and future that coalesces them into a temporal complex in permanent flux. The problem with this understanding might, however, be that anyone could challenge Morris by pointing to the dependencies and inequalities, which those who had constructed the original buildings had suffered from. Thus, if the feudal structures of dependency dictating labour relations in the original era of Gothic style architecture are regarded as nothing to strive for, then the ideas of the SPAB appear in a different and much less progressive light.

Precisely because of these obstacles, the example serves as an ideal proof that even within a progressive notion that grounds traditions in (subaltern) everyday practice, the very same mechanisms of an idealisation of the past that would usually be expected only from conservative and elite based strategies may be at work. Morris was engaged in an effort to prove the virtuality of the Victorian past-

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[101] Morris, 'Art and Labour'.

[102] See: Thompson, *William Morris*, 303.

present distinction by appealing to his fellow architects that their very ideas about their architectural predecessors' visions and housing structures as material handed-down remains of the past were inadequate. But at the same time he romanticised feudal labour relations in an impressive inversion of Marx's notion of historical progress and ended up misrepresenting distinct forms of labour relations as based on a sequential temporal structure whereas it would have taken him only a visit to the English countryside, let alone the colonies, to see that the very same ancient labour relations were in place side by side with industrial capitalism. Thus, any understanding of the nexus between traditions and everyday social practice in the realm of labour relations needs to be informed by the possible simultaneous embodiment of, for example, 'feudal', 'mercantile' and 'capitalist' labour relations within one political economic system – the challenge rather consists of expanding the unit of analysis far enough to see this simultaneity.[103]

In order to further the theoretical reflection on this issue, we will discuss how an analysis of traditions and their invention can be combined with a more thorough analysis of the powers and discourses at work during the emergence of the modern era – particularly pertaining to the question of legitimacy – in the following section. As we have now shown that beyond the relationship of past and present the question of the future plays an important role in arguments revolving around ownership. Therefore, we extend this analysis of enlightenment's legitimising function in relation to capitalist accumulation and European colonial expansions by introducing Deleuze's distinction of virtual and chronological past, present and future in the succinct section. In a third step we come to discuss to what extent the most recent ontological trope, the notion of globalisation, has informed the understanding of traditions and their invention in the social sciences.

Enlightenment, Colonisation and the Establishment of 'Legitimate' Dispossession along the Dichotomical Axis of the Traditional-Modern Distinction

We will now turn our attention to the focus of Morris' ardent criticism, namely the alienation of labour resulting from the rise of capitalism and the clear-cut hierarchies and roles that emerged within nation-states after the bourgeois revolutions. Although the modern era reunited new and old elites, these elites still needed to disguise political and economic inequalities arising with the interconnected processes of colonisation and industrialisation as reflections of a natural division of social strata both in Western and non-Western societies.[104] John Locke

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[103] For the widespread discussion of the untimely coincidence of labour relations see: Wolf, *Europe and the People without History*, and Mollona, 'Gifts of Labour'.

[104] Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters*. See also: Hobsbawm, 'Mass-Producing Traditions'.

was one of the authors working at the forefront of the establishment of the intellectual foundations that would convey legitimacy to prevailing inequalities in the capitalist world economy. Surprisingly, however, his 'Essay Concerning Human Understanding' was for a long time widely seen as a founding stone of enlightened egalitarianism.[105] But as a matter of fact, Locke's linguistic cartography distinguished humans according to their ability for rational reflection. This ability, he claimed, was the opposite of the widespread imprecise, shifting and ambiguous uses of words. Locke associated 'serious, ideal speech' with gentlemen, whereas women, the poor, working classes and rural populations conversed in 'plain' ways. While pleading for the necessity of a social contract to produce an egalitarian order in society, Locke argued that women were 'emotional' and exhibited a 'natural dependence' upon men.[106] How widespread the distinction between traditional and modern subjectivities was applied within Western societies – and thus not only applied to the 'native' victims of colonisation – is illustrated by another story.

One of Locke's colleagues at the Royal Society, antiquary and miscellaneous writer John Aubrey, contrasted 'modern' customs and language to ancient ways of expression he had collected through what he claimed had been extensive interviews in rural regions. Since he had to interrupt his studies at Oxford during the English Civil War, he spent three years at his family estate in south Wiltshire. These years he described as 'a most sad life …not to have the benefit of an ingenios [sic] Conversation.' His great hardship was further aggravated because he had no other company 'but Servants and rustiques' by locals who to him were 'Indigenae, or Aborigines'.[107] These experiences led him to conclude that there was a pre-modern and a modern way of being and thinking and that this dichotomy was based on empirical proof. By outlining the world as a dichotomical order made up by the vulgar conservation of 'rustiques' as opposed to the 'ingeniose conversation'[108] of learned men represented by his fellow Royal Society members, Aubrey managed to effectively set up the discursive construction of modernity.[109] Aubrey, Locke and other philosophers of Western enlightenment who saw language as an essential feature of human existence argued for the existence of an inherent set of standardised criteria along which individual rationality could be evaluated and used as a marker of social distinction.

A critique of the modern individual as the embodiment of rationality and the perpetuation of social inequality similar to our brief critical reflection on the history of enlightenment has been well established in the legacy of Foucault who

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[105] Locke, *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.

[106] Bauman, *Thinking Sociologically*, 69.

[107] Aubrey, *The Natural History of Wiltshire*, 11.

[108] Aubrey, *Brief Lives*, 326.

[109] Bauman and Briggs, *Voices of Modernity*, 2.

analysed the modern era as a regime of discourses and elaborated surveillance techniques intended to regulate and discipline subjects.[110] Following up on this perspective, Bauman has identified the emergence of 'legislators' who survey and control the projected conversion of their social inferiors from pre-modern to modern ways of knowing as central to the modern nexus of knowledge and inequality.[111] As indicated for Locke's philosophy, a variety of institutions active across a broad range of areas (the law, academia, religion, etc.) also actively produced those discourses that created the very objects in need of regulation.[112]

Our above arguments question the legitimacy of modernity from a very different angle than Schmitt's denial of secularisation outlined previously. Here instead, the emphasis is on the mutually enforcing *and* simultaneous construction of the traditional-modern dichotomy stemming from new and truly modern power structures active in the arenas of regulation and enforcement. Applied to the paradigm of 'invented traditions', at first sight there seems to be the need of the historical extension of Hobsbawm's analysis of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century into the political, economic and social dynamics that were at work before, during and after the heydays of enlightenment and modernisation.

This is even more so when the second contribution of Locke to the enlightened European societies is taken into account. In his essay *Two Treatises of Government*, Locke develops a clear-cut distinction between those humans who have the right to hold property titles and those who do not. These rights should be grounded in appropriate or inappropriate land use, meaning that only those who build fences and cultivate the land are to claim ownership whereas those who live off the land as nomads are not entitled to land rights. Such was the main legal argument for the dispossession of vast areas of populated territories like Australia by European colonisers.[113] All across the globe, colonised societies were constructed as traditional and in many former colonial territories until today marginalised groups can only challenge the continuous effects of colonial dispossession by claiming 'traditional' rights entitling them to the ownership of their presumed ancestors' land. Since colonialism and imperialism as the ensuing regime of accumulation are also two eras of forced migration, mass murder and the invention and altering of ethnic identities, many subalterns of today, like the Chumash, thus are forced to claim ethnic identities that were built on fragile fictions of cultural homogeneity that emerged during the eras of colonialism and imperial-

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[110] See among others: Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*; *Madness and Civilisation*.

[111] Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters*.

[112] Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, 112.

[113] See: Locke, *Two Treatises*, for the original text and Campbell and Wilson, *The Politics of Exclusion*, as well as Neveling, *Die Beziehungen zwischen Indonesien und Australien*, for the historical analysis.

ism.[114] By outlining a dichotomical order with colonial societies being depicted as embodiments of 'inauthenticity' as a result of the manipulative invention of traditions (which is often represented as the exclusive act of colonising societies) and precolonial societies as embodiments of 'genuine' but also 'premodern' traditions, many authors in the legacy of Hobsbawm and Ranger have gone up the one-way street of a highly slanted unilateral approach to authority and the ahistoric dualism caused by colonialism's culture. But although Ranger later tried to manoeuvre out of this dead end by suggesting to rephrase the paradigm into 'imagined traditions', something we have briefly discussed in an earlier section of this paper, we suggest instead to take the problematic notion of temporal causalities informing so many studies on the nexus of tradition and culture under closer scrutiny.

The Present and the Virtual Present as the Ontological Grounds for Notions of Tradition and Culture

Whereas Hobsbawm and Ranger assumed a distinct and hence relatively bounded nature of temporal regimes, Deleuze has carried the interlinkage of past, present and future implicit in the 'invention of tradition' paradigm one step further. According to him past, present and future are 'indiscernably' coalesced in a much broader way than Morris' political programme portrayed them. Since he understood the present as a temporal complex in permanent flux, Deleuze maintained that the past and things yet to come mingle and eventually constitute the 'present'. In other words, past, present and future are not distinct and self-contained points along an absolute and indexical timeline but are conceived by humans as essential components of the present.[115] Furthermore, Deleuze maintains that the actual present in the chronological sense is always accompanied by a 'virtual present' – its own past so to speak:[116] In contrast to the arbitrary and sometimes conflictual negotiations of the past and its legitimising quality for political practice in the present Deleuze assumes that '(…) there is a present of the future, a present of the present and a present of the past, all implicated in the event, all rolled up in the event, and thus simultaneous and inexplicable.'[117]

What does this signify for our purpose of pinning down the notion of tradition? Following Deleuze, embodiments of tradition are neither reminiscences of the

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[114] See: Campbell and Wilson, *The Politics of Exclusion*, for a case study of Indonesian fishermen in Australian waters claiming traditional rights and Friedman, 'Indigenous Struggles', for more general considerations.

[115] For similar ideas see: Robertson, '*Furusato* Japan'; Creighton, 'Consuming Rural Japan', Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*; Handler and Linnekin, 'Tradition, Genuine or Spurious'.

[116] Hulse, 'Crystals of Time', 3.

[117] Ibid., 100.

past nor in opposition to the modern era, but are intricately linked with the present and future as essentially part and parcel of one metamorphosis. The consequence of this understanding is that the past, present and future cannot be distinguished as self-contained entities, because they are part of a constant process of evolving into the contemporary and the future.

Following our analysis of the Schmitt-Blumenberg debate that opened up a perspective on the ontologies revolving around dichotomical notions of tradition versus modernity, we have further expanded the perspective in the last sections. The examples of the revival of tradition at the dawn of the neoliberal era and of the debate about Chumash 'traditions' can be situated within Deleuze's model of the constructed nature of historical sequences and causalities. Added to our preceding arguments, this perspective allows for a delineation of the objective as well as constructed qualities of traditions in terms of their situatedness in time *and* space. Political and economic structures at work at particular locations, but also within regimes of much more far-reaching relevance as in the case of enlightened European colonial powers, and not only notions of temporal sequence and causality, are interlinked on various levels of complexity by discursive practices that determine the negotiations and decisions about the viability of traditions. In the following sections we will further establish this notion by looking at recent global historical developments and show how a concept that carefully carves out the political economy informing the construction of traditional-modern constellations across regions and eras can be added to the debate on traditions based on the papers collected in this volume.

Traditions across Time and Space – Ubiquitous Myths of Rapid Social Change, Circulation and Creative Appropriation in the Globalisation Paradigm

Traditions are based on ontologies, both in arenas of social practice as in arenas of academic debate. These ontologies create relevance in time and space. Let us once more briefly outline why.

In such diverse (but also interlinked) historical phenomena as the global spread of neoliberal policies, the formation of Chumash identity, the debate on Victorian architecture or about the legitimacy of the modern era, competing understandings of tradition play a crucial role. In our discussion of the intersection of enlightenment, philosophy and colonialism as well as internal dispossession, the legislators who discursively create and enforce traditions in order to establish or maintain regimes of subordination in the Foucauldian sense were situated in the realms of the law, religion, medicine, the military, factory regimes or politics. In this and other cases, ontologies thus crosscut and often transcend the different arenas within which social relations are produced and reproduced. Because the examples

we have given range across time and space and the respective arenas where the role of traditions was negotiated are constituted and shaped by the circulation and contestation of ideas, values and practices concerned with the production and reproduction of social relations, it should by now be obvious that respective ontologies are by any means global and have been so for quite some time.

One of the leading ontologies in the social sciences in the last two decades has been the paradigm of 'globalisation'. This ontology is characterised by the notion that the 1980s and 1990s were an era of global integration substantially different from earlier eras and thus stood out in history as unprecedented. Numerous scholars have capitalised on this notion and flooded the social sciences with evolutionary models of *deus ex machina* global integration. One of the main proponents was Arjun Appadurai, who tried to establish the notion of five 'scapes' along which the new global integration was established. His notion is a neologism composed of the spheres 'ethno-', 'media-', 'techno-', 'finance-' and 'ideo-' followed by the suffix '-scape'. Appadurai's claim was that a 'new global cultural economy' had emerged that was 'a complex, overlapping, disjunctive order that cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models'.[118] The problem with his model was that it was a lot more simple structured than most previous centre-periphery models and has since been dismissed on various grounds.[119] The central issue of concern to us is that all conceptions of a recently emerging 'new global cultural economy' obviously disregard earlier forms of global integration because of their teleological understanding of history and because of their misunderstanding of culture. This has had severe consequences for the understanding of tradition in academic circles. The illusion of traditions being produced, perpetuated and enacted by bounded entities in clearly defined geographical contexts has remained rampant across disciplines. For example, Giddens argued that the moral nature of tradition provides ontological security to those who adhere to it and concluded: 'Tradition is always in some sense rooted in contexts of origin or central places.'[120] Other scholars objected in line with the 'new' structures of global integration outlined by the globalisation paradigm that traditions are '(…) increasingly detached from their moorings in particular locales'.[121] This idea of increasing detachment of once fixed traditions challenges Giddens' claim that traditions are necessarily connected to some fixed geographical site on empirical grounds, but takes the overall idea that there was a time in the past when tradition was attached to a place for granted. Thompson argues in

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[118] Appadurai, 'Disjuncture and Difference', 32.

[119] For an insightful summary of the critique and the grave problems of the model see: Tsing, 'The Global Situation'. Globalisation as a distinctively new form of global integration is now often equated with neoliberalism and analytically replaced with the latter term. Historians locate the advent of globalisation in the nineteenth century for example (e.g. Bayly, *The Birth*).

[120] Giddens, 'Living in a Post-Traditional Society', 80.

[121] Thompson,'Tradition and Self in a Mediated World', 99.

the same vein of a once established and then uprooted place: '(…) traditions were gradually and partially de-localized, as they became increasingly dependent on mediated forms of communication for their maintenance and transmission from one generation to the next.'[122]

In this introduction we have so far presented numerous examples that show that traditions were invented and thus deterritorialised entities long before the advent of what some scholars have retrospectively labelled 'globalisation'. Traditions have been exposed to deterritorialisation from the very point of their emergence and the salience of political and economic motives within traditions exceeds analytical distinctions of space and identity alike. As in the debate around Chumash traditions, the discussion between Schmitt and Blumenberg about the legitimacy of the modern era or the question of the reconstruction of Gothic heritage in the Victorian era, many famed 'vernacular' traditions all over the world are the result of the 'circulation of traditions' long before they became associated with space and identity. But even after they have evolved into distinct social practices that are represented and perceived as belonging to certain places and people, traditions continue to circulate as they are transmitted from external to internal to external actors in processes of their (re-)negotiation among all these very same actors who are incorporated into numerous social and political settings at the same time.

'Who's Gonna Go to Hell?' – Some Concluding Remarks

Our theoretical discussion has come a long way since quoting the lines of the grunge rock song 'To Defy the Laws of Traditions' at the beginning of this paper – both in spatial and temporal terms. In the course of our deliberations on the spatio-temporal framing of traditions within complex political and economic structures we have discussed the neoliberal revival of traditions in the Western core of the capitalist world economy starting in the 1970s. This revival had implications beyond the Western world and has since led to the establishment of a 'tradition' industry that mass-produces traditions not only for the sake of sustaining elite hegemony, but as much for the very simple purpose of pecuniary gain. This industry covers both political and economic concerns on different levels of social complexity. It is the interactions within isolated layers of complexity that are too often the concern of scholars who study traditions and their invention. Instead, we have suggested to expand the investigation to include the interaction of mundane and scientific debates on traditions framed by the overall political economy of late modern capitalism. In order to develop a framework that can cover the multifarious ways in which traditions are invoked for political and economic ends, it was necessary to reconstruct the historical trajectory of discur-

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[122] Ibid.

sive and legal-political claims, which effected overall changes in the understanding of society and established the traditional-modern dichotomy.

Ours is certainly anything but the first account of these significant changes. But what we have tried to add to previous studies is first, to provide an analysis of traditionalist and conservative understandings of traditions as opposed to modernist and progressive approaches, and thus, to demonstrate the overwhelming range of purposes to which traditions may be instrumentalised. As the relative position of mundane and academic actors who invoke traditions as resources is connected to the respective wider political-economic structure which they are part of, there is indeed a way of dealing with the 'invention of tradition' debate beyond the 'genuine' versus 'invented' question. Not only does this perspective challenge orthodox notions of traditions as mere instruments of restoring the past to serve the interests of elites, but our approach also contests the common understanding of tradition as static, bounded and part of the tripod nexus of past, present and future. In the course of our reflections, we have also debunked the myth of territorialised traditions once (again) and (hopefully) for all by demonstrating the inherent circulatory nature that traditions possessed from the very point of their emergence.

In the first sections of this paper we have argued that the rise of the 'invention of tradition' paradigm coincided with a rise in tradition-based political agendas altering social contracts in Western societies. As the analytical deconstruction of traditions as invented spread into the social sciences after the publication of Hobsbawm and Ranger's edited volume, this rise in popularity met with the spread of alternations of social contracts in the classical non-European fields that are of concern for social anthropology for example. But instead of regarding the opposition of traditional or modern sets of social relations as two modes of being in the world, two 'ontologies' in Friedman's sense, many social scientists stick to a notion of culture as the factor determining social coherence and practice in the social settings that they examine. What is missing in these accounts are the concomitant changes in social contracts, concepts of the individual and ways of redistributing income in Western countries and on the peripheries of the world economy. Although these considerations might sound to many readers like flogging a dead horse, they are not. Even in 2009 it is common for example that panels at international conferences debate the question of Papua-New Guinean land rights as if the citizens of this nation-state had nothing at their disposal but oral accounts of which family or clan holds rights of access to certain plots of lands or other resources. Objections that there might be something such as a notion of codified laws and citizen-state interaction based on concepts of being modern are too often met with claims that if there ever were efforts to establish a modern era in Papua-New Guinea, these were of minor importance and rather to be located in some disrupted past, the 1950s for example, that had nothing to do with the 'cul-

ture' of Papua-New Guinean citizens.[123] By taking a very different route, we have shown that one can identify a resemblance of debates and frictions among the Chumash and among the workers of General Electric. Furthermore, these debates reveal structural similarities in earlier eras such as among high ranked philosophers of post-fascist Western Germany. By choosing this unusual variety of case studies, we have gone beyond Orientalist and Occidentalist notions of 'the rest and the West.' We hope that this will open up a perspective that may contribute to a liberation of the social sciences from the identity trap set up by the anti-imperialist nostalgia of the 1970s that turned the Wilsonian doctrine of the rights and self-determination of the people into a fetish of the global emancipation movement. It is time to move on to a new post-identitarian agenda of the social sciences as well as to address contemporary political demands and to understand that the allocation of rights to identity-based and thus fictionally homogenous social entities is the opposite of equality and liberty and hence counterproductive to emancipatory movements.

In line with this adjustment of the paradigm, we have established an explanatory framework for diverse notions of tradition that exceeds orthodox implications still lingering across disciplines in the social sciences, namely that the legitimacy of the very notion of tradition is to be taken for granted as something objective. We have shown that in many cases and across various periods of history, legislators and constructors of discourses that defined the concept of what constitutes tradition have been or were identical, thus depicting the inherent lack of rationality that characterises a concept that is often depicted as the very embodiment of coherence and legitimacy. In broader terms: By doing so, we have managed to deconstruct orthodox notions of social practices of the past. At the same time we have demonstrated the continued importance of the 'invention of tradition' paradigm and reconstructed tradition as a theoretical and practical notion by elucidating the variety of future-oriented uses, which tradition may be appropriated for and of which the five papers collected in this volume give vivid and intriguing accounts.

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[123] Personal observation ASA bi-annual conference, Bristol, UK, 8 April 2009.

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The Salience of Traditions, Inventions and Global Integration Compared: Japan and the Mascarene Islands

Patrick Neveling and Susanne Klien

> '*Wa* can be seen as a basic spirit regulating the way of life in a community. This spirit permeates our families, and our workplaces, not to mention our villages, cities, states, and today, the whole world. Needless to say, it is important to maintain *wa* in each of these communities. Today, maintaining world peace has become a basic condition for the survival of human beings. This fact reminds me that the spirit of *wa* advocated by Prince Shotoku has never been so relevant to our world as today.'[1]

> 'The island's historical legacy with colonization, immigration and slavery explain why community or folk management systems over inshore fishery resources never developed in Mauritius. There existed no tradition for community-based control and management and no demarcation of fishing areas associated with particular groups of people. Moreover, there were no local institutions controlling access to the resources.'[2]

These quotes refer to Japan and Mauritius, one of the Mascarene Islands. As the following comparison of these two groups of islands introducing the papers collected in this volume will show, their portrayal by social scientists can be regarded as delineating the two far ends of the debate on traditions and their invention. Japan is often depicted as extremely rich in tradition, being a centuries – if not millennia – old high culture par excellence and therefore literature concerned with Japanese traditions and their deconstruction is abundant. Regardless of whether the practices, values or symbols considered 'typically Japanese' – *sumo* wrestling, *geisha* services, or *samurai* values – are old or recent, what does come as a surprise is that so many contributions in the field of Japanese studies and related disciplines continue to 'invest in the "shock value" that results from historicizing venerable Japanese traditions.'[3] In line with this canonical approach, several monographs, compilations and numerous papers are basically applications of the invention paradigm to Japan.[4] The majority of contributions to the now ca-

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[1]   Tamaki Koshiro cited in Ito, 'The Invention of Wa and the Transformation of the Image of Prince Shotoku in Modern Japan', 38.

[2]   Hollup, 'Structural and Socio-Cultural Constraints', 411.

[3]   Bender, 'Drumming Between Tradition and Modernity', 34.

[4]   Antoni (ed.), *Rituale und ihre Urheber: Invented Traditions in der japanischen Religionsgeschichte*; Vlastos (ed.), *Mirror of Modernity*; Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*; Robertson, 'It takes a Village'; Creighton, 'Consuming Rural Japan'; Kelly, 'Rationalization and Nostalgia';

nonical compilation *Mirror of Modernity*, published in 1998, content themselves with proving that the traditions examined are not that traditional.[5] As we will argue in the following paragraphs, this excessive concern with the historio-graphy of traditions can be explained by the fact that the academic interest in the selective handling and appropriation of tradition emerged out of post-war studies that focused on the modernisation paradigm and sought to explore processes of westernisation and industrialisation in Japan.[6]

Mauritius, Réunion and the other Mascarene Islands instead would be nearly blank spots if one drew a world map of places studied for their traditions and invented traditions. If authors – as in the quote above – mention the word tradition in regard to these islands in the Western Indian Ocean, they usually point out the absence of traditions because all the islands were uninhabited before European colonisation. One of the best known ethnographic studies on Mauritius, the otherwise strongly ethnicity and culture focused book *Common Denominators* by Thomas Eriksen, neither mentions 'tradition' in the index nor does the author relate any of his considerations on religious and ethnic divisions to traditions.[7] Eisenlohr, the main proponent of the tradition genre in both Mauritius and Réunion (on which there is no publications on tradition), does not take any notice of the possibility of traditions being invented.[8] He points out that Mascarene islanders are usually portrayed 'as subjects with origins elsewhere and ongoing commitments to traditions whose diasporic character is highlighted' and juxtaposes these approaches by referring to the existence of 'indigenous' traditions stemming from the local 'Creole culture'.[9] Authors from fields such as biotechnology, who are less concerned with sedentarist ideologies of bounded cultures, have instead labelled 200 years of growing sugar cane as a 'tradition'. Economists have identified the close cooperation of the Mauritian public and private sector in foreign economic diplomacy as a tradition.[10] Thus, whereas there is a large body of research on Japanese traditions and their invention guided by a view on the island as a homogeneous 'traditional' culture that has successfully undergone modernisa-

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Law, *Puppets of Nostalgia*; Martinez, 'Tourism and the Ama'; Moon, *From Paddy Field to Ski Slope*; Schnell, *The Rousing Drum*; Shirane and Suzuki, *Inventing the Classics*.

5   For example, Gordon ('The Invention of Japanese-style Management') discusses the invention of Japanese-style labour management, exposing alleged unique social traditions such as 'familyism' or paternalism in Japanese enterprises as hastily invented concepts with the advent of modern industry. Inoue ('The Invention of the Martial Arts') analyses the invention of Japanese martial arts, providing an example of *jûdo* being reinvented as a counter to Western values and to symbolise Japan's modern national identity with the rise of militarism and ultranationalism.

6   Klien, *Rethinking Japan's Identity*.

7   Eriksen, *Common Denominators*.

8   See especially: Eisenlohr, 'As Makkah is Sweet and Beloved'.

9   Eisenlohr, 'The Politics of Diaspora', 395.

10 Puchooa, 'Biotechnology in Mauritius', 112; Stoler, 'Mauritius: Co-Operation in an Economy Evolving for the Future,' 26.

tion, Mauritius and Réunion have so far rarely been subject to studies on traditions and their invention. Instead, research on the islands is ridden with a postmodernist multiculturalist angle buying in to nation-building ideologies of so-called rainbow nations whose populations are divided along the lines of cultures stemming from elsewhere.

On the following pages we compare these rather dissimilar island societies and examine how their changing integration into the capitalist world economy has affected social and political structures and particularly fictions of tradition, culture and belonging.

Political Structures, Histories of Global Integration and Vested Notions of Tradition in Japan

Japan held its own within the China centred world economy before European colonial powers gained economic and political control in East Asia in the nineteenth century. Succinctly, the nation tried to close off its internal market in order to avoid European domination. But the Japanese ruling class inverted this policy of what one might call 'unsplendid isolation' after the forced opening of the country by the US-American General Perry in 1853 and became eager to prove to the West that Japan was equally strong in diplomatic, economic, political and cultural terms. Again, the motivation behind this policy was to prevent the subordination to external powers, but this time Japan adopted measures to ensure Westernisation, which have often been described as 'internalized colonization'.[11] The national curriculum was 'modernised' and 'westernised'.[12] Western-style clothes became fashionable among the Japanese upper class, which held balls in European style buildings and encouraged the population to adopt 'beneficial' Western habits like eating meat. Particularly the latter call to abandon a practice that had been prohibited for more than a thousand years indicates that like in many other places, the encounter with the hostile West went beyond economic and political changes and affected all aspects of everyday life – even long held ritual practices. Thus, it was no wonder when the enthusiasm for 'modernisation' in the 1860s and 1870s was followed by a backlash in the 1880s and 1890s.

Seen in this manner, Westernisation and traditionalism in nineteenth century Japan were two sides of the same coin and – following the framework developed in our theoretical introduction – both can be interpreted as ontologies subscribing

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[11] Yoshioka, 'Samurai and Self-Colonization in Japan'.

[12] Karatani, 'Japan as Museum', 33.

to an imagination of a homogeneous Western regime and discourse.[13] Keeping these accounts of the Schmitt-Blumenberg debate and Morris' efforts to establish a countertradition to Victorian historicism in mind, it is nevertheless important to remember that the legitimacy of the modern era was as contested in Western societies as it was in Japan. Thus, what was subject to the Japanese debates during the nineteenth century was, following our theoretical framework, a highly occidentalist and selective version of modernity very much in a way as the traditionalist Chumash selected religious and cultural practices in order to claim rights of ownership to parts of the Californian coast. As the papers by Christoph Brumann, Susanne Klien and Cornelia Reiher in this volume show, self-reflections by the Japanese about their country, history and culture continue to reaffirm, but also to instrumentalise to its respective ends the fiction of a Western discursive regime that could be contested until today.

Although the question of how this pattern of Orientalist and Occidentalist fictions informing Japanese nation-building and everyday life has emerged can hardly be discussed in detail here, we suggest the following line of analysis: The integration of Western features into nineteenth century Japanese society might have seemed voluntary – but ultimately it was anything but that. As not all strata of society fell victim to Western domination, instead a series of crosscutting alliances emerged that transcended the constructed contradiction of Japan and the West. Both the reforms and the backlash following the country's opening to global trade were as beneficial to factions within the ruling class as the Japanese integration into the world economy after the Second World War would prove to be. In these more than 150 years, the country's history has seen many instances of 'national traditions' being constituted and propagated for the sake of establishing national cohesion and boosting national morale. During the two world wars the self-sacrifice by *kamikaze* pilots dying for their divine Emperor was a case in point. During waves of expansion, the Japanese economy tapped on an internal labour market with employees dedicating their life for the sake of the company work and dying of *karôshi* (overwork) as a result. Examples are many and all of them have been instrumentalised for political or economic purposes at the level of domestic but also foreign politics.

On the other hand, there are striking cases of how 'national traditions' have been constituted outside Japan by Western societies – in films and novels for example. The origins of these modern myths about Japan might be manifold but the ex-

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[13] These developments may be regarded as an early form of Occidentalism in the Orient with the Japanese ruling class introducing a number of reforms based on the fiction of a rational (and therefore superior) Western capitalism. The reforms were of course highly selective and excluded among many other widespread 'Western' practices the introduction of the English gin laws, the male circumcision practices of many inhabitants of the Western hemisphere or the introduction of the anti-scrape movement discussed in our theoretical introduction (see Neveling and Klien, 'Tradition', this volume).

tremely high growth rates of the country's economy in the second half of the twentieth century have definitely been one decisive factor. Whereas in the immediate post-war period, export products were not designated as Japanese due to the country's negative international image, this changed with the onset of the 1970s. The waning fortunes of the heavy industry in the United States were partially brought about by Japanese car producers advancing on the US markets. As a result of the 1973 oil crisis, Japanese imports of Toyota and Nissan started to replace models by American producers, a tendency which enforced anti-Japanese sentiment and 'Japan bashing' in the United States. As economic growth continued throughout the 1980s, the country gained weight within the international order and formed part of the G7 group of the world leading economies. Concomitant with the image of the rising star and global role model for factory regimes and management techniques based on the *kaizen* principle, negative images of a 'yellow menace' grounded in unfair trade practices, obscure and mafia-like networks and ruthless foreign trade policies emerged.

Numerous US-American novels and movies feature the inevitably ruthless, conspirative, clan-like, morally invirtuous Japanese villain. Often Chinese and Japanese people would be mixed up to the level of the two nationalities becoming indistinguishable and bracketed only by their opposition to the ethical (and economic) system of the West. Most famous examples from popular fiction were Michael Crichton's 'Rising Sun' (1992) and Tom Clancy's 'Debt of Honour' (1994). Hand in hand with Japan's growing economic wealth and reputation, business communities would develop an interest in the secrets behind Japan's economic success. As a result, numerous books by self-nominated US-American experts for Japanese business strategies were published. All these authors claimed the existence of typical 'national social practices' such as industrial paternalism, family-ism and the like.[14] In retrospective, Japan's economic success story was either interpreted as a result of some culturally contingent spiritual secret or as a result of ruthless conspiratory networks.

Given this historical background of mutual imagination-based interaction between Japan and the West, it is interesting to note that numerous studies on the invention of traditions in Japan have dealt with their construction out of political interests, typically addressing the national level and locating the enforcement of a national identity in the mid-nineteenth century. The invention of mythologies legitimising ruling authorities falls into this category, with imperial ancestry being a salient feature here.[15] At first sight, the paper by Cornelia Reiher adds on to the number of contributions exploring the strategic use of the past for economic pur-

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[14]   Gordon, 'The Invention of Japanese-Style Labor Management'. Popular titles were for example Vogel, *Japan as Number One*, and Johnson, *MITI and the Japanese Economic Miracle*.

[15]   Gluck, *Japan's Modern Myths*.

poses.[16] The revival of Arita ware in a Japanese district otherwise struck by migration to the urban centres is a classical example of the nexus between the rural development, the marketing of tradition and the interests of domestic tourism industries.[17] As many other studies, Reiher is concerned with the appropriation of rural traditions. But in her study, it is not the construction of the countryside and agrarian practices portrayed as the origin of Japanese cultural identity that is at the centre of marketing campaigns. Reiher points to what she calls an 'infrastructure of Japanese traditions' that frames and enables the success of the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival. Thus, whereas numerous scholars both Japanese and non-Japanese have embraced the idea of referring to exemplary traits of the past as a panacea for contemporary insecurities hovering in the background, this account of a commercial and traditional event highlights the de- and reterritorialisation of traditions in consumption patterns. In line with the Deleuzian argument of the coalescence of past, presence and future presented in our theoretical introduction, Reiher's example follows up on Robertson's distinction between the chronological and the imaginary levels.[18] The concept of *furusato* or native place, which refers to elements of parochialism, nostalgia and protectionism in the establishment of cultural and traditional roots, is rather shaped by a pre-modern industrial practice, the production of ceramics in Arita. Thus, Robertson's argument that 'native place-making is the process by which *furusato* is evoked into existence as a political project through which experiences and memories are shaped and socially reproduced' is elaborated further by Reiher ranging both into the sphere of rural development regimes and into the production of community along the lines of cashing in revenues to revive the village economy.

This reading of 'native place-making' can also be extended to the whole of the Japanese nation, as the paper by Susanne Klien shows. Expanding Ivy's reflection of Arendt's notion that '(...) insofar as authority presents itself historically, it becomes tradition',[19] Klien reveals the 'relay of temporal deferral'[20] within the Japanese book market. Her paper discusses Masahiko Fujiwara's *The Dignity of the State*, a book that has been among the most successful ones on the Japanese market in recent years. Very much like the election campaigns of Reagan referred to in our theoretical introduction, this taps on a 'rich conservative vein' of readers concerned with the fate of the Japanese nation and culture. It may come as a surprise that this case study, which is concerned with the least exotic realm of the

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[16] Moeran, *Lost Innocence*, Moon, *From Paddy Field to Ski Slope*, Creighton, 'Consuming Rural Japan', Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*, Knight, 'Rural Revitalization in Japan', Reiher, this volume.

[17] For examples and a general debate see: Bianchi, 'Place and Power in Tourism Development'; Clancy, *Exporting Paradise*; Neveling and Wergin, 'Projects of Scale-Making'.

[18] Robertson, 'It Takes A Village', 115.

[19] Arendt, 'Introduction', 38.

[20] Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*, 22.

social among the papers presented in this volume, the national book market, presents the bluntest effort to establish homogenising notions of culture and tradition. Given the importance of claims to ownership in the appropriation and invention of traditions, it is obvious that the least difficult claim to make pertains to the imaginary level of the nation as an invented community.[21]

Ben-Ari has observed that in general, outsiders, i.e. scholars, folklore experts, journalists, television producers and the like, authorise and validate local customs by finding them worthy of documentation.[22] Klien's example instead shows that it is sometimes difficult to maintain the notion of outsiders and insiders altogether, despite of Fujiwara's persistent efforts to enact and perpetuate difference. Fujiwara, the author of *The Dignity of the State*, might be regarded as an outsider, because he has spent a substantial part of his lifetime abroad – in the USA. But his claim that everything related to 'Japanese' lifestyle, heritage and thought had been dismissed for decades – despite its apparent supremacy over Western ways of being and stated in a surprisingly similar way as during the backlash following the nineteenth century Meiji restoration – is informed by an ontology that reverses to 'tradition' as a positive value only by establishing a novel form of subscription to the discourse of praise (and ensuing exoticism) that had been initiated by Westerners. Similarly, in the Japan of the 1930s, traditionalism became the fashion again in the literary world, with renowned writers such as Tanizaki Junichiro or Kawabata Yasunari converting from Westernisation to traditionalism not for nostalgia but because the latter was deemed *avantgarde*. Both trends to reevaluate 'native' traditions which might as well be discarded as outmoded and irrelevant for contemporary life can be interpreted as an inversion of Morris' nineteenth century effort to establish an understanding of tradition to promote a particular historically informed ontology of progress.[23] To put it differently, the success of invoking traditions within mainstream social and cultural practices has been neglected in invention analyses to date – meaning that there is an essentialism in approaches that too often focus on marginal groups or practices in order to trace invented traditions.

Just like in most other countries, Hobsbawm and Ranger's paradigm has seen diverse application in Japan, both with regard to the time period of cases as well as the locations dealt with.[24] Hara poignantly observes that in Japanese folklore studies, the 'invention of tradition' paradigm has been popular as a key concept, but has rarely been scrutinised until now.[25] An emphasis on tradition in the con-

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[21] See Neveling and Klien, 'Tradition', this volume.

[22] Ben-Ari, 'Uniqueness, Typicality, and Appraisal'.

[23] See Neveling and Klien, 'Tradition', this volume.

[24] For the initial publication referred to see: Hobsbawm and Ranger (eds.), *The Invention Of Tradition*.

[25] Hara, 'Saigen sarenakatta densetsu', 41.

text of political praxis at the national level has gone hand in hand with the conventional view of traditions being invented for the sake of boundary definition and social cohesion.[26] In this sense, most of the contributions contained in the above-mentioned compilation edited by Vlastos also seem overly faithful to Hobsbawm and Ranger's trope of hegemonial elites successfully instrumentalising the past to their political interests.[27]

In an extension of both Ivy's and Robertson's interpretations of romanticised traditional village life as efforts by urbanites to establish alternatives to metropolitan lifestyles, Christoph Brumann's contribution to this volume shows, that both historical town houses and festivals of urban Kyoto are as well suited to establish such alternatives to everyday routines. But not only is the field he has chosen different from where the two authors mentioned above studied traditions, his findings differ as much. Robertson concludes that urban interpretations of rural life constitute an effort to compensate for the ontological anxiety of loss,[28] arguing that internationalisation and nostalgia embodied by *furusato* are not antithetical but are two mutually constitutive modalities of modernity.[29] Ivy, too, deals with the role of nostalgia and places Japanese traditions into a 'structure of phantasm'.[30] Brumann's examples are real world objects and practices instead of epistemological ones and the presence or absence of these can be definitely located. Thus, he depicts the appropriation and perpetuation of tradition at the local level as predominantly non-political by exposing the multiplicity of individual reasons and motives behind engagement for tradition perpetuation. In this study of Kyoto, traditions are testimonies and positive embodiments of social change supported by the social weight of the abundant written and oral documentation that exists and prevents too radical reinterpretation and departure. The actors in Kyoto – be they local or non-local – are embedded in social contexts that produce the very ontologies informing Latour's statement that 'one is not born traditional; one chooses to become traditional by constant innovation'.[31] However, as in the other two cases of Japanese traditions presented here, these choices for Kyotoites are framed by what Reiher has categorised as an infrastructure for Japanese traditions and by no means free floating signifiers as Latour might want to make us believe.

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[26] Compare Brumann, 'Traditionen und Kulturerbe in der Japanforschung'.

[27] Ito, quoted at the beginning of this article, for example, focuses on the invention of the spirit of *wa* or Japanese collectivism as a cultural trait and applies the invention paradigm without elaborating on issues such as multiple agency.

[28] Robertson, 'It Takes a Village', 118.

[29] Ibid., 128.

[30] Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*, 22.

[31] Latour, *Nous n'avons jamais été modernes*, 103.

Rooted and Routed Traditions in Mauritius and Réunion as Substitutes to Political and Economic Equality

As argued above, traditions do not rank high on the research agenda of Mauritius and Réunion. Part of the reason for this low prioritization is that both islands were integrated into the capitalist world economy as truly empty spaces. Possibly because there were no inhabitants who needed to be dispossessed of their land rights in the enlightened Lockean manner discussed in our theoretical introduction, the early days of settlement are hardly anything one could be proud of looking back at. After the first Dutch and French ships had taken possession of Mauritius and Réunion, the settlers that would follow were a bunch of mainly lower class males that had been expelled from Europe by the turmoils of internal wars and economic crisis.[32] Both islands' economies only gained significant economic relevance in the nineteenth century when sugar plantations fully integrated the colonies into the world economy's market for agricultural products. But despite significant economic growth in the nineteenth century and the temporary presence of important scientists such as French physiocrats or Charles Darwin and Matthew Flinders, no one would seriously try to present these two European colonial creations as examples of the enlightenment.[33] Since the early days of settlement, the labour force in these two 'European ultraperipheries'[34] had been supplemented with slaves bought at various markets in the Indian Ocean. When slavery was abolished in Mauritius in 1835 and 1848 in Réunion respectively, both colonies opted for the import of indentured labourers from Asia. Within this setting, traditions were hardly relevant for political and economic life. In Mauritius, the main issues were instead the continuing dispute between the British who had captured the islands during the Napolean Wars in 1810 and the French-speaking white elite who ran the plantations. The latter persisted in a lifestyle that rather matched with the French society of absolutism than with a rapidly expanding colonial economy that quickly became the largest producer of sugar cane in the British Empire.[35] Only when the late colonial states in Mauritius and Réunion opened the political systems for the participation of non-European groups, issues of ethnic identity shifted from the race-based hierarchies of the plantations to the public sphere.[36] As Mauritius was granted independence in

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[32] See Moree, *A Concise History of Dutch Mauritius*, for an account of the living conditions of the inhabitants of this colony between 1598 and 1710, which never exceeded 300. Vaughan, *Creating a Creole Island*, has analysed both the patterns of settlement and the French colonial period for Mauritius.

[33] For the physiocrats see ibid. and also Gudeman, 'Physiocracy: A Natural Economics'. For Darwin and Flinders see: Anderson, *Convicts in the Indian Ocean*.

[34] Wergin, this volume.

[35] Boudet, 'La Construction Politique'; Neveling, 'A Periodisation of Globalisation'.

[36] Storey, 'Small-Scale Sugar Cane Farmers'.

1968 and Réunion saw the establishment of a more democratic structure with the demise of de Gaulle's military regime in the French heartland, the political participation of all strata of the population emerged. But as the papers by Steffen Johannessen and Carsten Wergin published in this volume show, the political arenas of both islands were dominated by debates contesting the legitimacy of colonial labour exploitation and injustices in the 1970s rather than concerned with developing national identifications to counter Western economic and political hegemony.

As argued above, the anthropologist Patrick Eisenlohr implicitly distinguishes true 'diasporic traditions' from those promoted as 'ancestral cultures' such as the teaching of Sanskrit language or Hindu and Tamil ritual practices by the postcolonial Mauritian state.[37] Both Steffen Johannessen's paper and Carsten Wergin's paper are clear indications of the strong effect this absence of the possibility to base traditions and ensuing identifications on sedentary ideologies had particularly on the subaltern movements on Mauritius and Réunion. Secondly, Mauritius and Réunion are highly politicised arenas and both papers show how strongly political struggles have informed cultural expressions located in the realms of music and dance.

Wergin is concerned with the political and economic use of music on Réunion, where the musical styles from all those regions, which the slaves and contract labourers had been imported from blended into Maloya. These to some degree reggae-like songs were first promoted and recorded (entitled: 'Document No 1 Aout 1976') in the political offices of the Réunionese Communist Party on an island-wide scale. Based on the history of one particular group of musicians, Wergin shows how Maloya was at first a medium into the past. At so-called *fêtes des témoignages* (festivals of witnessing), the history of exploitation and deprivation was recalled to contest continuities of political oppression in the present. This verbal re-enactment established a virtual present in the Deleuzian sense of past-present-future collapse outlined in our theoretical introduction and the example shows how this served to firstly contest the legitimacy of modern 1950s Réunion and secondly, to create political unity striving for an improvement of life in the future.

Very much like political movements in Réunionese history, Mauritian politics saw the rise of a strong socialist opposition shortly after independence in 1968. The Chagossians, a group from an archipelago once part of the British colony Mauritius that were expelled when a US military base was set up, entered this political scenario as exiles placed in the lower classes of Mauritian society. As their eviction had been tolerated by the postcolonial Mauritian government in exchange for a lump sum payment and the promise of preferential access for Mauritian export goods to the European markets, they did not have any other option

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[37] Eisenlohr, 'As Makkah is Sweet and Beloved'.

but to turn to the socialist opposition and for some years were strongly involved with this movement's ways of protesting in public and going on hunger strikes. But from the early days on, the Chagossians were also approached by elements of the ruling parties that were much more interested in proclaiming a Mauritian unity in diversity (the same slogan plays an important role in Wergin's paper too) based on cultural difference rather than in striving for the citizens' equality.

After analysing the years of vibrant socialist opposition, both authors then move on to analyse how a shift from a non-tradition based interest in the global framework of socialist politics during the Cold War evolves into the pursuit of a tradition-based approach. These moves position the Chagossians as well as the Réunionese musicians within alternative global frameworks: In the first case the evictees enter into what Johannessen labels in line with Comaroff's term an 'ethnically ordered world' within which they have to make their claim for compensation and the potential right to return. But the legal procedures of the United Nations Convention for the Rights of Indigenous People as well as of the British courts are, as Johannessen argues, informed by a sedentarist ideology. Thus, the Chagossians, who are actually descendants of slaves and contract labourers from all over the Indian Ocean and beyond, face the problem of how to attach their routed roots to the archipelago from where they were deported. They do so by establishing traditions, after an initial impetus from a 'traditionalist' anthropologist employed at a university in Great Britain. These traditions are essential assets for their claim that there had been a homogeneous society in place in the Chagos islands. Secondly, demonstrating that these traditions were on the verge of extinction as a result of their eviction establishes an accusation directed at the British and US governments mounting into allegations of cultural genocide.

For the Réunionese musicians instead, traditions are of lesser importance as the group Baster splits and the remaining members depart from the socialist cause to enter the realm and market of World Music. In contrast to the case of the Chagossians, the collective here is a much smaller entity and furthermore is engaged with attracting new customers instead of the global NGO scene (although there might be an overlap of actual individuals in these two different groups). Their move of going global also happens in the early 1980s and is informed by individual interests and personal aims to professionalise the output - something that, as the leading musician explains in an interview with Wergin, would have been impossible had their audience remained confined to the small Réunionese market. Thus, whereas the Chagossians move towards an increasing sameness of the 'ethnic' collective as they depart the larger (but nevertheless disintegrating) infrastructure of the Mauritian socialist opposition, the group Baster moves towards an increasing difference in global terms as the musicians strive for a sound that gives them particularity via the adaptation of an all-time classic of the messianic Rastafari movement, Bob Marley's 'Redemption Song'.

These two different trajectories perfectly embody a global division of labour emerging in regard to routedness and rootedness. Within the realm of consumption, there is an ever-increasing need for hybridity producing new forms of consumable and exotic traditions. Within the realm of rights and allocations however, the prevalence of an ethnically ordered world for the dispossessed only promises hopes of allocation. For the Chagossians, very much as for the traditionalist Chumash featuring prominently in our theorical introduction, these allocations depend on the successful establishment of a past-present-future trajectory within which they look back at a golden age of social interaction – no matter how cynical this might seem given that their ancestors were slaves and indentured labourers on some remote and backward islands in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Thus, as in the case of urban traditions in Kyoto, the promotion of Arita ware and the writings of Fujiwara, we find frameworks making the multifarious ways in which traditions are revived, defrosted, invented and even discarded. The driving forces behind these frameworks operate on different scales, sometimes on the individual, the local, the collective, the regional, the ethnic, the national, the cosmopolitan or the global scale – sometimes they operate on a mixture of these layers of complexity and as a rule, the spatial dimension of social practices apt to be turned into traditions is coupled with temporal features. The combinations of these are what we have called, in line with Friedman's understanding, ontologies in our introductory contribution to this volume.

In line with the arguments in our theoretical introduction, our summary of the contributions has highlighted the nexus of ontologies informing spatial as well temporal notions of tradition in Japan and the Mascarenes. Given the extensive number of case studies and theoretical contributions that have already been published on traditions and their invention, this volume is anything but an exhaustive account of the mundane qualities of these sociopolitical phenomena and their effects on scientific debates. Authored by four anthropologists and two Japanese studies scholars, the six papers nevertheless open up fresh conceptual ground for the debate on traditions as the two regions represented, Japan and the Mascarene islands, are somewhat prototypical examples of the extremes within this debate. As we have discussed in the respective sections, Japan is often portrayed as ridden with traditions because of its long history of relative seclusion, whereas the Mascarenes are often portrayed as lacking traditions because the islands had not been settled before the first colonisers arrived in the seventeenth century. We hope that the individual contributions give further insights into the appropriateness of both Japan and the Mascarene Islands as sites for analysing the 'circulation of traditions' in the global political economy.

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From Socialist Uprising to Cultural Genocide: The Emergence of Traditions in Chagossian Struggles for Repatriation

Steffen F. Johannessen

Introduction

In their now seminal volume published in 1983, *The Invention of Tradition*, Hobsbawm and Ranger suggest approaching social practices coined and celebrated as traditions from a political-historical perspective.[1] Although appearing as if passed on from mists of time, closer examination shows that practices identified as traditions are often invented at certain moments in history to serve particular political purposes. Once formally instituted, the authors argue, traditions tend to take on a conservative force that contributes to the production of social cohesion of desired group formations (such as nation-state citizens), legitimising authority and institutions, and inculcating certain beliefs, values, and patterns of behaviour. Directing attention away from the political economy, invented traditions may serve as a preventive political instrument for the ruling classes of society. However, not only those in power employ traditions for political purposes. In order to enhance their unfavourable socio-economic situations, an increasing number of subaltern groups mobilise by turning to traditions in order to be recognised as culturally distinct. As Comaroff once put it: '[E]thnic and nationalist struggles – in fact, identity politics sui generis – are (re)making the history of our age with a vengeance'.[2] While traditions in such projects also are invented to serve purposes of inclusion and exclusion they do not aim at upholding a status quo. Rather, traditions become an instrument of resistance, called upon as means to bring about change. To be awarded compensation or other forms of positive discrimination for injustices suffered from in the past, social actors invoke traditions to rewrite their histories and thereby underscore claims to be recognised as a culturally distinct category of people.

This article draws on the example of the former inhabitants of one of the remotest and heavily militarised island groups of the world – the Chagos Archipelago.[3]

To make way for a major US military base in the centre of the Indian Ocean during the Cold War, British authorities expelled and deported the archipelago's entire population, approximately 2000 inhabitants, to Mauritius and the Seychelles. Limiting the scope to the evicted islanders now residing in Mauritius, this paper explores the absence and emergence of Chagossian traditions in the course of their political struggles for repatriation and compensation. Although Hobsbawm found it fruitful to distinguish between 'genuine' and 'invented' traditions, I am less concerned with debating the 'authenticity' of such practices.[4] Borrowing Bourdieu's conceptual distinction between 'categories of analysis', as scientific categorisations of social practices for analytical purposes, and 'categories of practice', as practices classified and reflected upon by the actors studied, this article shows how traditions have moved from the first dimension to the latter in the course of the Chagossian struggles.[5] The group claimed that after their evictions, they ceased to practice what they later crowned as their most central tradition: a musical performance called the Chagossian *sega*. But before claiming compensation along the lines of 'cultural genocide', the Chagossians enjoyed the support of a nationwide socialist uprising in Mauritius during the 1970s, which brought them two minor compensation payments from the British government. Only when the socialist movement ceased to exist, the *sega* once practiced in the Chagos was reintroduced and took on relevance *qua tradition*. Thus, the group submitted to a wider framework of what Comaroff has coined an 'ethnically ordered world'.[6]

As this paper argues, such an order rests on a wider sedentarist ideology that presupposes 'cultures' and 'identities' to be embedded in particular places.[7] Within this ideology, cultural genocide seems to follow as an *a priori* logical consequence of physical displacement. Hence, when displaced populations submit to the framework of an ethnically ordered world to embark on a struggle for cultural recognition, they may quickly find themselves starting to fight a now desperate struggle against a new form of suffering, cultural genocide. But then the following problem arises: How to convince any audience of *post-facto* cultural genocide? To show how this dilemma has emerged and how the Chagos islanders have since then tried to solve it, I will first give a brief historical outline of their struggle. The two following sections explore how changing socio-political circumstances both within the community and in Mauritius first led to the absence and

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[4] Hobsbawm, 'Introduction', 8.

[5] Bourdieu, 'Identity and Representation', 220–8.

[6] Comaroff, 'Ethnicity'.

[7] Malkki, 'National Geographic'; 'Refugees and Exile'; 'Speechless Emissaires'.

then to the reintroduction of Chagossian traditions. The next part discusses the contradictions arising from the interaction of the Chagossians as a displaced population with a legal global order that is based on the above outlined sedentarist ideology of territorialised cultures. In the last section, I explore how the islanders have managed to consolidate the contradiction between being displaced and therefore claiming that they have been deprived of their culture and the need to prove the existence of a Chagossian culture by appealing to a continuous practice of their traditions, in particular the *sega*.

The Background to Chagossians' Expulsion: A Brief Historical Overview

The Chagos Archipelago consists of clusters of tropical coral atolls spread across the Great Chagos Bank located in the middle of the Indian Ocean. The islands were first occupied by French colonisers coming from Isle de France (now Mauritius' main island), who arrived in the late eighteenth century to extract profit from the local coconut resources. To be exploited in the production of copra and coconut oil, enslaved people from Madagascar and the Mozambique region were brought to the Archipelago. In 1815 the Chagos Islands passed on to British hands as a dependency of colonial Mauritius. With the abolition of slavery in 1835, indentured labourers from British India provided the plantations with an additional workforce. As the mode of production changed to wage-based employment, many former slaves remained with local industries. Organised in a quasi-feudal manner, the companies provided food rations, transport, housing materials, and ran shops. Over the years, the descendants of the indentured labourers were integrated into the local economy and adopted Catholic beliefs.[8]

Life and production on the isolated islands continued with relatively few changes until British authorities closed down the industries and began to expel the entire population in the mid-1960s. This rapid change was closely connected to the escalation of the Cold War, because of which US officials sought to establish a strategic military base in the Indian Ocean region and approached the British government for a site undisturbed by local populations and unpredictable political leaders of newly independent states. To meet US requests, Britain excised the Chagos Islands from the colony of Mauritius in 1965 and founded a new colony named the British Indian Ocean Territory (BIOT). It took until 1973 for the entire population of 2000 islanders to be deported to Mauritius and the Seychelles. Since these operations were not in accordance with international agreements as drawn up by the United Nations, UK officials sought to circumvent responsibility by redefining and representing the inhabitants of the Chagos Islands as a 'floating population' of contract workers. Thus, they presented the operation not

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[8] Scott, Limuria: The Lesser Dependencies; Walker, Zaffer pe Sanze.

as an eviction of a settled population, but as a 'return' of a group of temporary workers to Mauritius and the Seychelles upon the termination of their employment. The similarly problematic issue of redefining the colonial borders of Mauritius was settled by ensuring consent from the Mauritian political elite with the repeated offer of independence and of a £3 million compensation.[9]

As the course of history would show, these decisions had a devastating impact on most of the evicted families. Since their expulsion was an exercise directly related to Mauritian decolonisation, they arrived on an island struck by a series of communal riots over the issue of independence.[10] Ousted from homes, steady employment, and personal properties, no resettlement scheme was initiated for them in the early days. Even when the British government provided £ 650,000 to meet expenses for a Chagossian resettlement in 1972, Mauritian authorities impeded the distribution of the money until 1978. At their arrival, most Chagossians were illiterate and lacked the skills necessary to compete within the severely pressed Mauritian labour market. According to a 1985 report issued by *The Minority Rights Group*: 'By mid-1975, most of the Ilois [i.e. "Islanders", the Creole term *Ilwa* and the French term *Îlois* have designated people living in the Chagos since the nineteenth century, S.F.J.] were living in gross poverty; many were housed in shacks, most of them lacked enough food, compensation had not been paid to them; at least 1 in 40 had died of starvation and disease'.[11] A survey conducted by a Mauritian social worker identified prostitution, alcohol and drug abuse, aggression, and suicide as responses to the deprivation.[12] Although the misery and poverty of the 1970s were expressed and contested in a wave of public demonstrations and hunger strikes leading to an additional £4 million compensation granted by the UK government in 1982, the Chagossians continued their struggle for the right to return and for further compensation in various ways. Even today, the impact of what happened to the group is still very evident in their every day life as the majority of the Chagos islanders still inhabit the poorest sections of the Mauritian population. Since the late 1990s, the Chagos islanders have been involved in a 10-year litigation process against the UK government. In November 2000, the London High Court quashed the unlawful BIOT immigration ordinances that prevented the evicted islanders from returning to the Chagos. But in 2004 the UK government issued new immigration restrictions to the BIOT. Chagossians were successful in challenging also these orders, but on 22 October 2008, the UK House of Lords ruled contrary to every preceding judgment and appeal and upheld the immigration ordinances that criminalised the return of the

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[9]   L'Estrac, Report of the Select Committee; Curtis, 'Diego Garcia'; Pilger, 'Stealing a Nation'; Jawatkar, Diego Garcia in International Diplomacy; Vine, Empire's Footprint.

[10] In the 1967 elections, a striking 44 percent of the population voted against independence. See Houbert, 'Mauritius: Independence and Dependence'.

[11] Madley, 'Diego Garcia', 12.

[12] Botte, The 'Ilois' Community and the 'Ilois' Women.

Chagossians to their homeland (see Figure 1). Meanwhile, the sole militarised island in the archipelago has resumed centre stage in successive Middle East conflicts as US military attacks in Afghanistan and Iraq have been launched from the base on Diego Garcia.[13] The following sections will give a more detailed outline of the turns that the contest over the Chagos Archipelago has taken.

Figure 1: The leader of the Chagos Refugees Group outside the organisation's office in Cassis, Port Louis. In the run-up to the first communal return in March 2006, the entrance was decorated with maps of the Chagossian homeland: Diego Garcia, Peros Banhos, and the Salomon Islands. (Photo: Johannessen 2006)

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[13] Collen and Kistnasamy, 'Lalit Dimunn Ordiner'; Curtis, 'Diego Garcia'; Vine, *Empire's Footprint*.

Phase 1: Protests Within the Framework of A Socialist Uprising

As has been pointed out, representatives of the expelled population have militated for compensation and the right to return ever since arriving in Mauritius.[14] When the final boatload of evictees reached Port Louis harbour in 1973, passengers refused to disembark the BIOT cargo vessel when learning that arrangements in Mauritius, promised upon their departure, were not being facilitated. Having been left to fight for themselves, 422 evicted families petitioned the UK government in 1975 for plots of land, housing, and employment, and reported on 40 persons who had already died of poverty. On 9 September 1975 the petition was reprinted in the *Washington Post*. This was the first report on the eviction of the Chagos islanders to be printed in a Western newspaper.[15] The article not only questioned the official stance that the islands were in fact uninhabited, but also triggered support for the evicted islanders on the international scale.

In Mauritius, however, the struggle was strongly shaped by a nationwide socialist uprising starting in the early 1970s; i.e. it took place within a political situation that was to remain highly unpredictable for several years. Representatives of both the growing socialist opposition and the far-right-wing faction of the post-independence coalition government became involved with the protesting islanders. And as the respective parties sought exclusive claim to their cause, tensions within the evicted group arose. The socialist opposition organised the islanders along the political strategy of public protests whereas representatives of the coalition government sought to channel their disputes towards the courts by aiding the evictees in launching a legal claim against the UK government in the British courts. Before I show how this tension eventually climaxed in 1979, the political climate unfolding in Mauritius at that point deserves some elaboration.

In 1969, a Marxist-inspired party was founded on the island. Informed by the polarised global order of the Cold War, the *Mouvement Militant Mauricien* (MMM) considered UK-US ventures in the Chagos to be a matter of Western imperialism, and argued for the closure of the military base and the return of the islands to Mauritian jurisdiction. Particularly because the MMM was founded after Mauritian independence, the party had everything to gain by criticising how the government had handled the issue of Diego Garcia in the negotiations preceding independence. Appealing to trade unions, students, and the unemployed, the party argued that the poorer sections of the population shared common political inter-

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[14] In contrast to Mauritius, leaders of a recent Chagossian organisation in the Seychelles disconfirmed occurrences of early protests taking place in the Seychelles.

[15] In response to the petition, UK authorities referred responsibility for the evicted islanders to the Mauritian government. For a discussion on the *Washington Post* article, 'Islanders were Evicted for US Base', (9 September 1975), see Madley, 'Diego Garcia', 6; Pilger, 'Stealing a Nation', 31; Curtis, 'Diego Garcia', 421.

ests regardless of ethnic affiliations and quickly developed into a powerful opposition that seemingly did its best to also include the Chagossians.[16] For the MMM, the Chagos case perfectly testified to the extent of the government's failure to negotiate a 'true' Mauritian independence.

One of the parties in government tried to challenge this kind of agitation – and this challenge would cause a friction within the Chagossian community a few years later. One islander, who had been deported to Mauritius as late as 1973 came into contact with Gaëtan Duval, the leader of the far-right party *Parti Mauricien Social Démocrate* (PMSD). This party had its strongholds both among the Franco-Mauritian upper-class and among poorer Christian sections of the Mauritian population identifying with African descent (the 'Creoles'). According to local standards of classification, the people from the Chagos Islands fit in well with poorer sections of the 'Creole' population and thus as well with the PMSD's voter portfolio. Duval, who was a British educated barrister, established contacts with a British law firm, and in February 1975, a writ on behalf of the evicted islander was issued in the London High Court against the Attorney General for the Secretaries of State for Defence and for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.[17] In July 1978, a month after a number of protesting islanders had been removed by the police from the Public Gardens in Port Louis, the PMSD leader left for the UK to negotiate further compensation with a British legal representative.[18]

At the same time, organisations that sympathised with the MMM such as the *Comité Ilois – Organisation Fraternelle* (CI-OF), the left-wing political party *Lalit*, and the Marxist-feminist organisation *Muvman Liberasyon Fam* (MLF) rallied with the more militant factions of the islanders.[19] Six women conducted a 21-day hunger strike in September without much result. The following month, four islanders were fined and put into prison for opposing the demolition of their shacks.[20] Due to the evicted islanders' repeated protests and hunger strikes, the

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[16] Selvon, *A Comprehensive History of Mauritius*; Addison and Hazareesingh, *A New History of Mauritius*; Houbert, 'Mauritius: Independence and Dependence'.

[17] The litigation claimed 'damages, aggravated and exemplary, for intimidation, deprivation of liberty, and assault in the BIOT, Seychelles, and Mauritius in connection with his departure from Diego Garcia, the voyage and subsequent events' (*Chagos Islanders v. The Attorney General and her Majesty's BIOT Commissioner*: Para. 55).

[18] When the 1972 compensation was distributed in March 1978, MMM newspapers reported the amount to be scandalously inadequate (*Chagos Islanders v. The Attorney General and her Majesty's BIOT Commissioner*, Appendix: Para. 468). Between 1973 and 1976 (two years before the distribution) local housing prices were estimated to have risen by 500 percent (Prosser, *Mauritius – Resettlement of Persons*).

[19] The *Organisation Fraternelle* (OF) was a loosely knit organisation supporting working-class Creoles founded in 1970 (Eriksen, *Communicating Cultural Difference*, 242–3). Associated with the opposition parties, *Organisation Fraternelle* put up the *Comité Ilois* in 1976 to support the displaced population from the Chagos.

[20] Madley, 'Diego Garcia', 7; Collen and Kistnasamy, 'Lalit Dimunn Ordiner'.

case brought against the UK government was soon considered to be a group litigation. Thus, the British lawyer appointed with the help of Duval became recognised as a representative mediator between the displaced population, the British authorities, and the Mauritian government. Although he was sent to Mauritius to offer further compensations, his position as a representative of the collective was to be challenged as tensions between the two fractions within the Chagossian community grew.

When the UK lawyer arrived in Mauritius to offer the evicted islanders a £1,25 million compensation, the island was recovering from a general strike orchestrated by the socialist opposition in August 1979. Economically pressed, many Chagossians collected the money and gave their thumbprint signatures in return. However, when members of the socialist opposition learned that the evicted islanders were signing formal agreements written in English although they were illiterate kreol speakers – and by doing so abandoned any right to sue the UK government or to return to the Chagos islands – the MMM interfered and cancelled the whole operation.[21] Overnight the opposition reunited the divided Chagossian community and even managed to get representatives associated with the original plaintiff on board. A Joint Ilois Committee (JIC) was put up by the MMM and sympathising organisations, and a message repealing the signed acceptances was conveyed to the British lawyer.[22]

It is possible that the overall political tensions in Mauritius led the Mauritian government to launch the first claim to regain sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago in the UN 25th General Assembly in October 1980. This move towards the opposition's long-term agenda of rallying for sovereignty over the islands triggered another shift in the politics of the MMM. To mobilise support for the islanders without compromising Mauritian claims to sovereignty, the *Front National de Soutien aux Îlois* (FNSI), an umbrella organization consisting of the MMM, its recent ally *Parti Socialiste Mauricien* (PSM), and a number of local unions and organisations, was founded in the following month.[23] The FNSI organised what eventually would turn out to be the key event in the Chagossians' struggle. On 16 March 1981, hundreds of islanders gathered in front of the British High Commission in Port Louis. As with most of their protests, predominantly women were spearheading the demonstrations. The reasons for this may have been manifold, but the female-dominated militancy was at least partly a deliberate political strategy. If not only to ridicule male police officers fighting women in public, the tactic was also adopted to limit excessive police violence. As the

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[21] Madley, 'Diego Garcia', 7, 15; Houbert, 'Mauritius: Independence and Dependence', 472.

[22] Chagos Islanders v. The Attorney General and her Majesty's BIOT Commissioner, Para. 494.

[23] The FNSI included also the JIC, socialist organisations, religious bodies, trade union federations including the GWF, FTU, OUA, CDMO, IDP, *Linion Edition Moris*, MCPS, and the *Comité Soutien Îlois* (Walker, *Zaffer pe Sanze*, 30).

protesters were unable to provoke any reaction on the part of the High Commissioner, they decided to relocate and conduct a sit-in at the nearby Government House. Still, the demonstration ended in violent clashes with the police and several arrests. This, however, provoked eight women to embark on a decisive hunger strike. At the time, a US destroyer, a tanker, and a US aircraft carrier with the paradigmatic name 'Independence' were in transit in Port Louis Harbour. To prevent contact between protesters and some 5000 marines, US officers were stationed around the nearby public garden where the hunger strike was held.[24] On day nine, MLF and *Lalit* representatives decided to support the protesters. Adopting a political platform in accordance with the MMM program, the two groups obstructed Port Louis traffic for two days before blocking the Royal Road leading up to the Government House at the time of a cabinet meeting. Forced off the street by the police, the protesters reorganised to join the nearby group of hungerstriking women. The violence that followed resulted in the arrest and detention of eight women, including MLF and *Lalit* members.[25] The hunger strike nevertheless continued, and by the end of the month Mauritian authorities were pressed to approach the British High Commissioner. A message to London forwarded a statement by the leader of the right-wing PMSD who accused the Marxist opposition of manipulating the evictees. Moreover, since the majority of the displaced islanders now supported those organisations that sided with the opposition, the intermediary role of the British lawyer was further questioned in the message to the British government.[26] Twenty days into the hunger strike, the Mauritian government finally backed down and agreed to engage in negotiations for further compensation with the UK and to dispatch a tripartite delegation to London composed of government, MMM, and Chagossian representatives.[27] This round of negotiations was settled with the Mauritian authorities granting £1 million worth of land to be allocated to a housing project and the British government £4 million in cash.[28] The distribution, however, would only commence once the single evicted islander had withdrawn his case, filed in 1975, from the UK courts. Only a month before the signing of the agreement, the MMM-headed opposition had been voted into power in the June 1982 general election, winning all 60 seats of the Mauritian legislative assembly.[29]

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[24] Mundil and Laridon, The Struggle of the Chagos People, 13–4.

[25] Collen and Kistnasamy, 'Lalit Dimunn Ordiner'.

[26] Chagos Islanders v. The Attorney General and her Majesty's BIOT Commissioner, Appendix: Para. 531.

[27] The delegation would consist of single representatives from CIOF, FNSI, and the PMSD, and two delegates each from both the MLP and the MMM (Mundil and Laridon 1981, Appendix 4, *Agreement*).

[28] Those initially deported to the Seychelles have failed to receive any compensation.

[29] The agreement became formal by signature of the two governments on 7 July 1982. Since no money was transferred before the plaintiff withdrew his case, his family suffered heavy pressure

The Question of Traditions

Given the political situation in Mauritius in the years between independence in 1968 and the 1982 general election, the fact that Chagossian cultural practices or traditions had been anything but central to their protests is not surprising. Divided between the far right and the far left political fronts, the majority of the evicted islanders were eventually organised by the latter in the course of a Cold War socialist uprising. In this context, to call upon traditions to underscore claims of cultural difference would not have helped the Chagossians' cause. In bonding with 'anti-ethnic' Marxist-inspired parties organising a wider class-based movement, the situation offered limited room for ethnicity-based mobilisation.

An objection to this statement of the complete absence of tradition might be that the protests during this period stemmed from the wider framework of the 'traditions' of socialist movements. As Hobsbawm has argued, not only those in power but also revolutionary movements claim their own traditions.[30] Apart from the legal case against the UK government, the islanders' means of resistance concurred to a large extent with those employed by the rising opposition. That is to say, repeated civil disobedience including public demonstrations and hunger strikes. Nonetheless, what the evicted islanders themselves later publicly and outspokenly came to identify as their traditions, such as the *sega*, seems first of all not to have been practiced during this period, and secondly, would not have been an appropriate means of struggle in this context. Thus, applying Hobsbawm's approach to the Chagossians' struggle before 1982, traditions here are defined only by their absence and this absence can only be revealed by the emergence of traditions as a means of struggle in the following period. Thus, my discussion of tradition here is framed as a 'category of analysis'. That is, with one interesting exception.

As mentioned above, the most radical fraction during the protests was composed of women. Over the years, the predominant female Chagossian militancy helped to promote the assumption that the evictees had traditionally led a matriarchal society in the islands. Again, it is not the intention of this paper to debate the historical truth-claims to traditions. But it is interesting to note that much literature on the Chagossians tends to locate the causes for the female militancy with the historical or 'traditional', rather than the contemporary context in which the protests were acted out. Hence, gender relations dating back to the days of life on the Chagos islands such as the relatively few official marriages (actually grounded in a lack of clerics and gender ratio) and the households headed by women raising children of different fathers have more often been highlighted as causes for the

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from impatient islanders. Proceedings were eventually stayed by agreement and the cheque was handed over at a ceremony held on 22 October 1982.

[30] Hobsbawm, 'Introduction', 13.

female militancy than the wider political framework of Mauritian politics such as the nationwide rise of a women's liberation movement during the 1970s.[31] In fact, many Chagossian women became active members of the *Mouvement Liberasyon Fam* (MLF) as this feminist organisation was highly concerned with the Chagossians' plight.[32] While there may be elements of truth to these representations of life in the archipelago, it should be noted that the image of sexually liberated female Chagossians also draws on reports from priests and magistrates who expressed considerable concerns when they visited the islands and observed what they regarded as low sexual morals. The very same reports often identified and sought to end the one central expression of such uncivilised promiscuity – regular *sega* parties.[33] Today, however, the dominant position of Chagossian women is downplayed as a cultural marker. Until today, women are overrepresented within the politicised Chagossian community. Chagossian organisations, however, are headed by men who limit their concerns with gender issues to acknowledgement and praise of the leading role of women in the early years of Chagossian protests. Instead, emphasis is placed on those traditions that better connect to the Mauritian inter-ethnic vocabulary – as well as to an international vocabulary – serving to communicate inter-cultural difference (Schlee 2003, 2004). Although the strong position of women continues to be a source of pride for many Chagossians, unlike cuisine, clothing, music, and dance, such gender relations lack both mainstream connotations to 'culture' and the potential to be transformed into a cultural commodity – which has become an important way of expressing struggles for the recognition of cultural difference in today's ethnically ordered world.

In the course of my fieldwork, the evicted islanders repeatedly pointed out that the absence of the Chagossian *sega* during the 1970s was related to their abject poverty. One may therefore add that preoccupation with traditions as a 'category of practice' probably requires a minimum level of economic security, at least on the part of some active members of a group. As the following comparison of tradition-based struggles to the early days of Chagossian resistance will show, the invention or revival of traditions as a means of resistance, however, is also responsive to the general political framework within which a group of people operate.

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[31] Botte, *The 'Ilois' Community and the 'Ilois' Women*, 2, 12; Madley, 'Diego Garcia', 4; Muvman Liberasyon Fam, *The Women's Liberation Movement in Mauritius*, 78; Curtis, 'Diego Garcia'; Pilger, 'Stealing a Nation'.

[32] Muvman Liberasyon Fam, The Women's Liberation Movement, 78.

[33] Dussercle, Archipel des Chagos; Edis, Peak of Limuria.

Phase 2: Submitting the Struggle to the Framework of an Ethnically Ordered World: Enter Chagossian Traditions

> 'The future of the group in Mauritius is dependent upon a collective decision between integration as a separate group and assimilation within another group. In order for integration to occur, both the group itself and, more importantly, the boundaries of the group must be defined. [This] is particularly important in view of the minimal differences between many features of Creole society and corresponding features of Ilois society and in view of the small size of the Ilois community.'[34]

After the 1982 compensation, it was widely recognized in Mauritius that the 'realistic' aims of the Chagos islanders had been met. *Front National de Soutien aux Îlois* (FNSI) regarded its *raison d'être* concluded, and the constituent groups lost their concern for the plight of the Chagos islanders. Disbanded on the argument that 'it was high time to leave the destiny of the Ilois in their own hands', former members regrouped to engage in wider regional issues under the *Komite Morisyen Losean Indien*.[35] After only nine months in government the MMM split. Former party members as well as representatives of other parties founded the *Militant Socialist Movement* (MSM). The MSM then came to count enough members of parliament to head a government in coalition with six MPs of the earlier Labour-PMSD regime who had been allocated the extra six seats in parliament reserved for members of ethnic groups that would otherwise be underrepresented. The new government's position towards the evicted Chagos islanders was in accord with the KMLI. Back in the opposition, the remaining members of the MMM assisted the islanders in writing an appeal to Washington asking for an additional £4 million in compensation. The new Mauritian Prime Minister commented: 'It is just stupid. There is no Ilois issue any more. The Ilois have been fully compensated. [...] I have been asked in Parliament if my government will back them. I have said it is all nonsense [...] [T]o me the matter is closed. If anyone raises the issue again, they will be acting in bad faith'.[36] Confirming the official stance, the Scottish anthropologist Walker conducting his fieldwork among the evicted islanders in the wake of the compensation reported that 'the government, too, recognises that this positive discrimination is not entirely beneficial, and has now made it clear that it regards the Ilois as Mauritians [...] [T]hey will not, as a group, be treated preferentially. [...] It is hoped that this policy will stimulate integration of the Ilois into Mauritian society'.[37]

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[34] Walker, *Zaffer pe Sanze*, 47.

[35] Translation: 'Mauritian Indian Ocean Committee', see: KMLI report 1983: 4, cited in Walker, *Zaffer pe Sanze,* 30.

[36] *Africa Magazine* September 1984; cited in Madley, 'Diego Garcia', 11.

[37] Walker, *Zaffer pe Sanze*, 37.

From this point on, a new phase in the struggle of the Chagos islanders can be identified. After local support had declined with the collapse of the socialist project in Mauritius and the awarding of compensation to the Chagos islanders in 1982, objections and protests took an ethnic turn. As the above quote indicates, the islanders had furthermore become subjects of anthropological research. And as the following section will show, an anthropologist supported their change in strategy. But before turning to show how, as a result of anthropological examination, the *sega* once practiced in the Chagos archipelago was reintroduced as a tradition in Mauritius, it is necessary to outline how the 1982 compensation provided a structure through which exclusively Chagossian organisations would emerge that in turn laid the grounds for future ethnicisation.

In order to identify receivers before the compensation was disbursed, the 1982 agreement stipulated that a trust fund board should be established.[38] Furthermore, the board members should engage in the long-term planning of the housing project and in the promotion of the group's general social and economic welfare. For several years, the people from the Chagos Islands had pejoratively been referred to as the Ilois (i.e. 'islanders') by many Mauritians. The Ilois Trust Fund Board now officially reserved this designation for people born on those islands that since 1965 constituted the restricted British Indian Ocean Territory. The board issued identity cards upon registration and included five elected representatives of the Chagos islanders. People therefore started to identify as Ilois – even more so as they could now elect their representatives to the board.[39] In the years after 1982, exclusively Ilois-based organisations were founded. And in line with the argument elaborated by Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins that '[e]lectoral candidates routinely construct those whose support they must garner in terms which allow their proposed course of action to be taken on by their audience as their own', a period of Chagossian cultural revitalization came about within a new local and global political context.[40] Aided, that is, by a scholar specialised in the field of 'culture'.

During this time of substantial socio-political change, the evicted islanders became subject to anthropological examination. As already mentioned, this first-ever anthropological survey conducted by a scholar from the former colonial centre had significant impact on the community. Probably not celebrated for two decades, the *sega* parties of the Chagos were reintroduced upon the anthropo-

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[38] Chagossians in the Seychelles have to date not received any compensation.

[39] Mauritian Parliament passed the Ilois Trust Fund Act in July 1982. The board also included a chairman and five administrators appointed by the government. In 1984 the designation 'Ilois' was re-defined as 'a person who has been identified as such by the [Ilois Trust Fund] Board and has been issued an identity card on or before 14 May 1984' (Lassemillante, *Termes Identitaires des Habitants des Chagos,* 4). In 1999 the Ilois Trust Fund was replaced by the Ilois Welfare Fund.

[40] Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins, 'Identity Construction and British Muslims', 343.

logist's request during his fieldwork in the wake of the 1982 compensation. In his master's thesis he noted:

> 'One incident which exemplifies the movement towards retaining disappearing traditions occurred as a result of my expressing interest in the *sega*. Ilois *segas* have become less frequent in Mauritius […]. As a result of my interest a *sega* was arranged. […] Participation was greatest on the part of the elder women; the younger members of the party were not as familiar with the routine. Several weeks later many of the women present at the *sega* formed a group with other Ilois friends and began to record *segas* at regular sessions'.[41]

In 1986 the thesis was published by the KMLI in Mauritius, and in the same year, headlining 'A Scottish scholar presents a thesis on the islanders', a Mauritian newspaper reported on the launching of a music cassette labelled 'Sega Ilois':

> 'Twenty years after their displacement from the Chagos, thanks to *"Komite Morisyen Losean Indien"* (KMLI), the islanders could partake in the realisation of a cassette with music from the islands […]. In an introductory note to the cassette, the KMLI underlines the importance of this work that will fill a double gap: to preserve the oral traditions of the islands and to transmit islander culture to the younger generation. Also, within the context of the OAU Ministers of Culture conference, the KMLI regards this cassette to be a contribution from this Afro-Mauritian community to the regional cultural patrimony and to Mauritian patrimony in particular'.[42]

The anthropologist's interest in the *sega* had lasting effects. Today, two decades later, the Chagossian *sega* is regularly rehearsed by and among both the evicted and their descendants. In fact, many Chagossians highlight the *sega* as their most central tradition. However, rather than being interpreted as a plain contribution to regional or national patrimony, the ethnic mobilisation of the group that followed encountered considerable scepticism in Mauritius.

In 1985 the UK government granted BIOT passports to former inhabitants of the Chagos archipelago. This meant that the Mauritian claim to sovereignty over the archipelago was complicated further as its inhabitants now had British and Mauritian citizenship.[43] The 1982 compensation proved insufficient to lift people out of general poverty. Later demands for further and more appropriate compensation re-invoked the issue of returning to the Chagos. These claims were built on a twofold strategy; on the one hand the Chagossians sought to be awarded the status of an indigenous population by the UN and on the other hand they

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41 Walker, *Zaffer pe Sanze*, 42–3.

42 Week-End, 'Un étudiant ecossais présente une these'.

43 In 2002 former inhabitants of the Chagos were granted full British citizenship with the right of abode in the UK.

launched cases against the UK government in British courts as British citizens. Both political efforts were regularly criticised in Mauritius as anti-nationalist.[44]

In November 1988 another newspaper reported on a *sega* performed by a group of evicted islanders calling themselves *Deracines* (i.e., 'Uprooted'). The 1982 agreement had stipulated the construction of two housing projects on plots of land allocated by the Mauritian government situated at the outskirts of Port Louis. As part of both projects, Ilois Community Centres should be put up to promote the welfare of the local residents. At the ceremony heralding the construction works for what should become the Ilois Community Centres in April 1988, Prime Minister A. Jugnauth exhorted without irony and while laying down the first symbolic brick: 'You have to forget Diego Garcia. Forget the past. Stop dreaming and live in reality, you have the same rights as all Mauritians'.[45] However, at the official inauguration of one of the community centres in November the same year, the group *Deracine* objected to his call by means of a *sega* performance that put history into another perspective:

> 'Early morning I wake up,
> I go to Mr Rogers' office.
> Mr Rogers tell me I have sad news for you,
> Your country has been sold for gaining Mauritian independence.'[46]

The 'Mr Roger' mentioned in the song refers to the 'Rogers Group'. Founded in 1899 as a commercial and shipping company with its headquarters in Port Louis, it is today the number one multi-sector industrial enterprise in Mauritius. As the lyrics indicate, many Chagos islanders vividly remember how they first realised that they were unable to return home after visiting Mauritius when they were refused tickets at the counter of the Rogers' office in Port Louis. As this particular *sega* shows, the islanders' demonstrations were taking on a particularistic and cultural form in the period that followed the compensation. Civil disobedience and hunger strikes characteristic of earlier demonstrations were now replaced by protests expressed through media such as music and dance performed in a style alleged to be particularly Chagossian. Unsurprisingly, those left-wing organisations that had substantially contributed to and supported them in the course of their struggles were displeased with this communalist turn. *Lalit* representatives for example have criticised recent political efforts especially because these did not address matters beyond the Chagossian community, claiming that these struggles signalled an 'identity phase' characterised by the absence of 'any coherent political struggle'.[47]

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[44] Star, 'Les Ilois mettront sur pied un gouvernement en exil'; L'Express, 'Jugnauth aux Ilois'. For an elaboration on this issue, see Johannessen, *Contested Roots,* 68–74.

[45] L'Express, 'Jugnauth aux Ilois'.

[46] Le Mauricien, 'Le Premier Ministre "réécrit" un séga sur Diego Garcia'.

[47] Collen and Kistnasamy, 'Lalit Dimunn Ordiner', 111.

In Mauritius today, there are two organisations, the Chagos Social Committee (CSC) and the Chagos Refugee Group (CRG), who pursue largely similar goals of better compensation and the right to return to the Chagos Archipelago. One central point of disagreement is whether to align with Mauritius' claim to sovereignty or to remain neutral on this issue. But although the dilemma of being caught between British and Mauritian claims to sovereignty over their homelands continued, new arenas have opened up for the Chagossians to gather support and resources for their struggle. First of all, at the level of the trust fund support from within the Chagossian community can be mobilised in favour of either of the organisations. And this internal struggle is also defined by how cultural particularity is expressed and promoted. The following section will give an insight into the historical emergence of new cultural politics pursued by both the CSC and the CRG. Beyond the level of the community and the Mauritian nation, both groups are actively seeking to be recognised as culturally distinct on an international level. As a result, Chagossian organisations are today generating political and financial support through international NGOs that are sympathetic to their struggle.

Thus, an argument based on cultural terms turned more and more elaborate the harder the two leading communal organisations competed for the positions on the Ilois Trust Fund Board.[48] Since the cause of a general socialist uprising had been lost, other external factors came to be of more significant concern to both Chagossian organisations. In fact, the origins and development of these two competing organisations were shaped by the wider national and international political circumstances.

The Right to be Indigenous and the Chagos Social Committee

The first of the two rival organisations to 'go global' and thereby generate massive support within the community was the Chagos Social Committee (CSC). In the latter half of the 1990s, the CSC proceeded to have the group recognised as autochthonous to the Chagos Islands in successive United Nations Working Groups on Indigenous Populations in Geneva. Assisted by a Mauritian barrister, the CSC argued successfully that although the islanders could not trace their ancestry on the islands into the mists of time, slaves shipped to the Chagos Archipelago in the late eighteenth century had little choice but to remain in the very remote and isolated area. Bringing the islands into cultivation for the first time, the descendant of these slaves established a society of their own with traditions and cultural traits including a local dialect, dances, instruments, games, legends,

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[48] On 1 February 2000 the Ilois Trust Fund was replaced by the Ilois Welfare Fund (IWF). The IWF Board consists of an elected Chagossian chairperson, seven representatives of the Chagossian community in Mauritius, seven Government representatives and one secretary.

and gender relations particular to the group. These traditions, it was argued, dif-
fered significantly from comparable practices to be found in Mauritius.[49] In line
with working definitions of indigenous groups weighing the matter of distinct
self-identifications, the CSC also suggested a highly welcomed change of designa-
tion. The term 'Ilois' had long been considered a source of social stigma rather
than a matter of cultural pride – despite being included in the name of the trust
fund.[50] Although the displaced population had tended to identify 'home' with
more particular islands in the Chagos Archipelago, the CSC introduced a com-
mon designation. As 'the Chagossians', the evicted islanders should for the first
time be united under one identity without pejorative connotations. According to
a text authored by the barrister representing the Chagossians in Geneva:

> 'Our humble opinion is that those originating from Chagos and their des-
> cendants have a fair right to the designation "Chagossian" rather than islan-
> der. The bond with the referring territory is occult. The soil carries identity.
> That is one of the reasons for saying "mother-earth" and "sons of the soil"
> [*fils du sol*]. Any person has the right to his identity. The territory plays a
> primordial role. Chagos is the ancestral place of the Chagossians. [...] The
> debate on identity is fundamental. One cannot treat it as of an intellectual or
> academic nature. Identity is the bearer of force and the future.'[51]

Rather than aligning with local forces attempting to restructure the political
economy *without* ethnic divisions, representatives of the evicted population had
now definitively departed the socialist framework. In Fraser's sense, they had
moved from a politics of redistribution to a politics of recognition.[52] Rather than
allying with efforts to restructure the political economy, the group now was pur-
suing particularistic aims via a politics of cultural recognition *within* what Coma-
roff has called an 'ethnically ordered world'.[53] To qualify for central rights, which
the UK government had sought to discredit the Chagos islanders since the time
of their initial eviction, once shared cultural practices were now identified as
Chagossian traditions and brought forward to underscore claims to be culturally
different. Central among these practices was the Chagossian *sega*. But as the *sega*
is not a sole and particular feature of the Chagossians but instead popular among
all Mauritians as well as among people inhabiting other parts of the region, it is

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[49] Lassemillante, Autochtonie et Chagossianisme; Termes Identitaires des Habitants des Chagos.

[50] Walker, Zaffer pe Sanze.

[51] Lassemillante, *Termes Identitaires des Habitants des Chagos*, 4–5 (my translation). In Geneva in
1998 the Mauritian government refused to recognize the islander as indigenous for fear of losing
out on the claim to sovereignty: '... [T]he former inhabitants of the Chagos Archipelago cannot,
at all, on their own refer to themselves as indigenous peoples and on that assumption claim their
return to the Chagos Archipelago.' (Government of Mauritius, *Statement by Delegation of
Mauritius).*

[52] Fraser, 'From Redistribution to Recognition?'.

[53] Comaroff, 'Ethnicity'.

necessary to position this dance within the wider regional setting in order to better understand and evaluate the weight of this cultural practice.

Excursus: The Sega in the Western Indian Ocean

What is today celebrated as the crown of the evicted Chagos Islanders' traditions is a musical performance known as the Chagossian *sega*. The *sega* can be described as a particularly gendered interplay of dancers and musicians accompanying a lead singer. While *sega* lyrics may draw on humour, satire, nostalgia, or even direct complaints, songs tend to comment on social life and conclude with a surprising punch line. With swinging movements of the hips, male and female dancers engage in a mutual interplay of seduction and search for a partner. During the chorus sections, women fold their long skirts and spin in a way that the skirts will be lifted. Male partners may then approach and pretend to get a glimpse under the skirts. If acted to the very end, two partners may dance their way down, bending their bodies further until they reach the ground. But as a rule, partners never get into physical contact. Indicating the sexual and seductive element, going down (*'an ba'*) with a partner is sometimes a source of serious jealousy.

With certain variations, *segas* are performed in Mauritius, Reunion, Rodriguez, and the Seychelles.[54] The dance is often portrayed as a historical legacy that has spread across the South-Western Indian Ocean because of the African slave trade. But as both the trade's routes and the origins of the slaves went far beyond Africa and because the performances have changed in the course of the centuries, it is, at best, difficult to identify a precise historical origin. Some hold that the Chagossian *sega* originates from Mozambique where comparable cultural practices known as the 'chega' or the 'tsega' continue to be performed.[55] Others emphasise the aspect of creolisation and how *segas* developed into various forms in different places in the course of interaction between slaves of different African origins and European colonisers.[56] As already outlined above, both local plantation managers and visiting priests objected to the *sega* and what they interpreted as a particularly 'uncivilised' practice of the Chagossians long before the evictions.[57]

But although these local authorities were unable to prevent *segas* from taking place in the Chagos, it seems the Chagossian *sega* did disappear with the evictions to Mauritius. During my fieldwork in 2004 and 2006, older people from the Chagos Islands confirmed that Chagossian *segas* had not been danced in the early years in Mauritius. Furthermore, a Mauritian social worker reporting on the Chagossians' situation noted in 1980 that 'in Mauritius, the Ilois *sega* nights are not

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[54] See Wergin, this volume, for a discussion of the *sega* on the neighbouring island Reunion.

[55] Edis, Peak of Limuria, 59.

[56] Salomon, *Bann Lenflyans Mizikal lo Sega*; Wergin, 'T'shéga, Shéga, Séga'.

[57] Dussercle, Archipel des Chagos; Edis, Peak of Limuria.

so common, the young people choose partners early among their neighbours in their own community'.[58] Inquiring about the reasons for the absence of what is now regarded as their most central tradition, older people quickly pointed out to me that such events require that people bring both food and drinks. And because of their desperate economic situation, *segas*, they said, were not arranged. These responses also point to why the *sega* now has become such an important cultural activity. A proper contemporary Chagossian *sega* extends its musical expression and provides a social context in which a range of other relevant cultural markers – including food, drinks, and clothing particular to the Chagos Islands – are consumed and put on display. However, the *sega* was and is common to other people both in Mauritius and other parts of the Indian Ocean. Variations of rhythm, clothing, and the composition of musical instruments are commonly taken as indicators of where descendants of slaves developed the *sega* into particular expressions. In Mauritius, where a national ideology draws on ideas of a 'multicultural' composition of the population, the *sega* has become a way of stressing ethnic boundaries.[59] Hence, the *sega* has also become a central means of expressing cultural particularity and of communicating origin and belonging for the Chagossians.

A 'National Anthem' for the Chagossians and Claims to 'Rootedness'

Interestingly, the use of music to reclaim the past on behalf of an ethnically defined group has recently developed so far as to the identification of a Chagossian national anthem. In 2002 a Chagossian artist known as Ton Vié composed a *seggae*, that is, a style of music combining elements of *sega* and *reggae*, which soon turned into a number one hit in Mauritius. In the song *'Peros Vert'* (i.e., 'Green Peros'), the singer contemplates on the fate of the people 'uprooted' from the Chagos. In a subtle way, pointing out how life in Mauritius is different, he recalls the natural abundance and sweet life on Peros Bahnos, the island where he was born, but to which he cannot return. The final lines of the song are very typical for the metaphorical imagery of being (up)rooted common among the evicted islanders today:

> '…I have lost my island.
> Goodbye green Peros,
> Goodbye Salomon,
> Goodbye Diego;
> Which I will never see again,
> My island, my island,

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[58]   Botte, The 'Ilois' Community and the 'Ilois' Women, 31.

[59]   For a discussion on the *sega* in the context of Mauritian society, see Schnepel and Schnepel, 'The Mauritian Séga'.

> Sun, soil, my umbilical cord,
> My island, my island, my island.'[60]

Few Chagossians, however, would claim that this song represents typical Chagossian musical traditions. The song is not a *sega*, but a creole-style *seggae* performed with electric instruments. Nevertheless, the song is referred to as a 'national anthem'. Not unlike other 'national anthems' the lyrics link people to a particular territory – expressed in the singer's desperate longing for past life and times in the Chagos Archipelago. However, there is a temporally defined boundary line that must not be crossed. To trace descent, and in the same vein traditions, to times and places beyond the islands' first settlements in the late eighteenth century would be contrary to the purpose of underscoring the cultural particularity of the Chagossians. This would instead confirm the picture of a dispersed population originating from various regions around the Indian Ocean and thus play into the cards of the British authorities' claim that deportation from a true Chagossian homeland never occurred. Therefore, cultural particularity is substantiated by reference to the 'creation' of the group during a long-term period of isolation on the islands. Hence, even the Chagossian *sega* should not be traced further than to the shores of the Chagos of the late eighteenth century. From then on, the Chagossian *sega* took on its relevant qualities and can thus, by regular repetition as a cultural tradition, connect the displaced Chagossians and their descendants to their homeland. Thus, despite the fact that the Chagossian *sega* was not performed during the early years of struggle in Mauritius, the revival of this tradition still marks the Chagossian claim to rooted ethno-national continuity. However, in order to ground their political claims and legal cases for compensation and return, the Chagossians needed not only to prove that they were, and continue to be, culturally distinct. Soon after having carved out a social space to establish an ethnic group called the 'Chagossians', 'continuity' took on a different dimension: Serious concern was raised as to whether the Chagossians were standing on the doorstep of cultural genocide. As the following paragraph will show, the lyrics of the song quoted above make a strong reference to this claim as well.

During my fieldwork, Chagossians often pointed out that if a woman had given birth back in the Chagos Archipelago, it was custom to bury the umbilical cord in the ground. This is no longer practice among Chagossians in Mauritius. But Chagos islanders do not refer to this custom as an important social, cultural and religious practice of the past, which they now have lost. In the context of their displacement this past practice has taken on new relevance and has been vested with highly symbolic meanings. The umbilical cords buried in the archipelago now serve as a metaphor for Chagossian longing and belonging to their homeland. This is often phrased as follows: Like a child remains attached to its mother

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[60] Ton Vié, Peros Vert.

even after the umbilical cord has been cut, Chagossians who had their umbilical cords 'rooted' or 'planted' there would remain attached to their 'motherland'. Moreover, in the lyrics of 'Green Peros', the juxtaposition of the concepts 'sun', 'soil', and 'umbilical cord' should also be read as a subtle Chagossian critique of their contemporary circumstances. In the metaphorical sense of a people 'rooted' in and being nurtured through a particular and bounded piece of soil, the only place where the Chagossians are only able to 'grow' and 'flourish' is in a 'green' place beyond the slums and cemetery quarters on the outskirts of Port Louis.[61] These arguments have been central to their struggle against the British and US government in the past years.

Displacement and Cultural Genocide

> 'We are an uprooted people from over there in the Chagos Archipelago.
> We have no identity. We have no nationality. We are a small uprooted people living in poverty.
> You have used the Base on Diego Garcia to destroy Afghanistan.
> The Ilois people slept outside in front of the [British] embassy.
> How many suns have risen, yes, but how many people have left [died].
> We wanted to return, to where our umbilical cord is buried.
> It's time to get up, to make our voices heard, to show all our suffering for the whole world.
> We're not searching for gold or for diamonds.
> Our rights have to be respected. You stole our natal islands; you gave us bitter life in return.'[62]

Recorded in Mauritius by a musician born in the Chagos Archipelago, these are the lyrics of a popular new *sega* named '*Peuple Deracine*' (i.e., 'Uprooted people'). Like the *sega* performed in response to the Mauritian Prime Minister in 1988, this is a protest song. And in a manner representative for a wider group of Chagossians, the lyrics identify the Chagossians' separation from their homeland as a central source of their contemporary sufferings. However, as the second line indicates, politics of recognition have come to involve claims of cultural genocide. Rather than to debate whether a form of genocide equivalent to international 'standards' actually happened, in the following I will show how the above claims reverberate legal allegations recently brought forward against the US government.

In the late 1990s, classified British documents related to the expulsions appeared in the public domain. Subsequently, it could be verified how British authorities

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[61]   See Johannessen, *Contested Roots.*

[62]   Elyse, 'Peuple Deracine' (my translation).

had fabricated lies to lead the public to believe that no settled population had existed in the Chagos Archipelago prior to deportation. Sets of quotes from British officials constructing the Chagossians as a 'floating population' without any land rights and therefore as a perfect group of deportees to make way for a large US military base showed a complete disregard for the interest of the islanders and revealed racist attitudes on the part of those responsible. The famous Australian journalist John Pilger quotes a senior British Official who in correspondence with the Permanent Under Secretary in the Foreign Office called the Chagossians as 'some few Tarzans or Men Fridays'.[63] Hence, public outrage followed and a number of international support organisations were set up. Armed with these new evidences of British 'spin doctoring' before and during the evictions, the second association of Chagossians, the Chagos Refugees Group (CRG) was aided by a British solicitor to launch a new court case against the UK government.[64] In November 2000 the British High Court ruled in their favour and quashed the 1971 ordinance that prevented Chagossians from entering the BIOT. After this success in court, the CRG gained widespread local support. Having the expulsions ruled unlawful, the organisation pressed unsuccessfully for compensation in UK and US courts.[65] In December 2001 a class-action suit alleging genocide, torture, and forced relocation was launched against the US government. According to the US lead attorney upon a 2006 Court of Appeals hearing: 'Genocide occurred when the entire community was destroyed by removing them from the islands by threats and deceit.'[66]

Today, the contents of these declassified documents fuel Chagossian claims of having been deprived of their own identity. Accusations like this one made by an elder Diego Garcian are not uncommon: 'They lied and said we didn't exist [...] they lied to the United Nations, they lied to the whole world'. Additionally, histories of stigmatisation in Mauritius are frequently invoked to underscore the very same point. Elder Chagossians repeatedly reported how discrimination and prejudice on the part of other Mauritians forced them to under-communicate their true origin in the course of their early years of exile. Numerous personal stories of discrimination continue to elucidate and amplify the understanding of being deprived of an earlier 'real Chagossian identity'. However, with regard to the loss of their culture and identity, the most central argument among Chagos-

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[63] D. A. Greenhill; cited in Pilger, 'Stealing a Nation', 38.

[64] Gifford, 'The Chagos Islands'.

[65] The case was dismissed on 21 December 2004 by a judge for US Federal District Court based on the doctrine of sovereign immunity and political questions. On 16 February 2006 the case was heard before three federal judges in the Court of Appeals. Despite assurances by their lead attorney that the Chagossians were not opposing the US military base, the judges refused in April 2006 to overrule the executive, considering the issue a political and military question beyond the court's jurisdiction.

[66] Week-End, 'Olivier Bancoult et al.'. For an analysis of the Chagossian compensation case in the UK, see Jeffery, 'Historical Narrative and Legal Evidence'.

sians today is physical separation. As the song quoted above opens: 'We are an uprooted people from over there in the Chagos Archipelago. We have no identity'. Chagossians often hold that they have lost their real culture and real identity precisely because they have been physically separated – or 'uprooted', as they often put it – from the islands to which they claim to belong. This is not very dissimilar from what was argued under the leadership of the CSC before the UN, namely that '[t]he soil carries identity'. But the recent claims to cultural genocide extend presumptions of a bounded interconnection between peoples, cultures, places, and identities. These claims highlight how the physical displacement of people is in itself a direct violation of an 'order' identified and described by the anthropologist Liisa Malkki as based on a widespread 'sedentarist ideology'.[67] As I will argue below, this order is closely connected to the ethnically ordered world described by Comaroff .

In her work on exiles and refugees, Malkki has explored the logics of what she identified as a 'national order of things'. In short, the 'sedentarist ideology' rests on a system of botanical metaphors such as 'roots', 'genealogical trees', 'repatriation', 'homeland' and 'mother/fatherland'. Beyond these metaphors this sedentarist order or ideology is repeatedly externalised through ritual practises and performances such as burials or the act of embracing the soil upon return from lengthy journeys. Both metaphors and practices can be understood as conveying an 'assumed isomorphism of space, place, and culture'.[68] That is to say, a presumed bounded interconnection between a place, a people, and a culture where the imagery of 'roots' implicate that social and cultural identity is understood as if nurtured through a particular piece of soil.[69] Deeply embedded in everyday language, the sedentarist ideology tends to be taken merely for granted and accepted as 'natural'. While in the case of the Chagossians, the CSC representative evidently appealed to such an ideology before the United Nations Committee in Geneva, the claims to cultural genocide that were followed up by the CRG also draw on this logic. A central point in Malkki's argument is that persons subject to movement across the world's sectionalised national geography come to pose a challenge to sedentarist systems of classification. Becoming anomalous to a 'national order of things', people from a variety of backgrounds tend to be subsumed under general, ahistorical, and depoliticised categories of 'refugees' and 'exiles'. Moreover, if the sedentarist ideology presupposes an interconnection between people, place, and culture, it is evident that within this order physical displacement becomes – *a priori* – highly problematic. Therefore, Malkki – with reference to Marrus – notes that 'territorially "uprooted" people are easily seen as "torn loose from their culture" (Marrus 1985: 8), because culture is itself a territo-

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[67] Malkki, 'National Geographic'; 'Refugees and Exile'; 'Speechless Emissaries'.

[68] Gupta and Ferguson, 'Beyond "Culture"', 7.

[69] Fuglerud, Migrasjonsforståelse, 197.

rialised (and even a botanical and quasi-ecological) concept in so many contexts'.[70] But in order to fully grasp the Chagossian claim to cultural genocide, another set of external conditions needs to be accounted for.

Kuper has pointed out that a precondition for genocide is the plural society.[71] In other words he argues that genocide occurs within the framework of an ethnically ordered world.[72] This would, however, imply that claims to have fallen victim of cultural genocide could only come about within such an order. Such an assumption concurs well with the Chagossian example, but the interesting point is that because the ethnically ordered world appears to draw on a sedentarist ideology, physical displacement comes to imply cultural genocide *a priori*. This is of course not to argue that legal claims to cultural genocide raised by displaced groups such as the Chagossians are less valid. That the Chagossians have been deprived of a particular way of life is beyond question. I am concerned here with how the concept of cultural genocide relates to a certain sedentarist ideology in a global perspective. Sedentarist principles are protected (and thus confirmed) by national and international laws and, as we have seen, this was a central concern to the UK government at the time of the Chagossian evictions. To what extent the Chagossians have suffered from (cultural) genocide as defined by law is, of course, a separate issue.[73] What I argue here is simply that once having contextualized the struggle in the framework of an ethnically ordered world, and once having established the Chagossians as an ethnic group by emphasis on the particularity of their cultural traditions, claims to cultural genocide could follow logically because at that point the people had already been displaced.

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[70] Malkki, 'National Geographic', 34.

[71] Kuper, 'Genocide and the Plural Society'.

[72] While the first draft of the UN Genocide Convention extended protection also to political groups, it was opposed among other states by all nations of the Soviet Bloc and was eventually excluded in its final accommodation. This draft also contained the passage that 'cultural genocide' – defined as acts intended to bring about the destruction of language, religion and culture – should be criminalised. While the Soviet Bloc favoured this inclusion, it was abandoned upon rejection by Western states (Fein, 'Genocide: A Sociological Perspective', 78; Kuper, 'Genocide and the Plural Society', 61). Violations of 'cultural genocide' or 'ethnocide' – the latter expression was invented by G. Condominas, a French anthropologist, in 1965 (Benthall, 'Indigenes' Rights', 51) – do not carry any legal implications until today. However, the concepts were officially recognised when adopted without a vote under Article 7 of the United Nations Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on 26 August 1994 (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Draft United Nations Declaration*). However, since Article 2 of the UN Genocide Convention also criminalises acts that do not include 'deliberate killing', but intentionally 'causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group' and 'deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part', cultural genocide may also be interpreted as a criminal act (United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*).

[73] For a documentation of these damages, see Vine et al., 'Calculating the Damages'.

Catch-22? Asserting Cultural Genocide by Resorting to Traditions

On first thought it may appear paradoxical to mobilise a particular and clearly demarcated group through claims of having been deprived of what defines the very same group as distinct. Nevertheless, Chagossians frequently voice that they have suffered from the loss of culture and identity. While the lament that 'we have no identity' appears to be a contradiction in terms, it nonetheless underlines that claims to cultural genocide also need to be understood as a variation of cultural politics. To encourage a common struggle against the perpetrators of genocide is, of course, well suited for mobilising a group along ethnic principles. It must be added that although the Chagossian claims form part of a history of changing political agendas, it does not mean that ideas of losing 'culture' and 'identity' are not being felt and experienced as something highly problematic. For the evicted islanders memories of the past involve severe deprivations and invoke tragic losses of friends and close relatives. Moreover, as the first generation of deportees born in the Chagos now ages and dies in exile, feelings of being part of a culture threatened by extinction become ever more imminent. In the same vein, it is often assumed that this was the actual aim when the UK Foreign Office asserted that there had been no permanent inhabitants on the Chagos Islands. An elder Chagossian woman complained about how the British government overruled the November 2000 High Court judgement and reinserted a total ban on immigration to the Chagos Archipelago in 2004: 'The British make me very angry. They want to say that we never existed. They want us to die here in Mauritius. But I will never forget.'

However, the obvious complication of how to convince any audience of – *post facto* – cultural genocide arises in this context. Although the British High Court in 2000 ruled that '[o]n at least some of the islands there lived in the 1960s a people called the Ilois…[and t]hey were an indigenous people', both British and Mauritian governments claim sovereignty to the Chagos Islands and refute the islanders' indigenous status.[74] Beyond reference to external authorities such as the UN, a few historical reports, High Court judgements, or writings by social anthropologists, the means available to assert that a group existed as a distinct people – but due to its displacement has come to lose the defining criteria of 'culture' and 'identity' – are, of course, limited. In this regard, Chagossian traditions have come to play a crucial double role because they communicate both cultural difference and cultural genocide.

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[74] Cited in Collen and Kistnasamy, 'How Diego Garcia was Depopulated', 27. By reference to the UN adoption of the Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples on 13 September 2007, the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office has stated that within the UK and its overseas territories no minority group or ethnic group fall into the category of indigenous peoples (*UK interpretive statement on declaration of the rights of indigenous peoples*). The Mauritian government have also refuted indigenous claims on the part of the Chagossians (see footnote 52).

On the agenda of the Chagos Refugees Group, a politics of identification features as the highest priority. Under the title 'what are our visions, what are our missions', a cardboard poster exposed on the wall at their central office in 2006 read: 'Help all Chagossians to find back their dignity, their cultural values, their identity'. Closely connected to the organisation is a group of *sega* performers named *Grup Tambour Chagos*. Since the reintroduction of the Chagossian *sega* upon the initiative of the Scottish anthropologist in the mid-1980s, the *sega* has continued to be rehearsed and performed in the two community centres built under the compensation scheme of the early 1980s. The *Grup Tambour Chagos* represents Chagossian *sega* in its most authentic form and even includes a number of elderly (native) performers. Only non-electric instruments are played and the ways of beating the drum and the style of female dressing – including headscarves and long white underskirts – are emphasised. Thus, this *sega* is said to be typical for how it used to be played on the islands in the past. When performing for wider audiences, the *Grup Tambour Chagos* supports the CRG politically and collects money for the organisation.

Annual 'Chagossian culture days', which have recently become very popular, are one example of these politicised cultural performances that transform selected cultural practices into consumable commodities. An entrance fee is collected and the *Grup Tambour Chagos* performs on stage. Traditional food and drinks are sold as part of the event. Wearing CRG t-shirts conveying political messages, Chagossian women cater to their guests, often also wearing headscarves knitted in a manner held to be typical. But particularly the *sega* group also performs beyond the boundaries of the two social centres constructed for the Chagossian community. For instance, to raise funds and heighten awareness in the run-up to a court hearing in the UK in December 2006, the group toured several of the numerous tourism hotspots in Mauritius. Sometimes, these *sega* performances were followed by the screening of the award-winning documentary on the story of the Chagossians entitled 'Stealing a Nation'.[75]

Despite claims to be a well-preserved Chagossian tradition, it is no secret that the *sega* performed by the *Grup Tambour Chagos* is a politicised tradition. Beyond the authentic, recent transformations are very apparent. First, during a performance, songs remembered from before the deportations are presented along with an increasing number of new songs. As Jeffery has shown, the lyrics of the songs composed in the Chagos and those made after the evictions differ significantly in that the latter 'retrospectively define the colonial Chagos Archipelago as an idyllic island paradise rather than as a complex plantation economy with both positive and negative attributes'.[76] Lyrics composed in the post-eviction era, that is, after the *sega* was re-introduced in the 1980s, portray life on a peaceful and abun-

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[75] For the documentary: Pilger, 'Stealing a Nation', 2004.

[76] Jeffery, 'How a Plantation became Paradise'.

dant archipelago. This life, as already pointed out for the two songs referred to above, is contrasted with images of contemporary suffering in Mauritius. Through these contrasts, the lyrics implicitly and explicitly identify those external parties responsible for their present-day living circumstances.

Figure 2: Group Tambour Chagos performing at a youth congress against poverty among Creoles in Mauritius, Grand Bay, 23 May 2004 (Photo: Johannessen 2004).

Secondly, the binary spatio-temporal contrasts between here/now and there/then are reflected in the performers' uniform costumes. Members of the *Grup Tambour Chagos* are fully dressed in the colours of the CRG's political banner. This banner is a typical rectangular 'tricolore' shaped by three horizontal stripes. From top to bottom its colours are orange, black and blue. The banner is interpreted along both spatial and temporal lines: Spatially, blue and orange are held to represent the bright blue waters of the lagoons, and the orange-coloured sunsets and sunrises in the Chagos Archipelago. The banner has an obviously transnational history as it was originally designed by Chagossian migrants living in Switzerland. Initially, the black stripe crosscutting the flag added the silhouette of Chagossian coral atolls to the lagoons and the sun. In the highly politicised atmosphere of Mauritius, the colour black was given a new referent. Rather than a silhouette of 'home', the black stripe is now referred to as *marron* – based on the Mauritian concept of 'marronage', a term used for runaway slaves and still employed today in various ways to describe and remember the struggle against slavery but also other semi-legal activities such as 'taxi marron' meaning non-licensed

taxis. Thus, the black element invokes negative experiences based on the interconnected use of Chagossian conceptions of their present situation such as 'misery', 'suffering', 'sadness', 'uprooted-ness', 'genocide', 'exile', and 'poverty'. Although the Chagossian forefathers and foremothers were exploited on the plantations of the archipelago, the *marron* section of today's banner refers exclusively to life in Mauritius.

In sum, the ensemble of colours points to two places and thereby spatialises and temporalises the central problem of the community along the lines of here/there and then/now. Interpreted along temporal lines, orange refers to the deportations. Contrary to 'enlightenment' (as a sunrise), the colour orange refers to a sunset that confuses people and obstructs their vision. The colour black stands for the manifestations, hunger strikes, and police violence experienced after arriving in Mauritius. The current phase is represented by the blue section, which refers to change and hope arising after the November 2000 court victory, which led to increasing international recognition, the awarding of full British citizenship, and the granting of the first communal visit to their ancestors' graves in the Chagos Archipelago in March 2006. All events are recent achievements of their political organisation. The banner thus represents a complex ensemble of political claims and individual experiences. Dressed in these colours, the *sega* performances of the *Grup Tambour Chagos* externalise both a message of cultural genocide and cultural particularity.

If the existence of an ethnically ordered world based on the sedentarist ideology outlined above is accepted, then the Chagossian claims of suffering from cultural genocide may appear like setting up a classical catch-22 situation. If the group still practice their traditions, then how could they suffer from cultural genocide – but if they do not practice anything that makes them culturally distinct, then how could they fulfil the other predisposition for cultural genocide and be an ethnic group? Thus, the practice of traditions grounds the Chagossians' historical legitimacy, but proves this notion of suffering wrong at the same time. Nonetheless, it seems that traditions are the only way out of the dilemma and the only means by which *post-facto* cultural genocide can be asserted. This may particularly be so because powerful actors like the British and US government are the opponents, who have long restricted access to historical documentation and to cultural remains such as villages and gravestones by means of non-disclosure and strict immigration controls. Hence, in the words of the KMLI, traditions may 'fill the gap'. That is, traditions may serve to bridge the presumed 'vacuum' that seems to follow ideas of localised cultures and physical displacement. By referring to traditions, Chagossians express cultural particularity while implying that their 'culture' and 'identity' remain confined to and lost in another place. Whereas physical deportation has come to mean cultural genocide, traditions are understood as mobile assets, that is, cultural practices possibly deported into exile with those first-generation Chagossian bodies into which they were inscribed.

Besides their undoubtedly unifying qualities, this understanding of traditions also gives rise to a way of perceiving the past within the group that eventually paves the way for a division between those born in the Chagos and their children who are born in exile. Although substantial efforts have been made to perform traditions in proper traditional ways, people often regret that 'it is not the same as in Chagos'. As firsthand witnesses of the lost culture, elder Chagossians have been ascribed a certain level of authority in cultural matters. By definition, the next generation is excluded from this kind of secret knowledge, from 'knowing Chagos' ('Konn Chagos') or 'real Chagossian culture'. As even an important member of the *Grup Tambour Chagos* put it: 'I don't know Chagossian culture, I only know our customs. I was only a few months old when I left Chagos'.

Conclusion: From Resistance within the Global Order of the Cold War to Resistance within an Ethnically Ordered World

As the Chagossian example shows, not only people in power employ traditions for political purposes. Marginalised groups seeking to change their unfavourable conditions may as well call upon traditions. Present day politics of cultural recognition have turned traditions into a widely applied measurement that indicates cultural particularity. In struggles revolving around the question of cultural particularity, which according to Comaroff have become characteristic for our age, people are bound to call upon past cultural practices and to selectively re-identify those of their 'traditions' which define them as an exclusive group on the grounds of culture.[77] Designating traditions thus becomes an important asset to 'being' different. And to be different is, of course, a first step to be granted rights or to be awarded positive discrimination for those people who possess few other resources than their own bodies. But cultural traditions only become relevant as a political means within a wider political framework. As we have seen, a set of cultural practices centred around the Chagossian *sega* became important *qua* traditions only after the group departed the socialist context to pursue a politics of recognition within the framework of an ethnically ordered world.

Marxist thinkers would undoubtedly argue that although they might at first sight appear as movements of protest and resistance, people who engage in cultural movements underscored by reference to traditions simply veil the central political and economic causes of their deprivation. Political mobilization along the lines of ethnicity, culture, race, etc., serves only to reconfirm these categories. According to Comaroff, 'as long as social practice continues to be pursued as if ethnicity did hold the key to the structures of inequality, the protectionism of the dominant and the responses of the dominated alike serve to reproduce an ethnically ordered

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[77] Comaroff, 'Ethnicity'.

world'.[78] Further, one would argue that it reduces the possibility of a broader political movement of marginalised people to a number of zero-sum struggles among the poor for aid and attention.

But whereas it might be sound to deem both 'politics of cultural recognition' and 'the invention of traditions' as having conservative effects, an important distinction still needs to be drawn between traditions employed to uphold an established social order and traditions employed as a means to resist *within* that order. As defined by Hobsbawm, invented traditions are sets of practices, which through repetition 'normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past'.[79] Traditions invented for the sake of upholding a given social order typically celebrate either the present state of liberation from earlier external domination (i.e., national independence day celebrations) or they manifest an event that marks the defeat of a detrimental and chaotic period in the past by the contemporary established order (i.e., rituals invoking myths of an original matriarchy in male-dominant societies). But traditions employed as a means to resist, on the contrary, necessarily convey a story that inverts the plot of these narrative structures. Traditions employed as a means to resist need to monopolise a negative definition upon the present. Radical or reformist social movements opting to change a contemporary situation need to conceptualise the present, and not the past, in negative terms. And because traditions are all about the past in the present, traditions employed as a means to resist may often convey historical examples of contrasting (i.e. positive) alternatives to the contemporary situation in which they are performed.

As we have seen, contemporary Chagossian traditions monopolise more than a 'suitable historical past'. Dressed in the *tricolore* of the organisation's political banner, the *sega* performers of the *Grup Tambour Chagos* convey the story of an affluent and harmonious past in the Chagos Archipelago. At the same time, the black element in their dresses and in the national banner represents the misery identified with the present situation in Mauritius. Both the past and the present are represented in these acts. Therefore, only certain elements of the Chagossian *sega*, such as certain songs and the way of beating the drum, claim to date back over generations. That is, to the generations descending from the slaves first brought to the archipelago at the end of the eighteenth century. Crucial to such identity politics is to present the group as victims, as challenged, threatened, discriminated against – as suffering from marginalisation within a particular larger context. But as this paper has shown, there are possibilities for this context to show variations. As we have seen, in line with the political turning point in recent Mauritian history in 1982, the Chagossian struggle shifted from a socialist/feminist movement to an ethnic one. Hence, in stressing the difference between em-

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[78] Comaroff, 'Of Totemism and Ethnicity', 320.

[79] Hobsbawm, 'Introduction', 1.

ploying traditions to uphold a certain order and invoking traditions as a means to resist within that order, I am not saying that the Chagossian struggles for recognition does not re-enforce the ethnically ordered world. This struggle, including the claims to cultural genocide, not only draws on this order, but also reconfirms it. However, for subaltern groups it might sometimes be necessary to conform to this order for the mere reason of survival as a group – or even for survival as such. Since the politics of recognition commenced in the wake of the 1982 compensation, Chagossian political resistance has submitted to and is being fought within the conservative establishment of sedentarist and culturalist claims. But, in the words of anthropologist Burkhard Schnepel, precisely by submitting – or becoming 'patients' – to that particular order, new forms of agency have emerged.[80]

Furthermore, focussing on how traditions have taken their way from a 'category of analysis' to a 'category of practice' I have shown that in the period between 1983, when Hobsbawm and Ranger's volume was published, and 2008, traditions have taken on Janus-headed qualities that may run into curious contradictions. Traditions move between the practices of social scientists and the ways subaltern groups like the Chagossians practice and understand their grounds for struggle. By exploring how cultural biographies of social practices become traditions as they move between 'categories of analysis' and 'categories of practice', I have shown that these concepts can be a fruitful analytical tool to approach contemporary political implications of traditions that are intimately connected to the larger socio-political contexts in which they are performed.

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[80] Schnepel, 'The "Dance of Punishment": Transgression and Punishment'.

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Sounding Traditions that do not Exist: The Case of Réunion Island Music

Carsten Wergin

> 'It is their [traditions'] appearance and establishment rather than their chances of survival which are our primary concern.'[1]

The central aim of this paper is to follow the paradigm set out in the above quote by Hobsbawm and Ranger. It provides a concrete example for how, and for what reasons, music traditions on the Creole island of La Réunion are invented as original and fixed, while they remain indicators for cultural transition. I will discuss this by drawing on data collected during my one-year ethnographic fieldwork in 2003 and particularly on interviews conducted with musicians and other cultural actors on the island. With my informants, I discussed their musical enactments of what they perceive to be Réunionese culture and identity.[2] This text focuses on how some of them reproduce their visions of a cultural identity in Maloya. Maloya is a Réunionese music tradition and, as will be shown, a continuously reinvented concept, and as such, a framework through which musicians describe the cultural setting in which they locate themselves. In this way, Maloya also mediates Réunionese music traditions for various people in various cultural contexts. Its musical production is influenced by political, economic, and social differences. These form the setting within which the music and the invented traditions it transports are perceived.

La Réunion is a small island in the Indian Ocean and an Overseas-Department of France. It is composed of a bewildering mixture with the euro as its currency, EU stars on license plates, a subtropical climate, and an active volcano that erupts from time to time, spilling its lava into the ocean. Before being colonised, La Réunion was uninhabited. Therefore, the population's traditions cannot be described as original or rooted. Instead, as I will show, they are indicators of cultural transition and 'routedness'. Musical traditions do not point to something locatable at a certain place in time, but are designed as a patchwork of bits and pieces collected on musical routes that Réunionese musicians travel. They use this musical patchwork in order to grasp and proclaim the cultural background of their music-making.[3] While Terence Ranger argues that 'European invented traditions offered Africans a series of clearly defined points of entry into the colo-

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[1] Hobsbawm, 'Introduction', 1.

[2] Wergin, *Kréol Blouz*.

[3] Clifford, *Routes*.

nial world, though in almost all cases it was entry into the subordinate part of a man/master relationship',[4] the deliberate reference of Réunionese musicians to other musical settings allows for a conceptualization of invented traditions beyond this master/slave relationship. When using Maloya, Réunionese musicians present themselves as culturally autonomous. On a global scale, their music becomes a medium that enables Réunionese people to establish contact with other regions beyond a neo-colonial setting of metropolitan France as the centre and La Réunion as its subordinate periphery. Thus, Réunionese musicians offer their audiences a particular way of seeing the world, established in a specific rhythm, instrumentation, and structure: the Maloya.

What follows is a brief historical introduction to the last fifty years of music-making on La Réunion with a particular focus on the emergence of Maloya and its use as a political tool. This will lead into a description of how, at the end of the 1970s, a group of musicians began to use Maloya not only for the mediation of a political message but also as a means to represent their traditional difference from other musicians on a global scale. This group calls itself *militants culturels*. The third part of this text introduces the Réunionese band Bastèr and its relation to the *militants culturels*. My aim is to show how Bastèr has moved beyond the latter group's strategies and uses Maloya as one among many musical references to create pictures of places in which their audiences can locate themselves and their music. In conclusion, I analyse Bastèr's music as a 'translocal soundscape' – a vague but unifying whole that serves as the basis of a music whose tradition appears fixed but needs to remain flexible in order to incorporate new styles, narrations, and histories suitable and in accordance with the continuous rewriting of Réunionese history.

Historical Background

La Réunion was unpopulated when Portuguese sailors discovered it in 1507.[5] At first, pirates used the island as their hideout from where they set out to seize merchant ships crossing the Indian Ocean via the Cape of Good Hope. To these first inhabitants, La Réunion must have appeared to be paradise: no dangerous animals or fatal diseases, only clear skies, blue waters, and seemingly endless amounts of fish, birds, and other animals to eat. But from 1665 the French government began to colonise this sub-tropical paradise, and brought slaves from different regions of Africa to what was now called *Île Bourbon*. In the Indian Ocean region, Madagascar was a central market place where people from various ethnic groups

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[4]   Ranger, 'The Invention of Tradition', 227.

[5]   Chane-Kune, *Aux origines de l'identité*.

in Africa were 'stored' together and shipped on to other destinations. After their arrival on *Île Bourbon*, most of the slaves had to work on coffee plantations. In 1793, during the French Revolution, the island was given its current name, La Réunion. Since the early nineteenth century, plantation owners gradually shifted from coffee crops to sugar cane. When slavery was officially abolished in 1848, indentured labourers from India, particularly from Tamil Nadu, were shipped in to meet the demand for workers in an expanding plantation economy.[6] Of the numerous mills set up in the nineteenth century, only two are still in use. Nevertheless, the crop remains a major source of export earnings for the island, alongside with tourism, fishing, and large-scale social benefits from metropolitan France.[7] In 1946, La Réunion became an official French *Département Outre-Mer* (DOM), enjoying the same rights and obligations as other French departments. In 1997 it was incorporated into what in EU terminology is now called the *European Ultraperiphery*.[8] As already mentioned above, the island has no native population. It could thus serve as an ideal example for the EU motto *In varietate concordia*, 'United in Diversity', fostering the image of various cultural influences from Europe, Africa, India, and Southeast Asia living harmoniously as part of the European Union. What this image overshadows, however, is that Réunionese culture and identity have been shaped by experiences of slavery, deportation, and semi-forced labour.

In order to make this difference audible, Réunionese people began to employ music as a means to express their perspective on the island's social setting and its relations to Europe and metropolitan France. Transcending the ethnically and culturally mixed society, Maloya, in this context, is commonly referred to as one of Réunion's most authentic musical styles. Local musicians use this style to construct different images of Réunionese heritage and cultural identity partly generated by the French neo-colonial *métropole* some 11,000 kilometres away.[9]

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[6] This relates to the general discussion about semi-forced migration of workers from India to numerous islands in the Indian Ocean, also to be found, for example, on La Réunion's neighbouring island-state Mauritius. They were attracted by the argument that they would be able to make a good living for themselves and after a few years return home as richer men, which were only two of the promises hardly ever kept (Ghasarian, 'Indianité à La Réunion', Mann, 'How Many People', Tinker, *A New System*).

[7] In 2002 the unemployment rate on La Réunion was 31%. Total imports had a value of 2,931 million euro while exports were only 220 million euro, of which 88.6% were accounted for by income from sugarcane (INSEE 2003, *Tableau Economique*).

[8] La Réunion's status as a Région Ultrapériphérique (RUP) derives from Article 299.2 of the Amsterdam Treaty. More information is accessible via the URL: <http://www.regionreunion.com/fr/spip/ modelerup.php3?id_article=942> (accessed May 2008).

[9] France has dominated the island for more than 350 years and this is one of the many reasons why La Réunion has never been an isolated place. French administration and administrators form part of the local culture. But there remain certain paradoxes, for example, within the local school system, which parallels the French. As a result, the official curriculum expects Réuni-

Maloya was introduced as a political and cultural 'denominator'[10] by the island's communist party, the *Parti Communiste Réunionnais* (PCR), in the early 1950s and quickly became central to the presentation of La Réunion as autonomous from its *mère-patrie*. Although the PCR's campaign to achieve political autonomy for the island failed, the music remained a symbol of Réunionese cultural independence. Its mix of musical styles and political messages, articulated foremost in Réunionese Creole, demonstrates that any unifying cultural root is irretrievable because of the absence of a native population. Furthermore, the island's population is rooted in a culture fundamental to which is a violent history of slavery, semi-forced labour from India, socio-cultural suppression, and ongoing neo-colonial domination from metropolitan France.[11] Therefore, the idea of Réunionese culture informing Maloya is continuously renegotiated, and at the same time Maloya and the musicians playing it are one medium through which these negotiations are made audible.

By the end of the 1970s, Réunionese musicians affiliated with Maloya had become so-called *militants culturels*, a designation I have adopted from my interview partners. It is used to refer to a particular generation of musicians. Furthermore, it describes the transformation from a political to a cultural movement for independence and its revendication by various people, namely musicians, who, after the PCR withdrew from campaigning for Réunionese independence, continued to position themselves in the struggle against neo-colonial supremacy. In the 1980s, their music entered an arena established by an emerging World Music[12] industry. In these years, any sort of apparently 'authentic', 'exotic', or 'revolutionary' music attracted the attention of foreign musicians, producers, and festival organisers – mainly in Western countries. The emergence of this international label worshipping the image of *militants culturels* who fought for the recognition of their local culture in turn also further encouraged the commitment of those Réunionese musicians that assigned themselves to it. Their struggle continues until today and their musical imagery remains a useful tool for the successful enactment of uniqueness and authenticity. The fundamental characteristics of Maloya form their cultural capital and make their music valuable on a global scale. The difference to earlier times lies in its now rather depoliticised use. Maloya no longer represents Réunionese cultural autonomy for political pur-

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onese children to be taught that they are all Gallic in origin, even as, in 1999, around 35% or the population were of African or Malagasy descent, 28% Indian, and 4% Chinese. More information is accessible via the URL: http://www.outre-mer.gouv.fr/ (accessed November 2007).

[10] Erikson, *Ethnicity*.

[11] Vergès, *Monsters*.

[12] World Music has become an influential actor with concrete relevance to ongoing debates on the professed value of music traditions. The term describes a genre but also a discourse on what a traditional music is meant to sound like. As I argue in this article, Maloya musicians on La Réunion partly orient themselves and their music towards this discourse. In order to emphasise this discursive power of World Music, I have chosen to write the term with capital letters.

poses but has become a career development tool. Réunionese musicians are successful within the market for World Music as long as they remain able to emphasise a traditional musical difference from metropolitan France. This leads them to actively manipulate and invent new forms of local music tradition. Maloya is a medium through which musicians stage images of something uniquely Réunionese, something traditional, exotic, or folkloristic and by which they draw attention to their cultural difference. In what follows, I will further elaborate on this transition from political to cultural autonomy and how it is made audible. My central example will be the Réunionese band Bastèr, and their version of Bob Marley's 'Redemption Song'. In this version, the musicians make deliberate reference to Reggae, a musical style that links their work with another history of empowerment expressed in music – the Rastafari movement in Jamaica.[13]

From Political to Cultural Autonomy

Analytically, Maloya on La Réunion is related to numerous musical forms, from *griots* to *porte-plainte* to *servis kabaré*. In all of these cases, in order to invoke a musical tradition, a musician needs to refer to some imagined source of origin. This implies a step beyond Benedict Anderson's plea for 'imagined communities' in which the medium, in his case the newspaper, is the grounds on which such imaginations are based.[14] It stresses what James Clifford has outlined in his distinction between roots and routes.[15] People within an imagined community, provided by a musical medium such as Maloya, strive for a definition of their local culture that is suitable to their needs, as musicians, producers, or listeners. This becomes apparent in the light of a prototypical Réunionese musician who tries to be successful on the World Music market. His or her routes towards recognition are relevant for a general understanding of the use of traditions to present an 'imagined (Réunionese) community'. As mentioned above, musical imageries intonated in Maloya include the *griots* of West Africa, who carry news and stories wrapped in music from town to town. Another imagination is the *porte-plainte*, which relates to one of the Malagasy translations of the term Maloya, 'to spit out'. Similar to hip hop battles, people meet, sing Maloya, and give each other reasons why, for example, their village would be more beautiful than the others'. A *servis kabaré* also invokes Malagasy origins. It is a ceremony still held by some Réunionese families in which the spirits of dead ancestors are summoned. If such spirits are in a good mood and enjoy the Maloya, which is played continuously

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[13] Zips, *Schwarze Rebellen*.

[14] Anderson, *Imagined*.

[15] Clifford, *Routes*.

from six o'clock in the evening until six in the morning, they take possession of the bodies of one or the other participant and dance along with them.[16]

In all the above cases, Maloya is a medium into the past. It relates parts of a Réunionese population to imaginations of different regions, always in relation to a history of slavery and deportation. Based on these imaginations, in the 1950s, the PCR began to organise get-togethers of their political antennas, the *fêtes de témoignages*. These meetings were designed to *témoigne*, 'to give evidence', of the cultural difference of La Réunion from metropolitan France. They were held in Le Port, the island's main harbour city where the PCR usually collects most of its votes. Firmin Viry, one of the most famous Maloya musicians, for the first time publicly performed his music at these *fêtes de témoignages* and, in doing so, influenced a large number of young musicians. Some of them based their careers on his version of the Maloya, a mixture of political statement and taking pride in the enactment of Réunionese musical heritage.

Viry remains the musical icon of the *fêtes de témoignages*. The cover of the first Maloya recording shows him holding a *kayamb*, one of the central instruments used when performing Maloya, and singing at one of the *fêtes*. On the right hand side of the picture someone is holding a microphone in order to record his music. This first Maloya recording entitled *Document No.1 Aout 1976* was financed by the PCR. Apart from Viry's music, this recording also contains a speech by Paul Vergès, the party's chairman at the time. Vergès encourages the Réunionese population to stand together and to support the movement for autonomy from metropolitan France. As the title proclaims, the record was supposed to be a document of – in this case – the uniqueness of Réunionese culture and the local population should be agitated to join in and free itself from the chains of slavery still worn. This image was further invoked on the record cover that contrasted the images of Viry singing freely into a microphone and a gagged male or female slave.

Firmin Viry has always lived in the south of La Réunion, in a small village on the outskirts of St. Pierre, a city that was twice mooted as the capital of a bi-departmentalised La Réunion. The PCR and the Socialist Party supported this project. It failed twice because it was intended to lead La Réunion into complete independence from its *mère-patrie*, metropolitan France. The majority of the Réunionese population, however, never wanted full political independence from France, as this would have meant the end of financial subsidies and thus result in social and economic uncertainty.[17]

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[16] Dorsch, *Globale Griots*, Wergin, *Kréol Blouz*.

[17] The neighbouring island-state Mauritius has remained a striking negative example for them. After it gained independence from Britain in 1968, Mauritius faced great economic difficulties. Since then, the national economy has been profoundly restructured from agricultural monocrop production to a variety of goods and services. Nevertheless, the economy remains vulnerable to
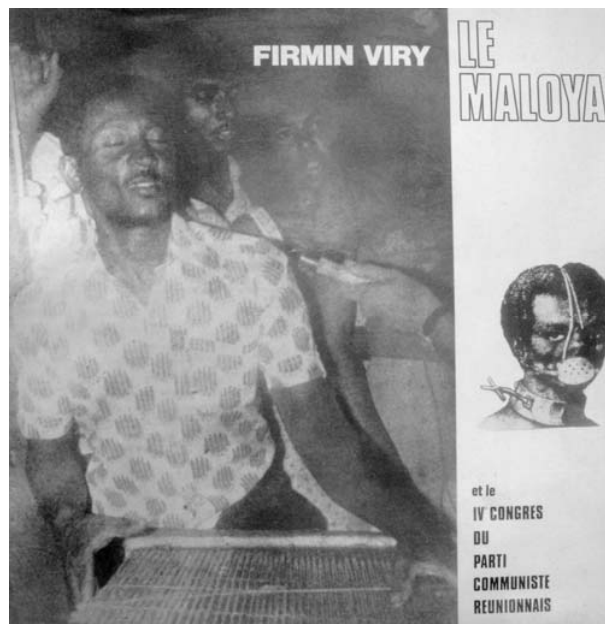
Figure 1: Cover of the first Maloya recording from the year 1976 financed by the PCR (photo by Carsten Wergin)

To strive for cultural independence, however, does not mean to give up those rights that guaranteed political and economic stability but came with political dependence. Because here the population could subscribe to a less precarious political agenda, the early *fêtes de témoignages*, the first public stagings of Maloya as an authentic Réunionese music, had a lasting effect. The *militants culturels* generation that emerged in the 1970s was the ideological offspring of musicians such as Firmin Viry, whose performances at the *fêtes de témoignages* had left a great impact on them. Furthermore, the emergence of the *militants culturels* is also linked to political developments in metropolitan France. In 1981, around the time when this generation of musicians was becoming increasingly visible, audible, and identifiable with Réunionese music, François Mitterrand was elected president. He initiated decentralisation measures that gave more administrative freedom but also financial support for socio-political and cultural projects to the various regions of France. Many years later, in 1997, La Réunion, together with the other three DOM-TOMs, became a *Région française monodépartementale*, with the joint administrative rights of a French region and a department.

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the ups and downs of the world market and the island's social hierarchy has remained surprisingly untouched by periods of economic decline and ascent (Neveling, 'Spirits'). Overall living standards remain below those of La Réunion, which are practically in line with the European Union and therefore unique to the region of the Southwest Indian Ocean.

For La Réunion, with its vital colonial past and neo-colonial present, this opened up new possibilities for self-representation. One of the beneficiaries was the group Bastèr that originated in a community-based project on the outskirts of St. Pierre, in a small village called Basse-Terre. Since then, St. Pierre has grown and Basse-Terre has become part of the city. But in the 1980s things were different, as Thierry Gauliris, lead singer and central figure of the band, explained to me: 'In this quarter there were the *servis kabarés* and since it was an agricultural area, one woke up with the natural sounds of the animals that sang, the cows, the cocks in the morning. That means a lot!'[18] This statement, notably to the *servis kabaré*, exemplifies the ways in which Gauliris introduces his own roots as a Réunionese musician. He does so with reference to the life-world of his childhood and youth, which he regards to be under attack by French modernisation, growing cities, and social housing. He grounds the music of his band Bastèr in a past cultural setting – when families still celebrated the *servis kabaré*. As St. Pierre grew and the slums of Basse-Terre gave way to social housing projects, the quarter's musical background changed. Before, the social structure of Basse-Terre had not been one of people living in three-storey houses on top of each other. But due to the advent of a social housing scheme, there was suddenly no space left to raise cocks or pigs. Instead, room was made to build garages for cars with large stereos that now blasted musical styles like *ragga*, *zouk luv*, or *soca* into the night, rather than Maloya. This, in Gauliris's eyes, has led to new problems. Based on this critique, he points to the importance of traditions in order to preserve a Réunionese cultural autonomy, which, as a *militant culturel*, is of central importance for him and his band.

Thierry Gauliris explained his views while we sat in front of his house and drank coffee. He wore dreadlocks, trendy jeans, and a shirt. Describing his identity with references to Europe, India, China, and slavery, he said: 'I have a bit of European in my genes, a bit of slave, of Chinese, even a bit of Indian… I'm very mixed.'[19] This is what he told me in front of the house. Meanwhile, behind the house, where Gauliris had outfitted his recording studio, a sound engineer from Jamaica was busy mixing Bastèr's new live album recorded at their twentieth anniversary concert a few months before. This collaboration represents a further development. Bastèr originated in initiatives for 'affirmative (musical) action' and the band members continue to attach themselves to these origins. By now, they have become a professional band that grew out of a socio-political movement, the *Mouvman Kiltirel de Basse-Terre* (MKBT). Their initial fight for the recognition

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[18] 'Dans ce quartier y'avait des servis kabarés et comme c'était un quartier agricole on était reveillés quand même au son naturel des animaux qui chantaient, des bœufs, des coqs le matin. Ça joue beaucoup!' (personal interview excerpt, Gauliris's home, September 2003, all translations by C. W.).

[19] 'J'ai de l'européen dans mes gènes, de l'esclave, de chinois, même de l'Inde un peu…je suis très mélangé' (personal interview excerpt, Gauliris's home, September 2003).

of a traditional Réunionese culture provides them with a unique background. It allows them to describe their neighbourhood as distinct from others, especially other poor areas throughout France. But in order to earn a living as musicians, Bastèr also has to be visible and audible not only for a local but also a global music market. With a population of roughly 800,000 people, Réunionese record sales alone cannot provide the necessary income in sales to finance the more than 400 new records produced by the island's musicians each year. As a consequence, Bastèr started to look for new musical connections. They have begun to incorporate popular sounds from other places that somehow connect to their ideas of music-making as well as to their musical background as *militants culturels*. As an outcome of these reorientations, their music is no longer solely a reference to the cultural autonomy of La Réunion. It has come to be produced within a translocal network of musicians, sounds, and ideas – which at the time of my visit meant the collaboration with a sound engineer from Jamaica.

Beyond Cultural Autonomy

Still, Maloya remains important for Gauliris and his group Bastèr. It serves them, as argued above, to be recognisable within the genre of World Music, where musical difference caters for an image of uniqueness and thus enhances artistic attractiveness. How this image is invented can be heard in Bastèr's interpretation of 'Redemption Song'. Hugh Hodges, a postcolonial theorist who specialises in African and West Indian literature, oral tradition and music, states in his essay 'Walk Good: West Indian Oratorical Traditions in Bob Marley's *Uprising*', that one of the album's central aspects is its reference to the oratorical traditions of the West Indies: '"Redemption Song", the closing song on *Uprising*, affirms this power of speech in a complex way. […] It begins with exile. But it ends with the triumphant trodding forward out of exile […] a triumph made possible by the fact that the one thing the pirates could not take away from the slaves was their voices'.[20]

'Old Pirates, yes, dey rob I, sold I to the merchant ships; Minutes after dey took I, from the bottomless pit; But my hand was made strong, by the 'and of the Almighty; we forward in dis generation, triumphantly…'.[21] Enacting oneself as a Réunionese *militant culturel* evokes a similar image of 'trodding forward out of exile': the Réunionese cultural exile in neo-colonial domination by metropolitan France. Bastèr relates over twenty years of musical history to this image. In the early 1980s the band began to incorporate new styles and sounds and created

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[20] Hodges, 'Walk Good', 59.

[21] 'Redemption Song' lyrics as in Hodges, 'Walk Good', 58–9.

their version of Maloya. They accompanied older songs with drums, electric gui-tars, and bass. The band continues this process of writing Réunionese music tra-dition, in the adaptation of 'Redemption Song' for example through deliberate reference to another (post-)colonial setting, that of Jamaica. The bandleader nur-tures Réunionese music by contrasting it with other cultural settings, other art-ists, and other musical styles, notably Reggae. To set the stage for this fusion of styles, in 1992, Thierry Gauliris changed the direction of his band from the local Basse-Terre towards global markets. 'After ten years of existence, around '92, that's when we – at least I – said to myself that we had to align the musical and the lyrical side of things. We had to practice, go to the conservatory, and take courses. That's what I did together with one of the musicians with whom I have stayed until today! Apart from this, the rest of the group – brothers, sisters, male and female cousins… we separated at that moment. I took new musicians, more trained, which had gone to music school in Paris or here. And this is how the group advanced'.[22] Gauliris explains in this interview excerpt why the band Bastèr, as founded in the early 1980s, no longer exists. Back in 1992, he put the narration about the roots of his music, fixed in Maloya and the quarter of Basse-Terre, partly aside. Instead, he opened his style to a wider audience by adjusting it to the criteria of the global music market.

As a 'close listening' reveals, Bastèr's version of 'Redemption Song' is indeed a strong and unique example of this. Its characteristic intro, taken from the original band version, sets the stage. The rhythm section, bass, and drums, together with harmonies from the guitar and piano leads as well as the instruments, quickly sound smoother when they start to accompany the voice of Gauliris. He sings the original lyrics in English. His French/Kréol-Réunionnais accent remains audible while he also imitates the Jamaican *patois*. Like the language in which it is sung, the rhythm of the song is both similar to and different from the original, played not in a straight 4/4 but in a 2/4 against a 3/4 rhythm. This makes the music sound fluid, in constant movement, and very danceable. The musical setting is contrasted by the lyrics of the song, which tell about deportation and violence, but also of increasing strength and of a redemption that is yet to come. The first few minutes of the song pass, and the contrast between lyrics and music develops. This becomes even more apparent when the lyrics stop for a piano break that is played in the style of an improvisation. Then, all of a sudden the piano stops as well and only the rhythm section comes back in. The soft sound of the electric bass is replaced by the deep voice of a voluminous drum. This rhythm has been

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22 'Après 10 ans d'existence, vers 92, c'est là qu'on – moi en tout cas, je me suis dit qu'il fallait même allier le côté musical et texte! Il fallait aller bosser: aller au conservatoire, prendre des cours. Ce que j'ai fait moi avec un des musiciens qui est resté jusqu'à maintenant! Sinon l'autre groupe: frères, sœurs, cousins, cousines, on s'est séparé comme ça. J'ai pris des nouveaux musiciens plus performants qui ont fait l'école à Paris ou même ici. Et c'est comme ça que le groupe a avancé' (personal interview excerpt, Gauliris's home, September 2003).

the foundation throughout the song. It is what created the danceable mixture of 2/4 against 3/4 rhythms in the beginning. Now the drum stands alone, only accompanied by the voice of the singer and the message of the lyrics. What becomes audible in this very moment is the way in which the original song has been transformed by adding sounds from somewhere else. This directs the song and its story towards other places, notably La Réunion, because it is the Maloya that suddenly appears underneath and reveals itself as the basis of a familiar song that sounded different from the start, because the Maloya had been present from the start. After the one-minute interlude featuring this enactment of 'authentic Réunionese music tradition', the harmony instruments, the piano and the guitar, come back joined by the drums, again making the sound smoother. The music is now close to an easy listening genre and as such now caters to very different images: from slavery to supermarket, Jamaica to La Réunion, and Middle Passage to High Street shopping centre. The song ends with the rhythm section restating the rhythmic introduction, this time accompanied by the drumming of the *roulèr*, another instrument that, like the *kayamb*, is a key element of any Réunionese Maloya performance. Its sound is loud and central to these concluding bars, in which Gauliris shouts out a few cheers of encouragement for the musicians to go on, play, and let loose, announcing a *servis kabaré* with endless music played throughout the night that is about to begin.

These last bars emphasise the extent to which the establishment of a Réunionese music tradition remains in flux. The music changes and evokes new images. The sounds of the Réunionese Maloya as intonated by Gauliris and Bastèr leave room for further development. Their Réunionese interpretation of 'Redemption Song' is as distinct from Marley's classic as it is from other interpretations. Understood as such, the musicians provide an alternative version, enriched by their musical background. But this does not mean that their island serves them as an original musical setting. Instead, the musicians work with different images of what they consider their Réunionese music tradition to be. Bastèr, by striving for a Réunionese music tradition, have gone beyond the criteria of the World Music market where the search for the exotic, for the different, and for musical opposition to an idealtypical image of Western ideology and lifestyle prevails. While Bastèr's musical tradition is informed by the attractiveness of an image of uniqueness and authenticity, they continue their search for musical roots of the 'other' kind, similar to but also different from their own. Those roots link La Réunion to places beyond the Southwestern Indian Ocean and beyond the island's traditional Creole setting as well as its dependency on metropolitan France.

Thierry Gauliris and Bastèr take new musical routes. The audibility of the band remains rooted in their impersonation of *militants culturels*, while, in a professionalised way, Bastèr also reinterprets musical symbolisms from other regions. Bob Marley's 'Redemption Song' is one of these symbolisms. When it is mixed with Maloya, the band extends Réunionese music tradition beyond the dichotomy of a

French *métropole* versus a Réunionese *périphérie*. This leads Réunionese cultural autonomy into a referential space beyond a presumably fixed neo-colonial setting. Marley's call for 'redemption' is rephrased through the emphasis on another music tradition, that of Maloya. In doing so, the music becomes a medium for new narrations and enactments of music traditions. Thierry Gauliris, himself from a Creole background, rearranges a music that is derived from yet another Creole setting, that of Jamaica. As such, Bastèr's 'Redemption Song' continues the traditional mixing of a mixing of a mixing, turned into something original by its artistic quality.

Conclusions

Gauliris and his musicians chose Maloya to give their music an original sound. The Réunionese form of 'redemption' they created offers the possibility to describe and follow up various routes, between, for example, La Réunion, Europe, Jamaica, and Africa – as I have done in this paper. Through such enactments, Gauliris and other musical actors connect La Réunion with other cultural settings. At the same time, they enhance the image of musical, cultural, and traditional uniqueness. Such is the basis for the band's success on the global World Music scale where an audience is particularly interested in musical authenticity. To achieve this, Bastèr oriented its music further away from the political struggle with metropolitan France. Simultaneously, in their adaptation of Marley's lyrics that talk about slavery and deportation, the former coloniser remains present. The band turned towards the history of Reggae, another musical form whose roots rest in a critical reflection of a violent colonial past. In doing so, Bastèr fosters an image of uniqueness not by combining but by contrasting Reggae with Maloya. This form of 'boundary-work'[23] also emphasises technological developments that have a great impact on the ways in which traditions are invented today. 'Boundary-work' is a concept developed to better grasp the distinctions between science and non-science. In this particular case, it underlines the importance of technological advancements in the invention of musical histories. As Eric Hobsbawm argues in an interview from 1995, 'the economic-technological base provides to some extent the framework, the limitations, within which culturally a variety of different forms of organization can develop.'[24] This is especially true for the music sector, where various networks, set up by the increased circulation of recordings, but also by concert agents or festivals, have lead to a much closer interconnection among artists. One of the results, among many others, was the

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[23] Gieryn, 'Boundary-Work'.

[24] Hobsbawm, *A Talk with Eric Hobsbawm.*

participation of a Jamaican sound-engineer in the production of Bastèr's live album in 2003.

What I have shown in this paper is that Bastèr's musical tradition is rooted in a multitude of socio-cultural influences. It also remains open to new roots. Here, it is not the search for one or the other place of origin that is central to musical production, but the conscious working with and adding of new differences. Bastèr enacts cultural identity in an individualised manner. In their music, the band gives this identity a momentary order that quickly dissolves into another sound, another musical imagery, or improvisation. In contrast to this idea of a music tradition in constant flux, Maloya-influenced elements in Bastèr's 'Redemption Song' still refer to Réunionese roots and appear relatively fixed. Therefore, while Gauliris introduces Reggae into his own musical style, and thereby incorporates new musical elements into his image as a *militant culturel*, he also continues to advocate the importance of Réunionese music in the struggle for cultural autonomy. This is one of the reasons why Maloya represents one of the most acknowledged Réunionese music traditions. But looking at Réunionese history, this style was only invented as a political means roughly fifty years ago at the first *fêtes de témoignages*. On a cultural level, this invention has become a far more complex task than a mere differentiation between master and slave, dominant and subordinate group. Musical actors, such as the Réunionese *militants culturels*, are no longer bound to traditions offered by their *mère-patrie*, regardless of whether they adopt or oppose them. Global music production turns such references into something ordinary. But the ordinary is not what attracts the World Music audience. Therefore, on a musical level, the invention of tradition must continue. This urge leads people into new referential spaces. Tradition, therefore, remains a powerful concept to the extent that it reshapes the perception of a place such as La Réunion, but also of metropolitan France, its former coloniser. The boundary between those giving and those receiving traditional knowledge has become difficult to sustain because experts and mediators of such knowledge, in this case musicians, are no longer solely informed by the ideal image of a colonising culture, but by the demands of a future-oriented World Music market. This inevitably leads musicians into a translocal soundscape. Here, 'boundary-work' is audible, at least for the duration of a song.

As outlined in the opening quotation by Hobsbawm and Ranger, the central theme of this text has been the appearance and establishment of musical traditions rather than their chances of survival. In this regard, I conclude with one final observation. It is crucial to note that Réunionese music cannot be submerged to a deconstructionist critique as derived from conventional scientific debates about the professed value of traditions.[25] This is because it has been exposed to such critique from the very beginning. Music-making on La Réunion has for a long time

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[25] Cf. Handler and Linnekin, 'Tradition', Linnekin, 'Cultural Invention'.

been a political project, a form of boundary work through which local musicians have tried to articulate narratives that differ from the one of a 'Unity in Diversity' brought forth as a dominant ideology by neo-colonial powers. This project demands personal engagement beyond that of a musician performing one traditional song after the other because its social implications go well beyond that of staging authenticity.[26] Nevertheless, the individual song remains one decisive moment in which such a project culminates. It is invented not to last, but to draw attention to the sublime, the 'other', which appears wherever a sound challenges the ordinary, notably a musical tradition that does not exist.

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Selling Tradition in Japanese Rural Tourism

Cornelia Reiher

Introduction

The debate on rural areas threatened by demographic and economic changes has been revived in recent years. Particularly amongst geographers, urban planners and economists these threats are now discussed from the perspective of 'shrinking cities or regions'.[1] As in other countries also in Japan some of these phenomena are not new. Instead, similar problems have been on the agenda since the 1960s, when initiatives to revive remote villages, known as *mura okoshi*, were launched by the government.[2] Among the aims of such plans was to turn local tradition into an important resource for diverse endeavours, particularly economic revitalisation. One main measure focused on the inclusion of remote areas into domestic tourism and was accompanied by a 'flush of rural nostalgia'.[3] Nationwide tourism campaigns drew on the already widespread nostalgic feelings of a lost 'premodern past',[4] which, according to travel agencies, could be rediscovered in rural areas. Thus, these campaigns significantly contributed to the rise of a Japanese localism in the 1980s. Many attempts to commodify cultural traits focused on 'the symbolism of communal belongingness'[5] epitomised in *furusato*, or the 'home village community'.[6] Until today, this project of preserving or revitalising a locality's traditions is kept alive in discourses of community planning and town revitalisation programmes in Japan. Tradition and local culture[7] have been and still are perceived as resources for town development that can help communities revive their economies and local identities against threats posed by global capitalism, the politics of decentralisation of the central government, or communal bank-

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[1] See for example www.shrinkingcities.com and Flüchter, 'Shrinking Cities'.

[2] Knight, 'Rural Kokusaika' and Id., 'Rural Revitalization in Japan'.

[3] Kelly, 'Rationalization and Nostalgia', 608.

[4] Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*.

[5] Creighton, 'Pre-industrial Dreaming', 129.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Although tradition and culture are often used synonymously within the Japanese discourse on community planning, I consider culture as the field, in which political and social identities are produced and reproduced (see Marchart, *Cultural Studies*, 12). Tradition on the other hand is conceptualised as one of many means by which difference and thus identities are produced within this field.

ruptcy.[8] However diffuse the perception of these threats may be, contemporary practical and socio-scientific discourses on community planning in Japan do not give much consideration to a critical analysis of the use of tradition although this category is credited with such importance for town or city revitalisation. Tradition has rather been perceived as a 'natural resource'[9] than as an outcome of social construction. Therefore, hardly any attention was paid to the construction of traditions[10] and their impact on community planning. In this article, I will reflect on the impact of invented traditions on community planning and town revitalisation activities in Japan. My reflections are based on a case study of a campaign that aimed to promote tourism in Arita, a rural Japanese town that until recently considered itself as a centre of traditional crafts rather than as a tourist destination.

In the first part of the paper, I will introduce Arita, a municipality in Saga prefecture in the northwest of Kyūshū, and its traditional ceramic industry.[11] Then, I intend to show how, against the background of a crisis in the ceramic industry, measures of community planning and town revitalisation entered the general discussion of community planning and connected it to tradition. Launched for the first time in spring 2005 to bring tourism to the crisis-ridden town and its kilns, the annual Arita Ceramic Doll Festival is the main social event that this study will focus on. I will examine how local tradition and history are referred to in the festival and how these tropes were presented in promotional material, tourist pamphlets, as well as local, regional, and national media. Further references are made to statistics and internal papers collected when I was employed at the municipal hall in Arita from 2004 to 2006 as a coordinator for international relations. The functions of tradition within the campaign and the actors that invented and utilised it will be examined. For this purpose, I interviewed actors involved in the campaign while I conducted research in Arita for the second time in January 2008, shortly before the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival was held for the fourth time.

In the second part, theoretical implications of the case study will be discussed against the background of Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger's concept of the 'invention of tradition'.[12] Adopting a critical stance towards the concept as mis-

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[8] See, for example, Yonemitsu, 'Promoting Traditional Craft Industries'; Rausch, 'Local Identity'; Funabiki, *Meido in Nippon*.

[9] Rausch, 'Local Identity', 134.

[10] Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions.'

[11] The research I conducted concerning the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival is part of my doctoral research project about Arita's ceramic industry in global contexts. The objective of this research project is the identification of local actors' perceptions concerning the impact of globalization on Arita and its residents in an economic and social crisis that not only questions their collective identity, but also alters the integration of the town and its products within regional, national, and global reference systems.

[12] Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions'.

leadingly implying that 'anything goes'[13] as invention, I point out that to discuss the process of inventing traditions within the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival without considering practices of commodification and consumption of traditions in Japan on a national level conceals the limitations to this process. However, it is this set of practices of commodification and consumption that provides what Marshall Sahlins calls the 'structures within which the invention of tradition occurs.'[14] Therefore, I will briefly introduce recent research on the commodification of tradition in Japan since the 1980s, especially highlighting tourism and its role in the perpetuation of the dichotomy between urban and rural Japan in order to attract urban visitors. I argue that the traditions incorporated into the campaign in Arita were not selected arbitrarily and that the initiators of the festival were aware of the Japanese market that has framed the context for travel agencies, department stores, and mass media in order to sell local traditions to urban consumers for decades. This network for the promotion of traditions as consumer goods constitutes what cultural geographer Jane Jacobs, referring to the logic of consumption, has called the 'infrastructure of tradition'.[15] I will show that institutions and discourse within the Japanese setting have imposed constraints on the selection and invention of traditions within the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival. Thus, this calls for a modification of the 'anything goes' implications put forward by Hobsbawm and Ranger. This article contributes to the discussion of the 'invention of tradition' concept beyond the simple constructivist approach of declaring traditions invented. Secondly, it is a contribution to the discourse on community planning in rural Japan analysing how tradition is constructed as a resource within community planning activities and highlighting the limitations of such constructions.

Arita and the Crisis of its Ceramic Industry

Arita is a municipality with slightly more than 21,000 inhabitants.[16] When I arrived in Arita in August 2004, I encountered a small town that had an atmosphere of a village surrounded by rice paddies and mountains and was mainly composed of small kilns. This first impression differed from the image created in the tourist pamphlet my employer, the municipal hall of Arita, had sent to give me an impression. This pamphlet, written in German, introduced Arita as the 'hometown

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13   Ben-Ari, 'Contested Identities', 218.

14   Sahlins, 'Two or three things I know about culture', 402.

15   Jacobs, 'Tradition is (not) modern', 35.

16   When I conducted my first fieldwork on the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival in spring 2005 and 2006, Arita had not yet merged with the neighbouring town Nishi-Arita. Thus, the number of inhabitants was only 12,700 at the time.

of Japanese porcelain' (*nihon no jiki no furusato*), whose products were especially popular in Europe during the seventeenth century and which, up to the present day, remains an internationally important and respected centre of porcelain production where traditions are preserved and successfully combined with modern manufacturing techniques.[17]

As a Japanese concept, *furusato* literally means 'old village'. Furthermore, it implies the image of a rural landscape and embodies the ideal of the place of birth. It connotes a symbolic community that is strongly connected to one's childhood memories and to which all Japanese are invited to relate to, no matter whether individual citizens have actually spent their childhood in the countryside or not.[18] *Furusato* was one of the key terms in a wave of nostalgia that resulted in a 'national obsession with nostalgic imagery, particularly that of a presumed lost past'.[19] Anthropologist Millie Creighton claims that this nostalgia boom was a reaction to Japan's economic success, the growing rural–urban disparity, westernisation, urbanisation, and the goal of internationalisation dictated by the Japanese government.[20] In the course of a general search for identity in Japanese society in the 1980s and 1990s, numerous sites claimed with varying justifications to be the *furusato* of Japan or the 'real Japan' based on particular objects, practices, performances, and festivals.[21]

Respectively, Arita's local government, entrepreneurs, and public and private museums present their town as the hometown of Japanese porcelain. Arita's tourist pamphlet informs the visitor as follows:

> 'Arita is a representative pottery town for the whole of Japan. The small and huge porcelain pieces in the displays of the shops in the beautiful old district of the town as well as the museums and archaeological collections narrate the story of porcelain from its very beginning and wait for your visit. […] In Arita, the variety of porcelain products ranges from traditional fine art objects to fine ceramics. In this respect, it is representative of Japan's porcelain towns. Porcelain production and porcelain painting at the kilns are based on tradition and are still alive in the work of the contemporary ceramists in Arita and are to be seen in their precise, high-level technique.'[22]

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[17] Arita-chō, *Arita – Wiege des japanischen Porzellans*.

[18] Creighton, 'Pre-industrial Dreaming', 130.

[19] Ibid., 129.

[20] Ibid., 129–30.

[21] Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*, 105–6.

[22] Arita Kankō kyōkai, *Gaido bukku*. (English translation by the author)

The '400-year-long history'[23] of the town and of porcelain manufacturing in Arita that is perpetually referred to in order to establish Arita as the Japanese hometown of porcelain, ironically begins with the Japanese invasion of Korea at the end of the sixteenth century. Ri Sam Pei, a Korean potter who was captured in 1592 and later brought to Saga Domain[24] by the troops of its feudal lord Nabeshima Naoshige, discovered porcelain stone in Arita in 1616 and produced the first porcelain in Japan. This technique of porcelain production has been continued by many generations of potters and has contributed to the success of contemporary Arita ware.[25] The narrative of the history of Arita's porcelain production continues with the seventeenth and the late nineteenth centuries, when Arita was a site of porcelain production for global markets. 'In the seventeenth century Arita porcelain, with its exotic Asian beauty, evoked admiration in Europe'.[26] Exported to Europe by the Dutch East Indies Company, '[…] the porcelain that was exported under the name of Imari as a substitute for the Chinese porcelain from Jingdezhen was very popular amongst kings, the nobility and the rich ruling class. The Saxon King August I, who ruled Dresden and its environs, was so taken in by its beauty that he started a porcelain manufacture in Meißen'.[27] Arita ware experienced another wave of popularity abroad at the end of the nineteenth century when products from workshops in Arita were exhibited at different world exhibitions to represent the high quality of Japanese crafts.

Throughout the twentieth century, however, the success of Arita ware was restricted to the domestic market. According to the historian Yonemitsu Yasushi, the Arita ware industry grew remarkably in the early 1980s, boomed during the bubble economy (1985–1992), and then, along with most other Japanese consumer industries, struggled in the post-bubble 1990s. [28] 'In the 1980s Arita ware sold by its name only', states Mr. F., an employee at Arita's municipal hall. 'It did not matter what kind of ceramics it was as long as Arita ware was written on the price tag'.[29] While during the bubble economy, luxurious Japanese tableware was in great demand at the big department stores, large hotels, and high-end restaurants, in the 1990s, catering demand fell sharply and Japanese hotels also bought less.[30] This resulted in a decrease of sales from 3.4 billion JPY in 1991 to 1.6 billion JPY in 2004.[31]

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[23] Ibid.

[24] Saga Domain or Saga-*han* was a feudal domain during the Tokugawa period (1603–1868).

[25] Hisatomi, 'Atarashii Ri Sam Pei-hi ni tsuite', 1.

[26] Arita-chō, 'Kizuna', 17.

[27] Ibid., 18.

[28] Tolliday and Yonemitsu, 'Microfirms and Industrial Districts in Japan', 53–4.

[29] Interview with Mr. F., 5 February 2008.

[30] Tolliday and Yonemitsu, 'Microfirms and Industrial Districts in Japan', 53.

[31] Arita-chō, '17nen Arita-chō Tōkeisho', 7.

A large percentage of Arita's local residents, however, continue to earn their living in the ceramic industry, with its approximately 100 kilns and almost twice as many retailers and wholesalers.[32] Arita's ceramic industry is mainly composed of small family-owned businesses whose products and sales strategies are extremely diverse. This is especially true of prices, designs, and manufacturing techniques. Porcelain created by Arita's most famous potters, the so-called 'Living National Treasures' (*ningen kokuhō*) Sakaida Kakiemon XIV and Imaizumi Imaemon, easily costs more than 5000 Euro a piece because it is all hand thrown, hand painted, and wood fired. In other kilns, however, porcelain is shaped by machines and decorated with stamps. Therefore prices are much lower. While Kakiemon and few others were designated as 'Important Intangible Cultural Treasures' (*jūyō mukei bunkazai*) by the Ministry of Education in 1971 and therefore bound to a specific historic manufacturing style that they are supposed to pass on,[33] other potters have never established a distinct design or brand, which exacerbates the distinction of Arita ware from porcelain originating in other places.

The Arita ware production region, also referred to as community-based consumer goods industries or *jiba sangyō*,[34] contains three principal ceramic ware districts around the towns of Arita, Hasami, and Imari, which Yonemitsu[35] describes as a remote region with relatively poor transportation infrastructure and no significant industry apart from ceramics. Contrary to Yonemitsu's view, I emphasize that Arita is located on the express train route and the motorway between Nagasaki and Fukuoka and boasts acceptable transport connections compared with other rural towns in Japan.[36] The town itself is generally praised for its beautiful setting, with the 'valley of the thousand (ceramic) shops'[37] surrounded by mountains. Despite its small size Arita hosts more than twenty museums and galleries, and the *uchiyama* district, alongside the main street, was designated by the Japanese government as a 'District with Important Traditional Architecture'

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[32] Here are some facts and figures to give the reader an idea about economic conditions in Arita: The ceramics industry is the largest employer in Arita town, second is the municipality. In 2004, 2000 people were employed in the production sector alone. The total population of Arita town before the merger in March 2006 was 12,700. Amongst those residents, 3,000 were already retired and about 2,000 were aged under 15. For more figures, see Arita-chō, '17nen Arita-chō Tōkeisho', 8.

[33] Tolliday and Yonemitsu, 'Microfirms and Industrial Districts in Japan', 62.

[34] *Jiba sangyō* means 'community-based industries' or 'localised industries'. The term refers to geographically concentrated industries composed of small-scale enterprises whose products tend to be strongly associated with the locale. Typically, the names of cities are associated with the product (Tolliday and Yonemitsu, 'Microfirms and Industrial Districts in Japan', 41).

[35] Ibid., 43–4.

[36] It takes 80 minutes by train and 60 minutes by car to get from Fukuoka to Arita and 50 minutes by car from Arita to Nagasaki via the motorway.

[37] Arita Kankō kyōkai, *Gaido bukku*.

(*dentōteki kenzōbutsugun hozonchiku*).[38] Thus, the construction of Arita's traditional traits, i.e. people, manufacturing techniques, buildings, and artwork, by local, prefectural, and national authorities and their recognition as authentic in the local, regional, and national discourses is rather strong.

The economic and social problems Arita faces at present are to a large extent due to Japan's general economic decline. Heterogeneity of companies, products, and customers make it difficult to agree on one strategy to overcome the crisis felt by most citizens and referred to perpetually. Social effects such as unemployment, migration of the young to the cities, and obsolescence are problems that rural areas all over Japan are faced with. In March 2006, Arita and its neighbouring town, the largely agricultural Nishi-Arita, merged in the context of the so-called 'Great Municipal Mergers of the Heisei Era' (*heisei no daigappei*) and became a municipality with a population of around 21,000 residents. With regard to decentralisation measures, the central government promoted the 'voluntary' merger of municipalities aiming at saving costs through economies of scale and the simplification of government bureaucracies and services.[39] However, the merger was not as voluntary as it was alleged, since municipalities that would not merge faced the withdrawal of governmental support.[40] Against this background of economic decline and the impact of the municipal merger upon the collective identity, various local actors have attempted to revive the town by increasingly focusing on tourism grounded in traditional crafts and the creation of a new identity that embraces the residents of both towns.

Revitalisation Strategies for Rural Areas in Japan

The problems faced by Arita since the early 1990s are problems that other localities mainly depending on traditional craft industries already experienced in the 1980s.[41] In Arita, a wide variety of measures for revitalising the town and its industry have been implemented and the discussion on better and more unique

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[38] Ibid.

[39] The first extensive merger in Japanese modern history took place in 1888–89 when the 71,314 identified natural settlements were amalgamated into 15,859 cities, towns, and villages. Within the second phase of mergers in 1953–1956, 9,868 cities, towns and villages were merged to yield 4,668 municipalities undertaken for purposes of establishing a national treasury subsidy system. Over 5000 villages disappeared and the number of cities nearly doubled (Rausch, 'Municipal Mergers').

[40] Interview with Arita's mayor Yoshinaga Masata on 22 September 2006 in Meissen.

[41] Yonemitsu, 'Promoting Traditional Craft Industries', 58.

strategies is extremely vivid at present.[42] Many efforts towards the revitalisation of Arita and the wider region that have been undertaken are related to the development of new ceramic products or more effective public relations and can be referred to as *sangyō saisei* or the revitalisation of industry. Especially for locally based consumer industries, concepts have been developed lately that emphasise tradition, design, and skill (*waza*) to connect the locality of production with certain locally distinct traditions and at the same time with national values.[43]

The central government's approach to regional development plans shifted within the last fifty years due to several attempts to adapt to changes within Japanese society but also as a reaction to global developments. Shortly after World War Two until the late 1970s the national development plans concentrated upon providing incentives to enterprises to locate in peripheral areas.[44] Today, the economist Ueta[45] argues for a reconsideration of the concept of industrial revitalisation (*sangyō saisei*) in an era of deindustrialisation. Thus, revitalisation strategies for cities in particular have to be separated from genuinely economic measures of industrial revitalisation. Above all, the revitalisation of towns and cities focuses on the people and what social scientist Neil Evans calls 'soft measures'[46] such as environmental issues and the revitalisation of regional culture and community that are intrinsically tied to each other. Accordingly, cultural education plays a crucial role within new conceptions of town revitalisation.[47]

In addition to these changes within the concept of industrial revitalisation, other less industry-oriented approaches have been discussed in Japan, such as the 'One Village – One Product Revitalisation Movement' (*isson ippin undō*), the 'Furusato Creation Movement', and regional and town revitalisation programmes in connection with the promotion of tourism and community planning (*machizukuri*). Within these approaches, the construction of a distinct local identity to distinguish a town or a region from others, often by constructing and emphasising 'tradition', is the main objective.

The 'One Village – One Product Revitalisation Movement' was first advocated by Hiramatsu Morihiko, then former governor of Oita prefecture, in 1979. It encouraged municipalities to promote 'whatever locally characteristic item it possesses'. Related to this was the formation of a community identity for the im-

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42 Arita also cooperates with the Saga University and the Kyūshū Sangyō University in Fukuoka in the field of community planning and the ceramic industry. See Arita-chō, 'Chiiki saisei wo kataru', 3.

43 Funabiki, *Meido in Nippon*, 10–11.

44 Funck, 'When the Bubble Burst', 333.

45 Ueta et al., *Toshi keizai to sangyō saisei*, vi.

46 Evans, '*Machi-zukuri* as a New Paradigm', 455.

47 Ueta et al., *Toshi keizai to sangyō saisei*, vii.

provement of the 'selling of places'. Localities were encouraged to find what Sam K. Steffensen calls an 'image product' that could somehow be claimed to be number one in Japan and turn this into a source of local pride. Accompanied by so-called cultural administration (*bunka gyōsei*), museums were built as manifestations of local culture and autonomy. Cultural activities were strongly promoted, both in order to try and fill the wide economic gap in relation to the centre, and to revitalise and (re)invent local socio-cultural characteristics. The promotion of architectural heritage as a commodity has evoked remarkable interest from Japanese corporations and resulted in substantial financial commitments, too.[48]

National government policies such as Prime Minister Takeshita's '*Furusato* Creation Policy' established in 1988 were followed by a large number of prefectures in Japan adopting similar programmes that emphasised local specialties and encouraged *furusato* making. Especially in the 1980s such programmes widely expressed interest in community life and traditions, – be they cultural, historical, or natural. Because all these activities focused on local differences, according to Steffensen, the whole campaign turned out to be quite ironical once localities started competing with each claiming uniqueness in a very similar manner and rhetoric. [49]

Regional as well as town revitalisation and the tourism industry are closely linked with one another. Many sites and events in Japan were cultivated as traditional and commodified for tourism.[50] In the wake of the bubble economy, large-scale national programmes provided subsidies for tourism-related projects in conjunction with the attempted revitalisation of rural areas. Examples are the Law for the Development of Comprehensive Resort Areas from 1987 and the 100 Million Yen Hometown Revitalisation Program in 1988. A total of 3.286 municipalities received funding from the latter and the bulk of subsidies was spent on projects creating local imaginaries based on history and traditions. Several other legislative acts implemented in the past aimed to save cultural properties. There is, for instance, the Law on Important Preservation Districts for Groups of Traditional Buildings from 1975 and the Law for the Promotion of Traditional Industrial Arts from 1973. More recent initiatives include the Project for Beautiful Japanese Villages (2004) and the Project for the Planning of Rural Spaces (2003) by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MOFF). This also indicates that cultural programmes are not only within the responsibilities of the Agency of Cultural Affairs but that every ministry takes measures to foster regional uniqueness and local identities. All these initiatives aim at the development and preserva-

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[48] Steffensen, 'Evolutionary Socio-Economic Aspects', 156–63.

[49] Ibid., 158, 172.

[50] A number of laws have contributed to this trend, such as the Law on Folk Cultural Property in 1954 and the Law on Important Preservation Districts for Groups of Traditional Buildings from 1975.

tion of regional particularities and traditions for the promotion of regional indus-tries, in particular, tourism.[51]

Strategies seeking the revitalisation of towns, cities, regions, and local industries through the promotion of tourism are also closely linked to the concept of com-munity planning or *machizukuri*. The practice of *machizukuri* has become a key concept within contemporary Japanese urban planning discourse, particularly over the last twenty years. What distinguishes *machizukuri* from conventional approaches to urban planning and practices in public construction projects is the decentralisation of the planning process and increased public participation, which Neil Evans sees as evidence of the gradual (re)generation of civil society in Japan. However, *machizukuri* is neither restricted to the actual construction of roads or public facilities nor to urban areas. Some authors even see it as the most signifi-cant keyword within the contemporary discourse of 'local community' (*chiiki shakai*), as community planning in the first place aims at enriching all aspects re-lated to the lives of local residents.[52] *Machizukuri* in rural areas is, similar to other revitalisation movements, a reaction to social and economic decline.[53] While revi-talisation movements usually involve top-down approaches, the ideal *machizu-kuri* involves the cooperation of local residents and local governments.[54] Conse-quently, when I refer to *machizukuri*, I draw on what Evans calls 'soft' *machizu-kuri* activities, which he defines as those that help to bring, or keep, residents to-gether and reinforce a kind of [...] community spirit.[55] Anthony Rausch refers to local identity as a resource within the process of *machizukuri* that 'offers both an expansive range of cultural commodities, including traditional foods, regional languages, crafts, folklore, local visual arts and drama, literary references, histori-cal and prehistoric sites, landscape systems, and their associated flora and fauna'.[56]

In summary, revitalisation initiatives for peripheral areas in Japan within the last decades have shifted from a focus on industry towards the 'marketing of places' through tourism. While conventional approaches of revitalisation programmes have been initiated by the central government, community planning as a joint process between local residents and local governments has emerged. The cultural traits of localities have gained importance for, on the one hand, creating a better living environment and a community spirit for local residents and, on the other, for being promoted as tourist attractions. Be it traditional skills and designs for

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51 Fukuda, 'Representing our Region'.

52 Evans, '*Machi-zukuri* as a New Paradigm', 443–4.

53 Steffensen, 'Evolutionary Socio-Economic Aspects', 144.

54 Evans, 'Machi-zukuri as a New Paradigm', 449.

55 Ibid., 455.

56 Rausch, 'Local Identity', 125.

the revitalisation of local consumer good industries,[57] traditional foods and historical sites for the creation of a local identity for *machizukuri*,[58] or the invention of traditions and the promotion of architectural heritage for the revitalisation of localities[59] – tradition is often referred to within such revitalisation movements in the whole of Japan.

Reviving Arita: From the Centre of Traditional Crafts to a Tourist Spot?

As regards tourism, Arita has almost no infrastructure or even attractions. While porcelain production in Arita flourished during the 1980s, there was no need for a stimulation of the tourist infrastructure. Therefore, it was not until the mid-1990s that tourist facilities were introduced in Arita, including a shopping mall for tableware and a porcelain theme park. Lacking hot springs, well-known sights, scenic spots, and accommodation, Arita is not a typical Japanese tourist town. If, as Nezar AlSayyad argues, tourists travel to find difference, hospitality, authenticity and truth in times and places away from their own everyday life, and if the tourist gaze transforms the material reality of the built environment into a 'cultural imaginary',[60] then the task for the producers in the tourist industry would be to create such an imaginary. What in this respect, one must ask, can Arita offer tourists?

With the exception of its annual Ceramic Fair, city dwellers came to Arita neither as tourists nor as customers because Arita ware was sold in department and retail stores close to where they lived. Arita's attraction therefore differs in many ways from such ideal-type tourist destinations like the pottery village of Onta, which is famous for its craft and where city dwellers travel seeking to reaffirm a fiction of Japanese past.[61] Arita as a *furusato* of porcelain instead was represented by its local products outside the town. An employee of the municipal hall complained about urban consumers' lack of knowledge concerning Arita ware and the town where it is produced, referring to insufficient communication between producers and consumers. This, he explained, is partly due to the retail system where producers entrust their products to local wholesalers who, in turn, sell them to regional or urban retailers or department stores.[62]

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[57] Funabiki, *Meido in Nippon*, 8.

[58] Rausch, 'Local Identity', 125.

[59] Steffensen, 'Evolutionary Socio-Economic Aspects', 165, 172.

[60] AlSayyad, 'Manufacturing Urban Heritage', 3.

[61] Moeran, *Folk Art Potters of Japan*, 222.

[62] Interview with municipal hall employee Mr. F., 5 February 2008.

The crisis of the ceramic industry described earlier, forced local actors to rethink this concept and to attract consumers to the town itself, thereby redirecting the image of the *furusato* from the products to the actual production site. This idea is poignantly expressed in a statement by a municipal hall official in the magazine *Chihōzei*: 'Arita is presently marketing walks in the romantic backstreets downtown with its many ceramic shops. If visitors buy items in those stores, they appear even lovelier than in department stores close to where the visitors live, because here they incorporate the charisma of the love with which they were made.'[63]

Figure 1: Visitors to Arita's annual Ceramic Fair crowd in the usually quiet main street (Picture: Cornelia Reiher, 30 April 2005)

Whilst 1.65 million visitors came to Arita in 1997, their number went up to 2.39 million in 2003, but shrank slightly in the following year.[64] This accounts for nearly 10 percent of the 28 million tourists that visited Saga prefecture in 2004.[65] Every year about one million tourists come to Arita during the 'Golden Week' – the first week in May when, due to four national holidays falling in the period from 29 April to 5 May, most Japanese take a one-week vacation – when the town holds its Ceramic Fair (*tōki ichi*). That leaves only one million tourists arri-

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[63] Fukae, 'Arita no miryoku saihakken', 183.

[64] Arita-chō, '17nen Arita-chō Tōkeisho', 11.

[65] Saga prefecture has a population of about 866,000. Kyōto, one of the most popular tourist spots in Japan, has a population of about 1.5 million. The number of tourists who came to Kyōto in 2004 was 45 million. For data and figures on Saga Prefecture see Saga-ken, 'Sagakensei no aramashi'.

vals over the rest of the year. With the sales of the ceramic industry steadily decreasing and the shops on the main street simultaneously emptying, the town has been occasionally called a ghost town by visitors who have come to Arita before or after the ceramic fair, as stated by Nishiyama Mihoko, the leader of the Arita Women's Group for Community Planning (*Arita machizukuri josei konwakai*).[66]

In the following part I will introduce the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival as one campaign that can be considered as a community planning project employing several references to tradition with the aim of reviving the town through tourism promotion.

The Arita Ceramic Doll Festival

In 2001, the Executive Committee for the *Benjara* Festival *(benjara matsuri jikkō iinkai)* – an association of shop owners mainly from the *Uchiyama* district – made a first attempt to attract more tourists to Arita. Their efforts to increase numbers of visitors by decorating dolls in the wake of the national girls' festival or *hina matsuri*[67] failed. But the idea to unite a number of shops themed around the girls' festival as a nationally celebrated festival remained and was further developed into the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival (*Arita hiina*[68] *no yakimono matsuri*) campaign. The planning process began in spring 2004, when the Executive Committee for the *Benjara* Festival and the Arita Women's Group for Community Planning asked the Saga Ceramics Research Laboratory (*Saga-ken yōgyō gijutsu sentā*) to produce a full set of porcelain *hina* dolls for a seven-tier girls' festival decoration (*nanadan kazari*). The dolls usually on display are made from fabric and are today only decorated in wealthy households or in public places. There-

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[66] Ōta, 'Aritayaki ni "jinsei" o moru', 24.

[67] The history of *hina matsuri* or *momo no sekku* (peach blossom festival) is usually traced back to the Edo period (1603–1868). People used to produce paper dolls, transferred their ill fortunes or sickness to the dolls and cast them into the water of rivers. These dolls were called *nagashibina*. This practice of ritual purification (*misogi barae*) is the background of the *hina matsuri*, but usually is not practiced anymore in connection with the festival (Arisaka, *Hinamatsuri shinkō*, 89–91). Today the festival, also known as girls' festival, is celebrated on March 3rd. Families with young daughters decorate *hina ningyō*, special dolls which are replicas of an ancient emperor, empress and their subordinates, dressed in costumes from the Heian Period (794–1192). The girls' festival is held to pray for health and future happiness for young girls. There are various kinds of food and items related to the festival as for example, rice cakes from mugwort (*kusamochi*), peach blossoms (*momo no hana*), little dogs made from paper-maché (*otogiinu*) and clam shells (*hamaguri*). Department stores sell sets of *hina* dolls, which can be very expensive (Creighton, 'Pre-industrial Dreaming', 132).

[68] Instead of the Japanese syllabary *hiragana* version for the word *hina*, the old Chinese character *hiina* is used, in the hope people would associate the event with the past.

fore *hina* dolls made from porcelain for common use could be considered unique.[69] Together with the municipality, the Saga Ceramics Research Laboratory, the prefectural technical high school, local kilns and shops, the Arita Women's Group for Community Planning, and the Executive Committee for the *Benjara* Festival started the campaign for the first time in 2005. The Arita Women's Group for Community Planning had applied for financial support from Saga prefecture for their proposal of the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival and received 2.4 million JPY, and an additional 600,000 JPY had to be provided by the local government. From the three million JPY, all expenditures of the first campaign were covered.[70]

The laboratories successfully completed two sets of porcelain dolls, which were then fitted in two different kilns with a 'traditional and unique decoration'[71] and displayed from February until the beginning of April 2005 as the main exhibit in the Arita-*kan*, a municipal facility that hosts a puppet theatre, changing exhibitions, and a coffee shop. One set of porcelain dolls for the seven-level display was estimated to be worth more than 10 million JPY.[72] Other attractions of the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival were an exhibition of children's tableware reflecting the 'friendliness of Arita's mothers' (*Arita no okāsan no yasashisa*) and their special concept of food education (*shokuiku*). This concept is based upon the assumption that children in Arita should be taught respect towards tableware made of porcelain. Therefore, mothers are recommended to let children use porcelain tableware from a very early age on.[73]

The campaign also featured visits to potters' private houses, preferably old listed houses in the *Uchiyama* district, to demonstrate to visitors the different ways of how potters celebrate the girls' festival. It goes without emphasis that the most important actors were the participating shops, easily recognisable by their pink lanterns; shop owners hoped that sales would multiply with tourists buying souvenirs; and that once a tradition to decorate ceramic *hina* dolls was established in the future a steady income would be guaranteed.[74] To make the 48 participating shops more attractive, owners were obliged to keep their shops open every day, to offer sweets and tea to customers, and to participate in a shop window decoration contest in collaboration with the local technical high school's design department. Another highlight was a special set meal – called *hina gozen* – designed by the members of the Arita Women's Group for Community Planning. Local spe-

[69] Interview with Ms. N., 30 January 2008.
[70] Ibid.
[71] Pamphlet of the first Arita Ceramic Doll Festival.
[72] Interview with kiln owner Mr. K., 31 January 2008.
[73] Fukae, 'Arita no miryoku saihakken', 182–4.
[74] Ōta, 'Arita hina no yakimono matsuri', 20.

cialties (*furusato ryōri*) were served on Arita ware in an old listed house. The main activities envisaged for tourists were to inspect and admire porcelain figurines and tableware decorated with traditional patterns, to walk around a traditional potters' town, to eat traditional local food, and to buy porcelain.

In the second year, 2006, the contents of the campaign resembled the previous event except for the main exhibit. Four of the better-known porcelain manufacturers, *Genemon*, *Shingama*, *Yamatoku*, and *Kōransha* – but no kilns owned by living national treasures such as *Kakiemon* or *Imaemon* – were in charge of the decoration of the *hina* dolls. The 46 cm tall dolls were promoted as the 'world's biggest *hina* dolls made from porcelain ever displayed.'[75] The organisers even made efforts to ensure the uniqueness of the *hina* dolls by verifying that no other *hina* dolls of this size made from porcelain existed anywhere else in the world. The reference to traditional decoration styles was even stronger than in 2005 and included the old *Nabeshima* style and *Ko-Imari* style, which are decorative styles typical of Arita. One kiln even referred to plates and vases submitted to the world exhibitions at the end of the nineteenth century, although none of this company's works had ever been displayed there and its present designs differed quite markedly from those chosen for the campaign's *hina* dolls.

Figure 2: One set of 'the world biggest hina dolls' made from porcelain at the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival 2006 (Picture: Cornelia Reiher, 23 February 2006)

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[75] Fukae, 'Arita no miryoku saihakken', 180.

The campaign was considered an overall success already in 2005 and even more so in 2006. According to Nishiyama Mihoko, 13,500 visitors came in 2005 and almost 20,000 in 2006.[76] Tourist coaches parked in front of the Arita-*kan* every day and large numbers of people continuously walked around the downtown area.

Arita was featured in the regional and national media several times and was included in travel agencies' special round trips in Kyūshū, themed around the girls' festival.[77] With detailed coverage in the town newspaper and by the local broadcaster (*Arita kēburu*), and additional events targeting Arita's children, the campaign was the talk of the town. Local residents not associated with one of the community planning groups, the municipal hall, the media, participating shops, or kilns were invited to show hospitality, for 'the *hina matsuri* campaign should not only upgrade sales of the ceramic industry, but also add to the life in the community in general'.[78] In 2005, the campaign was also included in the annual event calendar of the town printed in the recently launched tourist guidebook and has since become institutionalised as a fixed component of the town's culture.

The Arita Ceramic Doll Festival within the Framework of the 'Invention of Tradition' Concept

The 'Arita Ceramic Doll Festival' can be regarded as both a measure of community planning and of town revitalisation. As a community planning activity it is directed towards the improvement of the living environment bringing people from within and outside back on Arita's empty streets by involving as many residents as possible in the organisation of the festival and thereby creating a form of community spirit. Furthermore, the utilisation of otherwise empty listed houses can be considered as a community planning activity that supports the preservation of architectural assets. Initiated by local residents, the campaign also qualifies as a community planning activity in terms of citizen participation. However, without financial support from the prefectural government, the project could not have been carried out.

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[76] Nishiyama, 'Aidia o umu keiki ni', 23.

[77] JTB, Nippon Travel, Nishitetsu Travel, and others.

[78] Arita-chō, 'Arita hiina no yakimono matsuri', 12.

Figure 3: The members of the Arita Women's Group for Community Planning serve the *hina* set meal to visitors (Picture: Cornelia Reiher, 19 March 2005).

As a town revitalisation measure, grasped here in a predominantly economic sense, the campaign aimed at improving the difficult economic situation of the local ceramic industry by attracting potential customers to the town. The visitors were expected to purchase souvenirs, develop a desire for porcelain-made *hina* dolls and other decorations related to the girls' festival, and, through direct communication with producers, to reveal consumer needs that would enable producers to create new and more successful products. Tradition, history, and porcelain were and are considered to be Arita's resources that can be deployed for its transformation into a tourist town.[79] The goal of the Arita Women's Group for Community Planning, however, was not to replace the ceramic industry with tourism, but to establish tourist attractions on the basis of the ceramic industry and its products. Tourism, according to Nishiyama, is a measure to protect the industry and therefore the town, because 'if we do not protect the industry, the town will vanish as well.'[80] The preservation of the local industry then is a necessary precondition for the preservation of the town itself and therefore economically oriented measures can be regarded as community planning activities as well. The campaign also qualifies as town revitalisation because of its emphasis on the uniqueness of the festival, as it is expressed in the claim that no other *hina* dolls of this size made from porcelain exist anywhere else in the world. This also is reminiscent of the 'One Village – One Product' projects described earlier. The Arita

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[79] Fukae, 'Arita no miryoku saihakken', 181.

[80] Arita-chō, 'Arita o ikasu', 9.

Ceramic Doll Festival also shows similarities to or is grafted on other measures of town and regional revitalisation initiatives such as the '*Furusato* Creation Programme' through references to Arita as the 'hometown of Japanese porcelain' with porcelain as its only, but superior, product.

How were traditions constructed and referred to within the campaign? Held for the first time in 2005, the festival has since then become institutionalised and included in the seasonal calendar of the town. Therefore, by now, the festival itself can be regarded as a tradition that has been 'actually invented, constructed, and formally instituted'.[81] The Arita Ceramic Doll Festival also qualifies as an invented tradition according to Hobsbawm and Ranger's definition because it is 'a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past'.[82] The campaign tries to convince consumers to decorate porcelain dolls for the girls' festival and implies continuity with the past through reference to the long history of porcelain production in Arita, even though, according to historian Ozaki Yōko from the Arita Museum for Local History and Folklore, porcelain production in Arita has been circular and not without disruption within these 400 years.[83] It also is true for the claim that even if there would have been constant porcelain production throughout the past 400 years, the campaign tried to convince tourists that designs, techniques, and materials have not changed. This can be deduced from the reference to styles from the seventeenth century that have been used for the decoration of the *hina* dolls.[84] This is also evident in the reference to designs that were presented at world exhibitions in the late nineteenth century by one of the participating kilns that decorated a set of the large *hina* dolls. Therefore, it can be stated that traditions were presented as invariable. On the other hand the handling of traditions was rather permissive and creative. Apparently authenticity was not of importance to the initiators of the festival, even though the municipal hall employees often consult historians at the Arita Museum for Local History and Folklore to verify historical data before using them in public campaigns.[85] But these questions were not relevant to other actors such as porcelain producers or even community planning groups, as the director of the Kyūshū Ceramic Museum states.[86] The above illustrates that the distinction drawn between 'real' and 'invented' traditions by Hobsbawm becomes obsolete

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[81] Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', 1.

[82] Ibid.

[83] Interview with Ms. O., 8 February 2008.

[84] Fukae, 'Arita no miryoku saihakken', 181.

[85] Interview with Ms. O., 8 February 2008.

[86] Interview with Mr. Ō., 4 February 2008.

when authenticity is concerned, as it is hardly possible to 'separate spurious and genuine tradition, both empirically and theoretically'.[87]

Hobsbawm also traced the function of the 'invention of tradition' and offers three options of what traditions can be invented for: (1) establishing or symbolising social cohesion among members of real or artificial communities, (2) establishing or legitimising institutions, status or relations of authority, (3) socialisation, the inculcation of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour.[88]

Our case can be applied to function (1), the establishing or symbolising of social cohesion. The traditions invented for the campaign referred to and recreated certain aspects of local identity. The traditions chosen or created to represent Arita appealed to many local residents because they validate the achievements of potters, farmers, restaurant owners, and mothers, i.e., of a majority of the residents and, therefore, have a positive impact on their self-perceptions. Such acknowledgement used to be apparent in sales figures or attention from outside the town. The present day lack of it is possibly the reason why the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival could be established as a new annual event in such a short time. After all, the campaign contributed to the self-conception of the local residents as Japanese potters, but also points to the limitations of the concept since it tends to exclude all residents who are not related to either the ceramics or the food sector. The 'traditions' established as such, therefore, were not only aimed at tourists, but also at members of the community. This twofold approach may be typical of community planning, because, as Nishiyama Mihoko from the 'Arita Women's Group for Community Planning' points out, community planning in the first place aims at the local residents and addresses questions of their quality of living which, she assumes, improves if a place has 'living traditions' and a flourishing industry.[89]

According to Hobsbawm, the invention of tradition occurs 'more frequently when a rapid transformation of society weakens or destroys the social patterns for which "old" traditions had been designed'.[90] It can be said that the different traditions invented and references to the past made within the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival are reactions to both an increasing economic *and* a cultural marginalisation of the town within Japan. Local actors consider this marginalisation as being reflected in the loss of food culture all over Japan; this, amongst other factors, implies the marginalisation of traditional tableware and the disintegration of local identity in the wake of economic crisis and municipal mergers.[91] To overcome the

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[87] Handler and Linnekin, 'Tradition, Genuine or Spurious', 275.

[88] Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', 9.

[89] Arita-chō, 'Arita o ikasu', 9.

[90] Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', 4

[91] Arita-chō, 'Arita o ikasu', 9.

widely expressed feeling of crisis (*kikikan*) amongst local residents, the town became a site of struggle for its integration within the region, nation, and even on a global scale – through its reference to its 'glorious past' of exports to Europe – as a spatial entity that is very specific, yet integrated within a wider, at least, historical context.

This analysis has revealed that the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival, as a 'new tradition', and the many traditions incorporated in the festival, qualify to be what Hobsbawm and Ranger termed 'invented traditions', even though this is not to be understood here in opposition to 'real' or 'authentic' traditions, whose existence and invariance cannot be satisfactorily substantiated. The festival emerged within a specific situation of economic and social crisis and aimed at the creation of community solidarity as a type of 'group cohesion'.[92] It may even have successfully enhanced this community identity, as I have tried to point out. However, what remains to be elucidated is why the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival was successful outside Arita and appealed to tourists. This aspect might be most relevant to local actors trying to implement community planning measures to revive their localities.

The Commodification of Tradition in Japan

Hobsbawm's concept of 'invented traditions' has been criticised from different perspectives. I will reflect here upon points that refer to the limits of the 'invention of the tradition' paradigm. Marshall Sahlins criticises the concept for ignoring the cultural structures within which the 'invention of tradition' occurs, as well as the historicity of traditions. Any cultural trait could then be reduced to a certain function. He advocates that 'to realize that what is functional, in this sense of instrumental, must be structural. Desires depend on historical contexts of values, on existing or potential relationships of culture, not only for their content but for their possible realizations'.[93] Eyal Ben-Ari stresses the point similarly when referring to the limits of 'invention of tradition' in a Japanese context. He denies the idea of 'anything goes' with regard to the concept of the invention of tradition. 'We may miss continuities and limits on invention without a recognition of the elements of more enduring coordinates in the way Japanese conceptualize their communities and through these localities the way they think of themselves, their history, and their tradition. […] Talk of such localities is part of

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92 Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', 9.

93 Sahlins, 'Two or Three Things I Know about Culture', 407.

wider Japanese discourse about modernity, nostalgia, the politics of civic involvement, and about Japan's internationalization'. [94]

Therefore, an answer to the question why the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival attracted tourists can possibly be given after examining the national context within which the festival was established. This national context comprises recent trends of nostalgia and the commodification of tradition in general and in particular within Japanese domestic tourism from the 1980s until today.

Millie Creighton perceives a growing nostalgia in the 1980s and into the 1990s within Japanese society.[95] Japan's nostalgia boom has been characterised by a national obsession with imagery from the past, particularly that of a presumed lost pre-industrial past. This retro boom was only one of many that have spread since the late 1970s, including the *'furusato* boom', the *'matsuri* (festival) boom', and the 'history boom'. While the *'furusato* boom' celebrated the preservation of 'old' places as emblems of 'a world we have lost', the *'matsuri* boom' referred to the revival and reinvention of local ceremonies and festivals. The 'history boom' was connected to a celebration of the Japanese past in the mass media. According to anthropologist Ofra Goldstein-Gidoni, these booms as well as the general wave of nostalgia and the usage of the *furusato* metaphor in public discourse express Japanese society's search for identity from the late 1970s until today. This search has many aspects, including the search for a 'real Japan' and the vast literature called *nihonjinron* (discussions of the Japanese).[96] Creighton considers these sentimental projections of traditional Japanese life and communal rural past to be invented traditions because the booms exemplify the re-creation of the past in the present to suit present needs.[97] These developments, however, were linked to domestic tourism, department stores, and the mass media, i.e., the conscious appropriation of tradition in tourist campaigns and department store fairs with the aim to turn tradition into profit.

In the realm of tourism, with the Japanese National Railways' campaigns 'Discover Japan' in the 1970s and 'Exotic Japan' in the 1980s, a 'nativist project of national (re)discovery'[98] was initiated. It was at this stage that domestic and international tourism entered Japan's internal cultural debate about national identity. Measured by participation and market size, tourism — especially domestic tourism — is one of the most important leisure time activities in Japan.[99] Short do-

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[94] Ben-Ari, 'Contested Identities', 218.

[95] Creighton, 'Pre-industrial Dreaming', 128.

[96] Goldstein-Gidoni, 'The Production of Tradition and Culture', 34. For a case study concerned with *nihonjinron* see Klien, this volume.

[97] Creighton, 'Pre-industrial Dreaming', 130.

[98] Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*, 29.

[99] Manzenreiter and Ben-Ari, 'Leisure and Consumer Culture in Postwar Japan', 503–8.

mestic trips are a common form of domestic tourism the relatively short vacation time. As the Japanese have a limited time budget, domestic trips on average do not exceed two nights. However, with the tendency to spend lavishly on meals, accommodation, and souvenirs, tourists in Japan spend as much on a weekend as German tourists spend during two weeks of holiday.[100]

Marilyn Ivy points out that in the 1970s and 1980s the Japanese were preoccupied with national identity, culture, continuity, and community to establish the nation as a totality. The effort to sustain this totality, according to Ivy, was reflected in every tourist advertisement, every appeal to *furusato*, every assertion that 'we Japanese are modern, but we have kept our tradition', every discourse on public harmony. Travel became the primary medium for a return to origins and a national cultural home, implying the 'very idea of leaving home to find home'. The interlinked industries of tourism, transportation, advertising, mass media, and publishing have modulated regional differences, commodifying them together with diverse pasts and offering them to Japanese consumers of culture. Tourism, according to Ivy, is the sector of Japanese culture industries, which possibly most powerfully articulates 'the Japanese place' with reference to the formation and circulation of Japanese national-cultural themes. In this respect, 'Discover Japan' was the first highly visible mass campaign urging the Japanese to discover what remained of the pre-modern past in the midst of its presumed loss. It expressed the longing to return to origins – even in the quotidian sense of a return to one's own rural hometown or *furusato*.[101] The urban-rural juxtaposition that character-ises the nostalgic longing for community is apparent in the prevalent use of the *furusato* imagery.[102]

Within the emergence of rural tourism, tourists were addressed as 'departed vil-lagers' coming back to their *furusato*. But *furusato* can metaphorically incorpo-rate unrelated visitors as well.[103] Therefore, this concept is central to domestic tourism. However, since Japanese domestic tourism is not dependent upon for-eign investment and foreign visitors, it was hit hard by the post-bubble economic crisis in the early 1990s, even though the overall leisure market continued to grow until 1995 and then shrank only slightly.

Tourism, however, is not the only domain on which the concept of *furusato* and nostalgia had a significant impact. Urban department stores re-created village fes-tivals and fairs according to a traditional calendar of events (*nenjû gyôji*) and in the context of a new localism and festival boom, and promoted area or traditional crafts and products. Creighton argues that the *gyōji*, which are believed to have

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[100] Funck, 'When the Bubble Burst', 336.

[101] Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*, 22–34.

[102] Ibid., 105–6.

[103] Ibid.

once regulated community village life, are maintained as traditions through retailing re-enactments. Additionally, foreign holidays were adapted to department stores' *gyōji*. For the girls' festival for example, other than the display and sale of dolls, events for children are staged in the department stores. It is this combination of actual sales and activities Creighton describes as a synthesis of fun activities with knowledge about Japan's heritage and the local life ways of its many declared culture areas. The localism Creighton refers to re-creates specific area traditions for commercial usage. City-based retailers endeavour to bring village life back to their clientele by sponsoring local area crafts and traditions as well as by promoting products based on the places of their production, which they display in special exhibition halls on the upper floors of department stores, often accompanied by music or dance performances. Localism, 'usually directed at those city-dwellers who feel bereft of *furusato*'[104] was and is profitable for urban department stores that sell *furusato* foods or *furusato* crafts. Within the logic of *furusato* and its implied loss, traditional craft products can be adopted as symbols of national as well as regional identities.[105] But while within domestic tourism the boundedness of tradition to a certain place is central, department stores dealing with local traditions often de- and reterritorialise them.[106]

Japanese mass media also play a prominent role in the diffusion of nostalgia, images of place-based community life, and local specialities. TV programmes present local images, foods, traditions, and events. Sam Steffensen considers the way Japanese newspapers and the national television company, NHK (Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai), present local images and deploy the *furusato* metaphor at every opportunity to be an exoticisation of domestic places that is also linked to the set up of local socio-economic revitalisation plans. The tourism-centred 'image-up' publicity by local governments dispersed through the media is usually designed to 'ride the wave of a 'gourmet and tourist boom' widely sustained by television, chiefly addressing young girls, dating couples, and retired people'.[107]

In summary, as regards the commodification of tradition in Japan over the last thirty years, tourism, retailers, and the mass media have been closely linked with one another. Within the commodification of traditional things and traditional places, the symbolism of the *furusato* or hometown, the traditional calendar of events, and localism play important roles in structuring campaigns and events. The above-mentioned booms were related to a preoccupation with national iden-

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[104] Creighton, 'Pre-industrial Dreaming', 130–5.

[105] Yonemitsu, 'Promoting Traditional Craft Industries', 51.

[106] Creighton, 'Pre-industrial Dreaming', 135.

[107] Steffensen, 'Evolutionary Socio-Economic Aspects', 165.

tity and culture in Japanese society that continues until today and finds its manifestation in new campaigns such as 'Cool Japan'.[108]

The Arita Ceramic Doll Festival as Tradition beyond the Framework of Invention

The different aspects of the commodification of tradition in Japan provide the *infrastructure of tradition* for the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival. The term infrastructure refers to a network of institutions, discourses, and (advertising) themes that on a national level already existed and into which the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival could be incorporated to market the campaign nationwide. Such an understanding also enables us to connect the local and the national level, as the above description has shown that the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival as a 'new tradition' created group cohesion on a local level, but its reach and impact beyond Arita could not be grasped with Hobsbawm and Ranger's approach. Given this infrastructure, framing the limitations to the invention of tradition paradigm, there are two reasons why the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival might have appealed to tourists.

The first reason is the consideration of nationwide nostalgia and national tradition in the campaign. Rather than to merely invent a completely new tourist attraction or event with no reference to the past, knowledge about the nostalgia and the longing for historical places, rural landscapes, and what is considered the 'premodern' Japan, nurtured in national identity discourses for decades, informed Arita's decision to rely on traditional themes and materials. This awareness enabled the organisers of the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival to pre-estimate that reference to the past would pay off and calculate what 'materials' from the 'large store of [...] materials [that] is accumulated in the past of any society'[109] shall be used for their invention of traditions and at the same time imposed limits upon their inventiveness. The desire for the preservation of 'old' places and practices and the fear of their loss is also evident with the initiators. Nishiyama Mihoko from the Arita Women's Group for Community Planning, for example, believes that tradition is important to people for personal reasons (see also Brumann this volume). She draws this conclusion from her own experience of loss, when her hometown – a former coal mining town – vanished due to economic decline.[110] Apart from economic reasons, with the private sector hoping to boost sales and the municipality hoping to raise tax revenues, and the political motivation to integrate the

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[108] See <http://www.nhk.or.jp/cooljapan/>.
[109] Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', 6.
[110] Interview with Ms. N., 30 January 2008.

residents of the newly merged town into a new 'imagined community',[111] the demand for tradition seems to express '[…] that people – and not only those with power – want culture, and they often want it precisely in the bounded, reified, essentialised and timeless fashion that most of us do now reject'.[112] As pointed out above, some people in Arita even consider tradition as being a factor that raises their standard of living.

Evidence for the utilisation of the *infrastructure of Japanese traditions* for the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival in this sense is the theme of the girls' festival itself, employed by local actors in order to connect the campaign to the national discourse on customs and traditions. As a festival in the traditional calendar of events, the girls' festival and the *hina* dolls had already been incorporated within urban department stores and travel agencies' sales strategies. While department stores decorate and offer dolls and sweets, travel agencies sell domestic trips themed around *hina matsuri* to different places in Japan, where, according to their itineraries,[113] the festival is celebrated in a distinct way in each locality. These two examples illustrate that the *hina matsuri*, as 'ancient' Japanese tradition, may be considered as rendering the integration of the *furusato* Arita into national discourses of Japaneseness and the calendar of events of travel agencies and mass media on the one hand. If we consider the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival as a 'new tradition', it can be stated that, with its connection to the girls' festival, the festival has been grafted onto an 'older tradition',[114] which fortunately reached beyond the local level. On the other hand, the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival needs to distinguish itself from other forms of celebrating the *hina matsuri* because of the 'high level of competition between communities for the patronage of urban consumers'.[115] Under the rubric 'Four Seasons of Arita', the 'Arita Tourist Guidebook' includes the campaign in Arita's own seasonal calendar of events. It stresses its uniqueness by emphasising that '[…] the seven-tiered decoration of *hina* Dolls is all made from porcelain. *Hina* dolls made by each kiln and special food for the girls' festival are displayed and sold.'[116]

Therefore, the second reason for the success of the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival can be seen in its emphasis on localism. As for the traditions referred to within the campaign, local and national traditions can be distinguished. Arita had to emphasise its unique features and respectively create them to successfully stand out from all the other local girls' festival campaigns. While local traditional cuisine

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[111] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

[112] Brumann quoted in Sahlins, 'Two or Three Things I Know about Culture', 403.

[113] JTB, Nippon Travel, and Nishitetsu Travel.

[114] Hobsbawm, 'Introduction: Inventing Traditions', 6.

[115] Creighton, 'Pre-industrial Dreaming', 133.

[116] Arita Kankō kyōkai, *Gaido bukku*.

(*dentōteki na furusato ryōri*) was served on traditional Arita ware as a locally unique kind of porcelain in the singular atmosphere of the hometown of Japanese porcelain per se, old listed houses were assigned to a specific era of Japanese architectural style and therefore similar to other buildings from the same era in other places in Japan. Themed around the girls' festival, the campaign was also integrated into the wider national context of Japanese tradition. Since Arita was already known as the *furusato* of Japanese porcelain, it seemed only natural to the local actors to relate the girls' festival to porcelain. This is expressed in different texts published on the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival, for example: 'The Arita Ceramic Doll Festival is distinct from other events in Japan that relate themselves to the girls' festival'.[117] Tradition then serves as a means by which places and their products can distinguish themselves as unique from others to attract Japanese consumers from outside of the town. Traditions in this sense act as markers of difference and are at least partly invented against others, as anthropologist Nicholas Thomas points out;[118] in this case, against other localities with whom Arita has to compete in inter-local competition for urban consumers.

This *infrastructure of localism* includes television shows such as *'Furusato ichiban'* [Our hometown is number one!] or the show *'Tsurube san no kazoku ni kanpai'* [A toast to Mr. Tsurube's family], portraying the comedian Tsurube who travels around rural Japan and introduces local specialties and people on NHK. The Arita Ceramic Doll Festival appeared several times on regional and national television because the initiators could use the already established promotional connections of the municipal hall's commerce, trade, and tourism division. The notion of localism also includes local and regional revitalisation movements and campaigns that have connected regional and town revitalisation and tourism since the 1960s. Governmental programs and laws promoted the establishment and the preservation of traditional places, commodities, and practices, and thus also defined what could be considered traditional. Different ministries on the national level, but also prefectures and municipalities, take measures to foster regional specificity, local identities, and the development and preservation of regional specialties and traditions for the promotion of regional industries, in particular, tourism. Thus, access to financial support by the government of Saga prefecture for the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival was made possible because a programme to promote community planning activities had already been established.

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[117] Fukae, 'Arita no miryoku saihakken', 179.

[118] Thomas, 'The Inversion of Tradition'.

Conclusion

This study of the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival has shown that traditions were invented and consciously used as a primary resource for the promotion of tourism in this rural Japanese town. Various features of the campaign were labelled traditional, and the initiators of the campaign were aware that tradition would help to sell the campaign. However, an analysis that employed the approach of the 'invention of tradition' by Hobsbawm and Ranger could not provide an explanation to the question why the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival attracted tourists from outside Arita. Although it has elucidated how group cohesion can be achieved within a community that has already been established through other – especially political – measures, it covers only the dimension of the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival as a *machizukuri* activity. In the case of Arita, however, local actors tried to reach beyond their town and address Japanese consumers in general by connecting tourism with localism and nationalism.

Therefore, regarding the paradigm of the 'invention of tradition', the case of the Arita Ceramic Doll Festival points to the limits of the concept because it demonstrates the de- and reterritorialisation of tradition through the logic of consumption. If, as in the case of Arita, tradition is not only invented for the self-identification of a bounded group within a bounded territory, but conceptualised as a means of difference against other localities and their products targeting urban consumers, the question of whether traditions are 'real' or 'invented' becomes obsolete. Rather than to distinguish between 'real' and 'invented' traditions and to focus on the function of invented traditions only, references to tradition within a specific place and time should be traced within the social, cultural, and economic contexts in which they are situated. In this respect, the suggested metaphor of an *infrastructure of tradition* could prove as a useful perspective from which connections between different spatial entities – local and national in our case – and social systems and discourses can be unveiled.

Furthermore, references to tradition and its invention were not arbitrary. Although the campaign invented traditions and stressed local difference to create a cultural imaginary for tourists, the material reality and the context, within which traditions were invented, mattered. This means that, for community planning activities, communities cannot simply invent any tradition whenever it seems to be adequate to their individual community planning activities. Thus, the 'invention of tradition' in community planning is more successful if it refers to a material reality (whose elements do not necessarily have to be 'old'), which at the same time imposes restrictions on the 'inventiveness of traditions'.[119] It is particularly this

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[119] Sahlins, 'Two or Three Things I Know about Culture', 408.

finding of my case study that questions the idea of 'anything goes' with regard to the concept of the 'invention of tradition'.

Instead, the process of invention was based on the knowledge of the discourse on tradition and nostalgia within Japanese tourism and localism. Although in Japan, local specificity has played an important role for the commodification of tradition, as well as for community planning and town revitalisation activities, in our case, the reference to Arita as the hometown of Japanese porcelain was not sufficient anymore to attract tourists and consumers. Therefore, the local tradition of porcelain production was incorporated into the national tradition of the girls' festival to appeal to tourists. How this was done can be understood by looking at the infrastructure of tradition that, in our case, is constituted by the network of national media, travel agencies, and department stores, as well as the prefectural government. Both the material reality in Arita and the infrastructure of tradition imposed limitations on the inventiveness of traditions.

However, rather than exceeding or questioning the national — as could be expected in the age of globalisation — the invention of tradition in the case of Arita, as in most other cases where local governments in Japan have mobilised resources to activate local economies, revitalisation strategies neither question the logic of capital nor do they challenge general national interests.[120] This does not mean, however, that the return to national traditions in Japan is unrelated to globalisation. Especially neo-nationalist claims that Japan must 'restore its nationhood through cultural, ethical, and racial as well as territorial integrity'[121] are a reaction to the 'mainstream view that Japanese nationhood is in decline today more than ever in a world increasingly organised under the force of global capital'.[122] The emphasis on tradition then is just one of many attempts to recapture national identity and national unity against globalising forces. Thus, the focus of further research on tradition in the contemporary world, characterised by the consumption of traditions on a global scale and growing nationalism(s), should rather shift to the analysis of the relationship between global and local processes of differentiation through the invention of tradition and to the limitations posed to its construction (for example by global capitalism).

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[120] Steffensen, 'Evolutionary Socio-Economic Aspects', 172.

[121] Yoda, 'A Roadmap to Millennial Japan', 640.

[122] Ibid., 641.

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Japan's *Horror Vacui*: The Invention of Japanese National Identity in Fujiwara Masahiko's *The Dignity of the State* (*Kokka no Hinkaku*)

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> 'One exists in a universe convincingly real, where the lines are sharply drawn in black and white. It is only later, if at all, that one realizes the lines were never there in the first place. But they are necessary in every human culture, like a drill sergeant's commands, something not to be questioned'.[1]

In this paper, I will explore a rather recent example of invention of Japanese national identity, namely Fujiwara Masahiko's bestseller *Kokka no Hinkaku* (The Dignity of the State). This slim volume was published in November 2005 by the Tokyo-based rightist publisher Shinchôsha and has sold more than 2.6 million copies. In 2006 it was the second most popular book in Japan, only to be outsold by *Harry Potter*. In May 2007 an English translation was published. If one takes a closer look at the content, however, one realizes soon that most of the arguments contained have been heard before. So why then would it be worthwhile to refer to this book?

This study of the book looks specifically at Fujiwara's ways of reifying and perpetuating 'traditions' for the purpose of collective identity formation. Anthropologist Thomas has pointed out that the central question about the interaction between tradition and identity construction should not be how traditions are invented but against whom.[2] I intend to investigate how Fujiwara has managed to attract the attention and support of numerous Japanese readers by his sophisticated technique of equating alleged tradition or values with authentic Japan and rendering them against 'the West'. The author deplores Japan's postwar emphasis on economic development and claims that the Japanese have forfeited their 'authentic' cultural values in the process:

> 'After the Second World War, we Japanese, who have been raised to lose our pride about and confidence in our home country, have thoroughly forgotten about our ancient values of "*jôcho*" (emotion) and "*katachi*" (form), which we should be proud to show in the whole world, and instead we weakened

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[1]   Eiseley, *Strange Hours*, 105.

[2]   Thomas, 'Inversion', 216.

Japanese have sold our souls to "logic and ratio" in the European and American sense as represented by the market economy.'[3]

Such arguments can be traced back to the essentialist 'Japan versus the West' dyads that were developed in the 1970s and 1980s in Japanese literature concerning the nation's cultural and ethnic identity. These were based on assumptions of Japanese society as homogeneous and monolithic, embodying racial homogeneity, harmony, groupism, particularistic ethics and dependence, as opposed to 'the West', characterised by racial heterogeneity, competitive conflict, individualism, universalistic ethics and independence.[4]

Second, intricately related to the first point of such dichotomical representations, I will focus on the usage of the 'Other' in the process of collective identity construction. I argue that Fujiwara's recent bestseller is a case *par excellence* of reference to invented tradition stereotypes that have emerged as a result of Japan's encounter with the West and the ensuing aim to construct a distinct 'national' identity. Many scholars have argued that Japan constitutes a treasure trove of 'invented traditions' as coined by Hobsbawm and Ranger.[5] Vlastos has pointed out that modern Japan is widely regarded as 'a society saturated with customs, values and social relationship that organically link present generations of Japanese to past generations'.[6] If one takes a closer look, however, many traditions that are publicly perceived to have originated centuries ago turn out to be relatively modern.

Third, I will explore what place *The Dignity of the State* takes in the context of *nihonjinron* or debates about Japanese identity. Should we consider Fujiwara's latest work as another ordinary case of this well-known genre? Or does it constitute something novel? Rather than the contents of the book *per se*, its overwhelming popularity and influence are pertinent here. Why would Japanese readers of various ages and backgrounds enjoy reading a book making the above outlined claims? How is its popularity related to perceptions of the present state of Japanese society and national identity?

As outlined above, I will relate the 'invented tradition' paradigm and its distinctive feature of strengthening collective identity construction to an analysis of Fujiwara's most recent work in the context of *nihonjinron*. In the course of my argument I will show that the claims found in *The Dignity of the State* could be seen as another example of internalised colonised thinking, as defined by Yoshioka and ultimately serve to disguise the increasing vacuousness of Japanese national identity. I will therefore explore which 'invented traditions' Fujiwara ap-

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[3] Fujiwara, *Dignity*, 6 (All translations of Fujiwara's text are my own.).

[4] Goodman, 'Majority', 65.

[5] Compare for example Brumann, 'Traditionen', 3–4.

[6] Vlastos, *Mirror*, 1.

propriates and reifies in his latest opus. Furthermore, I will examine not only the author's perspective, but also introduce readers' reactions to the book as displayed on internet sites such as amazon.co.jp (the Japanese version of amazon.com) and the livedoor blog as well as reviews in the Japanese print media. I argue that the overwhelming success of Fujiwara's most recent volume is due to his skilful appropriation and reification of 'invented traditions', such as the alleged Japanese sensitivity for nature, for the purpose of collective identity construction. In the process, in order to prop up the rather vacuous images of Japanese collective identity, negative modes of presentation with regard to 'the West' are employed to enforce a semblance of Japanese national homogeneity. Ultimately, the combination of the 'invented tradition' paradigm with the classic discourse on Japanese identity or *nihonjinron* features (see the next section for details), and references to ambiguous terms such as 'dignity' (*hinkaku*), have made the book a bestseller despite its apparently trite content.

The structure of the paper is as follows: I start by exploring how Fujiwara's recent bestseller could be placed in the context of previous *nihonjinron* works, explain briefly the author's biographical background, and then analyse the intention of his anti-Western polemics. A summary of his main arguments is followed by a categorisation of the various types of 'invented traditions' according to Hobsbawm and Ranger[7] and an outline of the extent to which these categories are applicable to the references to invented traditions that can be detected in *The Dignity of the State*. I then present a survey of Japanese readers' reactions to the volume before summing up the results of the paper in the conclusion.

The Dignity of the State as Part of the Nihonjinron Discourse

In order to adequately judge the significance of *The Dignity of the State*, and before applying the 'invented tradition' paradigm, an evaluation in the context of *nihonjinron* is necessary. The latter is a genre that according to the anthropologist Befu could be called a Japanese 'minor national pastime'[8] as has become a genre in its own right since the end of the Second World War, although its predecessors can be traced back to the first half of that century. More recent *nihonjinron* classics are Doi's *Anatomy of Dependence* and Nakane's *Japanese Society*. While publications in the *nihonjinron* genre address virtually every aspect of Japanese culture in its broadest sense, major arguments tend to focus on social structure, social psychology, and language and bear a strong current of open ethnocentrism. They regard Japanese social structure as of specific nature with hierarchy and

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[7] Hobsbawm, 'Introduction', 9.

[8] Befu, *Cultural Nationalism*, 107.

group harmony as ubiquitous features. Key characteristics of the Japanese personality are allegedly melancholy, fatalism, and the practice of reciprocity, which is closely related to the above-mentioned social structure. Finally, the common comparison of Japan with other countries merely serves the purpose of asserting the alleged uniqueness of Japan. The genre's characteristic thus matches the claim by Lacan[9] and others that the notion of 'self' is only constructed in juxtaposition and recognition of 'Otherness'. Typical presumptions of the *nihonjinron* discourse relate to Japan as a culturally homogeneous entity and to isomorphisms of geography, race, language, and culture. Another remarkable feature is the implicitly or explicitly negative representation of anything non-Japanese.[10] This is, according to Dale, 'conspicuously nationalistic, displaying a conceptual and procedural hostility to any mode of analysis which might be seen to derive from external, non-Japanese sources.'[11]

Having introduced the main characteristics of Japanese identity discourse, I will set out to show that *The Dignity of the State* matches many *nihonjinron* features and can therefore be understood as part of this genre. A first example: Fujiwara's consistent binary construction of a monolithic West as opposed to an essentialist Japan follows classic *nihonjinron* tradition. The author sets Western talkativeness against Japanese silence. In a similar vein, Fujiwara's fixation with 'the West' as a framework of reference and Japan's comparison with other countries serves the purpose of asserting the alleged uniqueness of Japan; the 'West' is used as a foil for internal reflection, but at the same time its overwhelming influence is evident, as will be elaborated later. Throughout the book, Fujiwara repeatedly refers to Japanese warrior (*bushidô*) values, trying to elicit an image of Japan as strong but gentle. At the same time he associates concepts such as respect for the elderly, protection of people weaker and/or poorer than oneself, diligence, benevolence, and the like with the 'traditional Japanese warrior', he concedes that there is no clear definition of the samurai spirit.[12] Both the equation of Japan with *samurai* values and the reluctance to define these have been analysed by Yoshioka:

> '[…] the samurai stands for the desire for cultural essentialism. In the West the term has been used to identify something or someone as typically Japanese, and sometimes it even seems to be synonymous with what Japan is like. In the West it is a privileged sign that points to the very core or essence of the Japanese mind. But what do people imagine by it? Like many other cultural stereotypes, it derives its totalizing effect from its vagueness, its lack of distinct content.'[13]

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[9]   Lacan, *Ecrits*.

[10]   Befu, *Hegemony*, Yoshino, *Nationalism*, Aoki, *Nihonbunkaron*, Dale, *Myth*.

[11]   Dale, *Myth*, Introduction.

[12]   Fujiwara, *Dignity*, 121.

[13]   Yoshioka, 'Samurai', 102.

The irony of Fujiwara's entire discourse is that while at first his arguments appear to be classic revisionism because of his demands for greater confidence in and a return to 'genuinely Japanese values', the symbols embodying 'the essence of Japan' he refers to, above all the image of the 'traditional Japanese warrior', have emerged at the interface of the encounter between Japan and the West. Yoshioka puts it as follows:

> 'The samurai as the archetype of the Japanese spirit is but an invention constructed as the result of the relationship between Japan and the West during the last 120 years. And it was invented not only by Westerners but also by Japanese themselves. What if the innermost tradition is nothing but an image represented by the other? What if our desire to return to the original spirit is itself mediated by an alien element?' [14]

This issue is also of substantial importance to the analysis of *The Dignity of the State*. I argue that Fujiwara's line of thinking is an attempt to constitute a Japanese identity by means of internalising the imagined Western gaze on Japan. Thus, the author tries to establish a Japanese self-reflection corresponding to Yoshioka's notion of 'mind as colony', i.e. the claim that to avoid political colonisation, the Japanese have adopted patterns of thinking that posit them in an imaginary identification with the West, resulting in every Japanese being a coloniser of his own mind.[15] In fact, an editor of *Asahi Shimbun*, one of Japan's oldest and largest daily national newspapers, remarked that he could not help having the impression that the foundation of the book is black humour in the British sense rather than within the *samurai* spirit.[16]

Fujiwara's apparent straining of coherence by pursuing a cosmopolitan stance while at the same time emphasising the uniqueness of Japanese culture has been a common feature of many identity discourses; looking back on preceding *nihon-jinron* works, we can see that these paradoxical arguments being lined up side by side have done little to impair the popularity of these discourses.

Difference as Identity Marker in *The Dignity of the State*

At the outset of this section, I will give some biographical information about the author. Born in 1943 in Manchuria, Fujiwara Masahiko started his writing career after two years of employment as an associate professor at the University of Colorado. He narrated this experience in *Wakaki sûgakusha no Amerika* (Amer-

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[14] Ibid., 104.

[15] Ibid., 107.

[16] Yamazaki, 'Bestseller Kaidoku', 25.

ica From the Perspective of a Young Mathematician). While there are innumerable Japanese authors who oppose Western values, Fujiwara stands out among them because he has plenty of experience of living and working in the 'West'. He states that initially he viewed the United States and its values and lifestyle positively, but gradually came to question the Western emphasis on theory and logic, maintaining that theoretical rightness should not be overestimated. Fujiwara does concede the significance of rationality but emphasises the importance of so-called essential Japanese values of 'emotion' (*jôcho*) and 'form' (*katachi*). Furthermore, the author audaciously states that freedom is an illusion since man is inevitably constrained by numerous social obligations from the moment of birth.[17] Here, Fujiwara adopts Doi's view of freedom always being strictly limited to relationships of dependence in Japan.[18] Like Doi, Fujiwara pursues an antagonistic approach with freedom in the West assumedly meaning freedom from social constraints, while in Japan it requires the indulgent consent of the group; in doing so he constructs alleged Japanese and Western nuances in meaning.

Another example is Fujiwara's rather elaborate description of the differing ways Americans and Japanese perceive the chirping voices of cicadas. Fujiwara narrates the episode of a professor from Stanford University who visited the author in his home on an autumn evening. Cicadas had just started to chirp near the veranda. Somewhat irritated, Fujiwara's guest wondered about the source of the noises. Fujiwara, on the other hand, was reminded of his grandmother in northwestern Shinshû province who had always remarked rather nostalgically that the onset of cicada voices meant that autumn had started. In other words, Fujiwara implies that non-Japanese – regardless of their educational background – tend to associate the chirping of cicadas in the autumn dawn as noise while Japanese relate them to sentiments of melancholy and wistfulness. It is not clear, however, whether Fujiwara suggests that this sensitivity to nature is due to innate cultural differences or merely socialisation. In any case, Fujiwara consistently points out differences, constructing distinct monolithic cultural entities without any common ground.

Curiously enough, Fujiwara's overall opinion of 'the West' is rather ambiguous. On the one hand, 'the West' constitutes a standard of excessive authority; on the other hand Fujiwara implies that it is morally inferior to Japan and uses mainly negative images of 'crime', 'family disintegration' and 'collapse of the education system' in his description.[19] This uneasy inherent paradox too has been inherited from *nihonjinron* debates. In the *Dignity of the State*, we can find numerous examples of the Meiji catchphrase of *tôyô dôtoku, seiyô geijutsu* or 'Eastern ethics as base, Western techniques as means', as coined by nineteenth century scholar and politician Sakuma Shôzan implying the moral superiority of Japan over 'the

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[17] Fujiwara, *Dignity*, 67.
[18] Doi, *Anatomy of Dependence*.
[19] Ibid., 18.

West'. Depending on the circumstances, Fujiwara emphasises either a positive or a negative image.[20] As pointed out above, the persistent reference to the binomial categories of homogeneous 'Japan' versus monolithic 'West' is a typical feature of *nihonjinron* discourses. Their ultimate aim has always been to enforce a collective identity that is perceived to be fading away. Throughout *The Dignity of the State*, the 'West' as Japan's 'Other' has both negative and positive connotations as the book features a mixture of respect, anger, and aggression against the other as well as a yearning to be the other. At the same time, Fujiwara implies that the 'Other' is degenerate, unrefined, and rough while Japan is depicted as unique, elegant, subtle, and supremely civilized. For example, Fujiwara points out that the reactions by Japanese and non-Japanese to Basho's famous haiku poem, '*Furu ike ya kawazu tobikomu mizu no oto*' (An old pond / a frog jumps / sound of water) differ in an essential way.[21] According to Fujiwara, the Japanese tend to imagine a single frog plopping quietly into the water. Due to the sound of the plunging frog, the silence of the surrounding landscape is highlighted. In contrast, so Fujiwara claims, in many other countries people rather imagine a group of frogs splashing noisily into the water, with the association of peaceful serenity lacking entirely so that not even a hint of *jôcho* (emotion) could arise. While this example may seem trivial, it shows Fujiwara's emphasis on Japan's being different.

These are just some examples of the differences that are promoted wilfully throughout the book to convince the reader that Japanese culture has been underestimated and should be approached with more confidence. While Fujiwara's constant reference to the 'Other' evidently seeks to provide a surface to perpetuate Japanese identity against, the presence of the 'Other' in the form of European and American perspectives nevertheless seems to be overwhelming, as it is perceptible on each and every page throughout the book.

Fujiwara's Main Arguments: 'Emotion', 'Form', 'Dignity of the State'

In this section I will provide a brief survey of the book's structure and main claims. Consisting of a preface and seven chapters, this volume of 191 pages first appeared as a pocket book in the Shinchô Shinsho series put out by Shinchôsha Publishers. The author sets out by describing his own experiences in the United States and the United Kingdom and his conversion from Americanophile to someone who believes in the significance of non-rational values after he understood that issues cannot be settled by resorting to logic alone.[22] Fujiwara ends his

[20] Iwabuchi, 'Complicit exoticism'.
[21] Fujiwara, *Dignity*, 110.
[22] Ibid., 4–5.

reflections by regretting the fact that as a result of the introduction of market economy principles, Japan has lost its 'dignity of the state'. While the author omits a precise definition of this central concept as he does of key terms such as the magic catchphrase of 'samurai spirit', the conspicuous vagueness of these terms seems to contribute to their enticing nature. Fujiwara does not elaborate on the meaning of the key phrase of the volume, 'the dignity of the state', but argues that in order to maintain this concept, Japan needs to resist the homogenising effects of globalisation and keep its distance from the rest of the world and avoid to become a 'normal country'. Paradoxically, Fujiwara argues that by keeping its distance, Japan can contribute to mankind.[23]

In the first chapter entitled 'The limits of the rational spirit of modernity' (*Kindaiteki gôri seishin no genkai*), Fujiwara emphasises that over the last five centuries Japan has suffered from the hands of Europe and the United States (*ôbei ni shite yarareta jidai*) while these regions managed to obtain global power through the Industrial Revolution. He praises the emergence of sophisticated Japanese literature in ancient times while he claims that the level of mathematics in Europe at the time was inferior to that in Japan.[24] The core argument of the first chapter is the claim that the Western conviction that problems could be solved by means of logic and reason was mistaken. Instead, Fujiwara argues, consistent logical argumentation has brought about problems. This claim is further elaborated in the second chapter entitled 'With logic only the world will be a failure' (*Ronri dake de ha sekai ga hatan suru*), which concedes the importance of logic but maintains that the most important issues for humans could not be explained by logical argumentation.[25]

> 'If the most important issues for man could all be explained by logic, then it would be sufficient just to teach logic. But in fact this is not so. There are so many things that are extremely important but cannot be explained rationally.'[26]

He goes on to point out that this alleged fact has also been proven mathematically by Kurt Gödel's incompleteness theorem, which states that for any consistent formal theory that proves basic arithmetical truths, an arithmetical statement that is true but not provable by the theory could be constructed. That is, any theory capable of expressing elementary arithmetic cannot be both consistent and complete.

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[23] Fujiwara, *Dignity*, 6.

[24] Ibid., 15.

[25] Ibid., 44.

[26] Ibid.

In the third chapter 'Questioning freedom, equality and democracy' (*Jiyû, byôdô, minshushugi wo utagau*), he argues that the term 'freedom' is not called for – the notion itself being an illusion – as from the moment of his birth, man does not have freedom, given his constraint by numerous social obligations. According to Fujiwara equality, like democracy, is a beautiful theoretical concept but overly reliance on logic and ratio in practice are powerful obstacles to its realisation.

In the fourth chapter 'Japan, the country of '*jôcho*' [emotion, atmosphere] and '*katachi*' [form]' the author asks the Japanese to rediscover these values, which he claims to be specific to Japanese mentality and thought.[27] Once again, Fujiwara's dichotomising way of presenting 'facts' becomes evident in the following section entitled "[Japanese] Sensitivity towards nature":

> 'So what is 'emotion' and 'form' that is inherent to the Japanese? First, what remains uncontested is their sensitive receptivity towards nature. Foreigners who have stayed in Japan for a long time at least made such observations. At the beginning of the *Shôwa* period, a diplomat named George Sansom was working at the British embassy in Tokyo; his wife Catherine wrote a book with the title "Living in Tokyo" (Iwanami Bunko). […] In her book she writes as follows: "With regard to the receptivity to nature and the capability to feel beauty, there is no country which could excel Japan."'[28]

Fujiwara's reference to foreign sources and observations in order to prove the uniqueness of Japan could be regarded as an obvious example of internalised colonisation or 'mind as colony' as coined by Yoshioka.

The fifth chapter, 'Towards a revival of the samurai spirit' (*Bushidô seishin no fukkatsu wo*), contains Fujiwara's core claims, i.e. an appeal to revive the 'invented tradition' of the way of the warrior or *bushidô*, a way of thought that he claims to fit in well with the Japanese climate (*Nihon no fûdo ni tekigô shita shisô*)[29] – a claim that sounds quite familiar from previous *nihonjinron* writers such as Watsuji Tetsurô. Fujiwara maintains that in order to promote sensitivity to beauty or Japanese emotion [whatever that may mean precisely], man needs a certain form of spirit, such as samurai spirit.[30] To illustrate his claim, Fujiwara describes the weakening of *bushidô* from the beginning of the Shôwa period onwards and the various historical forces that led to its downfall. He then outlines Nitobe Inazô's presentation of *bushidô* in his *Bushido – The Soul of Japan* written at the beginning of the twentieth century, which was clearly addressed to foreigners, but – according to Fujiwara's argument – was also partly penned with the

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[27] Ibid., 95.
[28] Fujiwara, *Dignity,* 96.
[29] Ibid., 117.
[30] Ibid., 116.

Japanese in mind. The beginning of Nitobe's construction of *bushidô* as an ethical system already shows that it takes place at the interface between Japan and its European and American counterparts:

> 'Chivalry is a flower no less indigenous to the soil of Japan than its emblem, the cherry blossom; nor is it a dried-up specimen of an antique virtue preserved in the herbarium of our history. It is still a living object of power and beauty among us; and if it assumes no tangible shape or form, it none the less scents the moral atmosphere, and makes us aware that we are still under its potent spell.'[31]

To perpetuate this alleged dichotomy, Fujiwara then finishes by looking back rather nostalgically to his childhood days when his father educated him to come to the aid of persons weaker than himself who are being badly treated – a convention that could of course be attributed not only to the way of the warrior but also to Christianity and most other belief systems. The last part of this section about the future of the *samurai* spirit – in accordance with Nitobe's last chapter entitled 'The Future of Bushido' – is rather short, consisting only of a few sentences. While Fujiwara's description of concrete features of the *samurai* spirit seems rather vague, he concludes the chapter by calling on the Japanese to revive the 'way of the warrior' and to convey its pertinence to all those in the world who rely on empty logic ('*Mazu nihonjin ga kore [bushidô seishin, S. K.] wo torimodoshi, tsumaranai ronri bakari ni tayotteiru sekai no hitobito ni tsutaete ikanakereba ikenai to omoimasu*').[32]

In the sixth chapter 'Why emotion and form are important' (*Naze 'jôcho to katachi' ga daiji na no ka*), one can find the argument that *jôcho* and *katachi* are universal values and should therefore be given more attention. On the one hand, Fujiwara likes to point out the uniqueness of numerous Japanese features with regard to spirit, mind, and thought, but on the other hand, he tends to think of Japan in terms of the global or international system:

> 'The third reason why beautiful emotion is important is that it helps to educate international people in a genuine sense (*shin no kokusaijin wo sodateru*). When one talks about 'international people', the association is mostly 'English', but these two are not directly related. I consider as genuinely international those who go out into the world and are respected as humans.'[33]

In the last chapter Fujiwara focuses on the 'dignity of the state' (*kokka no hinkaku*), arguing that Japan sacrificed its dignity for the sake of postwar economic growth and reflecting on how Japan could regain its lost dignity. While

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[31] Nitobe, *Bushido*, 21.

[32] Fujiwara, *Dignity*, 129.

[33] Ibid., 143.

this key term is the central theme of the last chapter, Fujiwara does not provide any definitions of its meaning. In the preface he admits rather openly that the volume was based on a manuscript of a talk given at a symposium and required thorough revision due to the lack of finesse (*hin*). Demonstrating some sense of self-irony, Fujiwara describes *The Dignity of the State* as:

> '…an extremely rare work, namely a theoretical deliberation on the dignified state by an author without dignity ([…] ***hinkaku*** [emphasis by S. K.] *naki hissha ni yoru hinkaku aru kokkaron to iu kiwamete mezurashii sho*).'[34]

As a matter of fact, '*hinkaku*' was awarded the annual great prize as "the new/fashionable word of the year" (*shingô/ryûkôgo daishô*) in 2006. Since then, other books bearing the term in their titles have subsequently come out, such as *Josei no hinkaku* (The Dignity of Women) by Bandô Mariko in late 2006. Between January and March 2007, a popular TV series entitled *Haken no hinkaku* (The Dignity of Dispatch) was broadcast on Nippon Television Network. In other words, a veritable *hinkaku* boom has occurred in Japan since 2006, with the term *hinkaku* featured in book titles and being used with high frequency in editorials of influential Japanese newspapers such as the *Asashi Shimbun*, the *Yomiuri Shimbun*, and the *Sankei Shimbun*.

Types of 'Invented Tradition' in *The Dignity of the State*

Hobsbawm distinguished three types of 'invented tradition' in relation to hegemonies. The first are those creating social cohesion and collective identities. The second are those establishing or legitimising institutions and social hierarchies. Finally, the main aim of the third type is socialisation, perpetuation of views, and values or codes of behaviour.[35] Hobsbawm's distinction of 'invented' and 'genuine' traditions has been debated extensively.[36] Fujiwara alludes to numerous 'invented traditions' throughout *The Dignity of the State* in order to create a pleasant atmosphere, reassure the Japanese people about their 'lost' identity, and establish distinct national cohesion. The author achieves this in various ways, some of which I will discuss in the following paragraphs.

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[34] Ibid., 6.

[35] Hobsbawm, *Invention*, 9.

[36] Hobsbawm's distinction of 'invented' and 'genuine' traditions has been discussed extensively. Handler and Linnekin, 'Tradition', Hanson, 'Making the Maori', and Keesing, 'Creating the Past' have argued that traditions are created in the present, thus contesting Hobsbawm's categorisation into genuine and spurious traditions. Compare also Schnell, 'Rural Imaginary', 202.

First, he refers to the trite myth of Japan's unified nation-state without elaborating on it. This claim evidently belongs to type one, the aim being the creation of social cohesion. Fujiwara's arguments – if not explicit – resemble Walker Connor's concept of ethnic perennialism, suggesting that the national bond is fundamentally psychological and non-rational. For example, in the last chapter on the dignity of the state, Fujiwara elaborates on the jeopardised virtues that are impregnated on the Japanese 'as if it were their DNA'.[37] Similarly, Connor described nations as a 'group of people who feel that they are ancestrally related. It is the largest group that can command a person's loyalty because of felt kinship ties; it is, from this perspective, the fully extended family'.[38]

Second, Fujiwara writes repeatedly about alleged values such as emphasis on emotion and form and *mono no aware* or special sensitivity to nature that are claimed to be specific to Japanese culture and incomprehensible to non-Japanese.[39] He elides any explicit clarifications as to whether these values are innate or due to socialisation. In some parts, Fujiwara implies that values such as respect for the elderly or helping those who are in a weaker position than oneself need to be learnt from early childhood, thus suggesting the importance of socialisation.[40] But nevertheless, throughout the book the author alludes to values that seem to be innate to Japanese. For example, his reference to the much-touted Japanese sensitivity to nature is such a case of perennialist nationalism in the above-mentioned sense of the Japanese as (constructed) family and nation.[41] This claim that unique features can only be understood by natives, not in a rational or logical manner but based on intuitive insight into Japanese culture has also been a pervasive feature of previous *nihonjinron* treatises. I will now cite a section from the fourth chapter on the ways of the tea, flower arrangements, and calligraphy (*sadô, kadô, shodô*):

> 'Also when it comes to the issue of tea, in Great Britain everyone drinks roughly from mug cups; in Japan, however, we have *chadô* [the way of tea]. Also with regard to arranging flowers, we have *kadô* [the way of flower]. When it comes to characters, the main thing is that the recipient understands them. However, in Japan we have *shodô* [the way of writing]. And we also find *kôdô* [the way of scent] which explores scents. Everything is turned into an art. *Jûdô* [karate] and *kendô* [the way of the sword] also emphasise beauty (*bi*) and etiquette (*rei*). The contents of the different skills in other countries are quite different. The sensitive receptivity towards nature and its resulting

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37 Fujiwara, *Dignity*, 188.

38 Connor, *Ethno-Nationalism*, 202.

39 Fujiwara, *Dignity*, 95.

40 Ibid., 47–8, 126–8.

41 Ibid., 110.

aesthetical emotion (*biteki jôcho*) have formed the core of the Japanese and have brought about the formation of fine arts that are unique in the world.'[42]

This exclusivist argument of Japanese uniqueness clearly belongs to both type one and three of invented tradition as defined by Hobsbawm and Ranger, since apart from the function of establishing social cohesion, the aim is also to revive certain codes of behaviour, the background being the fear of the hollowing out of Japanese national identity. Fujiwara argues that these allegedly intrinsic values are unique to Japan, but he also claims that they are universally significant and should be spread throughout the world – a thought that seems difficult to reconcile with his call for Japan as an aloof nation that keeps its distance from the world.

The third means by which he seeks to revive the nation's lost identity is the ubiquitous argument about Japan's unsurpassed cultural refinement and sophistication. This goes hand in hand with the claim – if only implicitly stated – of Japan's moral superiority. In other words, the myth of Japanese uniqueness as has been discussed in detail by Peter N. Dale[43] is being perpetuated throughout the book. Fujiwara's attempt to reconstruct a cohesive image to which Japanese people feel attracted is perhaps best pinpointed by his reference to Japan's traditional warrior culture or *bushidô* as the embodiment of national culture, a view that is – at best – controversial given the fact that only a small percentage of the Japanese population actually belonged to the warrior class.[44] Fujiwara's argument that Japan should maintain its distance to the rest of the world (*kokô no nihon*) since it is an extraordinary country (*ijô na kuni*) shows a certain propinquity to international relations scholar Kôsaka Masataka's comparison of Japan's position in the world with that of a *hanarezashiki*, literally a detached room or annex in Japanese architecture, with which he describes Japan's distance from both China and later the West while adopting elements from their cultures.[45]

Fourth, Fujiwara's tactic to insist on 'Japan' as the opposed binary of 'the West' is nothing but a corollary of the above discussed homogeneity claim in the *nihonjinron* genre. The consistently negative depiction of Europe and the United States throughout the volume serves to shore up Japan's national identity by constructing an 'Other' and helps to reify Japan as a totalised homogeneous 'Self'. Many of Fujiwara's arguments can be read as an attempt to overcome Japan's excessive dependence on the United States and Europe as well as to counter the fear of the

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[42] Ibid., 98.

[43] Dale, *Myth*.

[44] According to the Statistical Data Collection on the Japanese Population (*Nihon Jinkô Tôkei Shûsei Kokusei Chôsa*), in 1872 there were 1.938.204 warriors out of a population of 37.868.987 in Naimushô, Nihon Jinkô Tôkei Shûsei.

[45] Mayo, 'Attitudes', 7.

hollowing out of national identity due to globalisation processes. In the last chapter on the dignity of the state, for example, Fujiwara asserts that the heart of virtue held by the Japanese, almost as if it were their DNA, was gradually damaged in the Second World War; he goes on to claim that recently it has been thoroughly impaired by a materialism that has spread due to the rise of capitalism. Fujiwara calls for Japan not to give in to the reins of the unrefined foreign countries but to maintain the high virtue that embodies the nation; to this purpose, he argues, the Japanese need to restore emotion and form.[46]

The author selects aspects of Japan that fit this image of a binary opposite. This elicits faint associations with the Japanised version of the traditional Chinese *ka-i* view of the world, in which Japan itself would be the *ka*, the civilised centre of its own world order (as coined by premodern Japanese history scholar Ronald Toby[47]) consisting of the 'empire' in the centre and its 'barbarian' periphery (*i*) with its 'logic of difference', the latter being a term by Japan expert Tessa Morris-Suzuki.[48] This simplified, black-and-white depiction serves to reinforce the feeling of solidarity among Japanese readers (type one of invented tradition as envisaged by Hobsbawm and Ranger) apart from attempting to assert Japan's moral and cultural superiority (type two). In addition, Fujiwara makes efforts to establish this sense of cohesion by directing attention to what he calls 'Japan's collective destiny'. The author claims that it will be the Japanese who will 'save the world' by maintaining a 'state of dignity'.[49] This call is characterised by logical inconsistency: While Fujiwara talks about 'maintaining' a dignified state, he also concedes that Japan's excessive dependence on the United States deprives it of the prerequisites for being such a state. Here, Fujiwara alludes to the collective destiny of the Japanese 'to save the world' (*sekai wo sukuu no ha nihonjin*), striving to rediscover and reconstruct certain communal values to reinforce the sense of cohesion that gives rise to national identity – clearly a claim that could be classified as type one of invented tradition as defined by Hobsbawm.

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[46] Fujiwara, *Dignity*, 188.

[47] Toby, *State and Diplomacy*, 217–9. This self-representation as 'civilised' as opposed to the 'backward' other demonstrates furthermore the hybrid role of Japan in Orientalisation processes: At times it is object of investigation, at times 'agent' which pretends to be subject of investigation.

[48] Morris-Suzuki, *Reinventing Japan*, 17–8.

[49] Fujiwara, *Dignity*, 191.

'Atmosphere rather than arguments'? Japanese readers' reactions to *The Dignity of the State*

On the Japanese amazon.co.jp website, 595 comments have been posted by readers of the book; the overall evaluation given by readers 3.5 stars out of a maximum of five.[50] While some highly praise the volume, others express their astonishment that it became a bestseller. Most readers agree that the book is 'easy to read' (*yomiyasui*). Perhaps the following comment entitled 'Fujiwara's theoretical views on education' (*Fujiwara no kyôikuron*) appropriately grasps the essence and appeal of the book:

> 'I read *The Dignity of the State* a year ago. It seems that the book still continues to sell now. It is a very peculiar work penned by a mathematician who announces his views on Japanese culture and identity, but for me personally it was quite useful. Since it is written in colloquial language, it is easy to read [*sic*, S. K.], and he argues logically like a mathematician; both content and expression are comprehensible. The content of the book…I cannot remember.'[51]

Rather than specific arguments, the atmosphere and terms such as *hinkaku* and *bushidô* seem to lure readers. Accordingly, quite a few state that they enjoyed reading the book because it creates a pleasant atmosphere by pointing out positive aspects of Japan: 'I felt good reading the book since the Japanese were presented in a favourable manner'.[52] Very few readers express their disagreement with Fujiwara's black-and-white depiction of Japan and 'the West' (i.e. Europe and the United States), such as this comment:

> 'Both the critical attitude taken towards European and American modern civilisation, which is maybe based on secondhand information and the fact that Japanese civilisation such as the traditional warrior spirit are presented in a positive light without any critique or verification, strikes me as an immature discourse and I felt uneasy when reading the book.'[53]

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[50] Among the 595 comments on Fujiwara's book, 194 rated it with five stars, 147 with four stars, 109 with three stars, 55 with two stars, and 90 with one star. In comparison, *Harry Potter* (depending on which volume and edition) was accorded between 4 and 5 stars. The Japanese version of *Harry Potter and The Order of the Phoenix*, the only book selling more copies than Fujiwara in 2006, had an overall evaluation of four stars and received 567 comments, of which 256 *rated it with five, 163 with four, 89 with three, 33 with two, and 26 with one star. The Japanese amazon.co.jp* website was last accessed on August 2008.

[51] Comment on <http://blog.livedoor.com>, 5 September 2007.

[52] Comment by 'Umi no saizenretsu', 27 June 2006.

[53] Comment by 'Katsumarô', 17 July 2006.

Many commentators remarked that the author's call for re-emphasising Japan's 'tradition' appealed to them, but only very few question the authenticity of this 'tradition':

> 'It is certainly true that I believe that in present Japanese everyday life Westernisation is spreading in various areas. I am not saying that this is a bad thing but the fact itself that Japan has managed to imitate the good points of other cultures in such a skilled manner may constitute Japan's tradition and culture. At the same time, however, I would like to see Japan's specific culture being attributed more respect.'[54]

This lack of reflection and the overwhelming appeal of this volume to a considerable number of readers attest to the fact that there is a growing need for reaffirmation of so-called Japanese national traits in times when what accounts for 'the essence' of Japan's national identity is becoming less evident:

> 'Since this book has been a bestseller, I started to read it for I expected some epoch-making observations, but far from it, what I found were mostly commonplace statements. But I am not saying that this is something bad, I rather consider it as something positive. I think that this book has managed to express clearly that the pride of being Japanese needs to be recovered, a thought that has been shared by a great number of Japanese'.[55]

Another reader, for example, states in his comment on 9 July 2006 that reading the volume reminded him of Japan's traditional martial arts spirit, since he practiced *kendô* or Japanese fencing as a youth, which helped him to restore his self-confidence. Ironically, the pseudonym of this reader is 'Kevin'. This comment testifies to the attractiveness of vague associations that feelings of (constructed) continuity elicit:

> '[When reading this book, S. K.] I remembered the martial arts spirit, since I did *kendô* until the time I started senior high school. I realised that I have also changed a little bit. Of course there is also 'change' due to 'growth'…my beloved Nippon [Japan, S. K.]. I have fully realised the spirit of traditional martial arts inside me. I have the feeling that I have gained a bit of self-confidence. I can understand that this book sells and I like the Japan where such a book is so popular.'

To sum up, the number of readers who expressed clear disapproval of Fujiwara's views was rather small while there were quite a number of commentators who appreciated the author's call for reviving Japan's 'traditions'. The positive reaction to catchy terms like *kokka no hinkaku* that are introduced in the book without further specification is exemplified by a reader who explains that the term

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[54]   Comment on amazon.co.jp by 'Mitsubo', 14 July 2006.
[55]   Comment by 'Kotomine', 17 July 2006.

hinkaku caught her attention and that she casually read the book while browsing in the bookshop. Since she found the content to be comprehensible and useful for raising children, she decided to buy it.[56]

Another reader remarks that this book certainly tries to present Japan in a favourable light but this is just because it underestimates the Japanese. He argues that this volume warns the Japanese about the profound danger of being too humble. Furthermore, according to Fujiwara, even if the Japanese reached a stage where they could be proud of themselves, they would go so far as to demonstrate insolence. This is attributed to young people wavering too much about the after-effects of past deeds, despising patriotism, and misunderstanding true patriots. In this reader's opinion, such a tendency of picking out the ugly parts of Japanese history and not trying to see its glory is not bound to give rise to a good future.[57] Comments by famous personalities from all walks of life in Japan have recently been uploaded onto the website of Shinchôsha Publishers. For example, we find positive remarks by former prime minister Nakasone[58] on the bestseller:

> 'There is no other book that deals with how Japan should act in such a fair and open manner. Views on history and thought, i.e., the essence for (of?) the state, have been dealt with in detail and I read the book with great sympathy.'[59]

Most newspaper reviews have also been positive, the tenor being that Fujiwara's latest work is easy to read, compact, and provides information together with entertainment. Most reviewers have pointed out that Fujiwara has managed to write the book at a time when Japanese readers seem to be grasping for orientation and a new sense of purpose and identity, and that this is what Fujiwara caters to in this book. A columnist in the newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* comments that due to the popularity of the book, his views on the state (*kokkakan*), which had been in a frozen kind of condition, have started to thaw.[60] While some have criticised the shallowness of Fujiwara's arguments and question the appropriateness of the title, the majority of reviewers emphasise the author's humorous style and his great skill in sensing readers' longing for an atmosphere of security and familiarity in times of insecurity and change. *The Dignity of the State* has been called the 'voice

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[56] Comment by 'Churajima', 4 July 2006.

[57] Comment by 'Ozarasu Keiji', 15 October 2007.

[58] Incidentally, it was Nakasone who established and generously funded the International Research Center for Japanese Studies (known as *Nichibunken*) in Kyoto to look at the origins and evolution of what constitutes 'Japanese culture'.

[59] See www.shinchosha.jp/wadainohon/610141/comment.html accessed August 2008.

[60] Yamazaki, 'Bestseller Kaidoku', 25.

of our times' (*jidai no koe*)[61] and 'something that has turned into a social phenomenon' (*shakai genshôka*).[62]

Conclusion

In this paper I have investigated why Fujiwara's *The Dignity of the State* has met with such success, examining its sophisticated technique of alluding to and reproducing presumably genuinely Japanese values. The construction of an antagonistic world order with Japan as the centre and the 'Occident' representing the (threatening) 'Other' turns out to be highly effective as a means of constituting a semblance of a Japanese national identity, as numerous positive reactions by readers on select internet sites and by reviewers in print media demonstrate. The monolithic depiction of the fictitious entity of the 'Other' and the lack of elaboration of arguments in general indicates that the function of the former is to act as a boundary marker in order to conjure up a distinct Japanese 'Self'. In other words, the *ad nauseam* invention of alleged specifically Japanese customs and traits combined with the usage of vague but catchy terms serves the purpose of shoring up national identity in the hope of eventually overcoming Japan's postwar dependence on the United States and Europe. Fujiwara's latest book can clearly be traced back to earlier *nihonjinron* works since Fujiwara points out the superiority of Japanese culture over other cultures, emphasising Japan's uniqueness, while at the same time perpetuating self-Orientalising images (e.g. warrior spirit). Furthermore, he too pursues a primordialist approach, employing attributes of basic social and cultural phenomena such as language, religion, territory, and kinship in his attempt to generate a sense of collective belonging. At the same time, however, it is being suggested somewhat paradoxically that these apparently innate features can and should be adopted by and are worthwhile frameworks for non-Japanese.

While the 'invention of tradition' paradigm has been referred to here, this study has also revealed that Hobsbawm's notion of 'tradition' as something static[63] does not apply. Fujiwara clearly uses assumedly traditional values to inject new

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[61] Yano, 'Ima wo kataru', 67.

[62] Shinchôsha Chief Editor Mie Hakuichi, 'Shinchôsha 'Kokka no hinkaku' no urekata', 70.

[63] Hobsbawm saw it as one key characteristic of all 'invented traditions' that he claimed to embody some invariant quality of the past. This was the basis for the distinction of 'tradition' from 'custom': 'The object and characteristic of 'traditions', including invented ones, is invariance. The past, real or invented, to which they refer imposes fixed (normally formalized) practices…'Custom' in traditional societies has the double function of motor and fly-wheel. It does not preclude innovation and change up to a point….'Custom' cannot afford to be invariant, because in 'traditional' societies life is not so.' Hobsbawm, 'Introduction', 2–3.

momentum into Japanese self-definition and confidence, picking selected puta-tively native aesthetic values such as affinity to nature and spiritual orientation toward life. As Linnekin and Handler have stated, 'the content of the past is modified and redefined according to a modern significance'.[64] The *Dignity of the State* exemplifies the reference to suitable pasts and traditions for the construction of a waning national identity. What is more, Fujiwara's call for the revival of neglected values is a means of conferring upon his readers a sense of cultural superiority and of re-asserting national cohesion. One could consider it as an attempt to fight the 'dark vision of national disintegration', as Robinson has described the function of *nihonjinron* as a whole.[65] Features such as ethnocentrism, emphasis on national uniqueness, innate values, and ethnic homogeneity clearly draw on previous *nihonjinron* arguments and even the coupling of calls for internationalism with the revival of 'Japanese' values and codes of behaviour sound familiar from previous discourses on Japanese identity. On the one hand, Fujiwara calls on Japan to abandon its preoccupation with Western values and to revert to 'genuine' values (Japan should not be a 'normal' state, but be proud of its extraordinariness[66]) but on the other hand he appeals for the promotion of becoming Japanese with an 'international' outlook (*kokusaijin*), whom he defines as 'people who are respected as human beings abroad, too'. ([...] *kaigai de mo ningen toshite keii wo ukeru you na ningen*). [67] This inherently contradictory reasoning merely shows the fuzzy state of the Japanese identity discourse and can be found in previous debates about Japanese identity. 'Tradition', vaguely represented by a seemingly arbitrary array of values, is nothing but a remedy to the end of claiming cultural specificity and countering the notion of 'Japan as void' (*Nihon no kûmu*).[68] Befu argued that *nihonjinron* substituted a symbolic vacuum due to the lack of appeal of Japanese national symbols such as the Japanese flag or the imperial institution as a result of their divisive nature.[69] Fujiwara's deft appropriation and reification of select values and traditions can be seen as an illus-

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[64] Linnekin and Handler, 'Tradition', 287.

[65] Robinson, 'Enduring Anxieties', 181.

[66] Fujiwara, *Dignity*, 179–80: 'Japan has since times immemorial been an "extraordinary country". It has always been completely different from distant countries, but also from its close neighbours.' (*Nihon ha yûshi irai, zutto 'ijô na kuni' na no desu. Tôku no kuni ha mochiron, kinrin no kuni to mo marude kotonaru kuni deshita*.)

[67] Ibid., 59.

[68] While literary critic Fukuda Kazuya maintained in *Nippon no Kakyô* (Japan's Homeland) that the lack of content is the essence of modern Japan itself and that the identity of nothingness is a 'home' one ultimately returns to (Fukuda, *Nippon no Kakyo*, 150), his anti-essentialist theoretical posture is not thoroughly sustained (see Iida, 'Japanese Identity', 457). In this sense I take it that 'nothingness' has generally been perceived as a menace which has enforced attempts to recover identity and meaning by re-establishing the impaired framework of a collective imagined entity.

[69] Befu, *Hegemony*, 86.

tration of Goldstein and Linnekin's claim that tradition is consciously used by people in the construction of their cultural identity as well as of Hanson's argument that 'traditional culture' is something that is constructed for contemporary purposes.[70]

The overwhelming success of the book can be explained partly by the great effect Fujiwara's reference to 'traditional' Japanese values and practices seems to exert on Japanese readers and Fujiwara's considerable skill in creating a semblance of national identity. What may strike the reader as ironic is that on the one hand, Fujiwara makes an effort to appeal to Japanese readers to revert to 'genuinely' Japanese values in typical *nihonjinron* rhetoric, but on the other hand, the aspects and traits he chooses imply the internalisation of Western perspectives. In fact, Fujiwara's recent opus can be usefully regarded as an example of Stuart Hall's insight of the acceptance of hegemonic 'Othering' of the coloniser by the colonised natives and the ensuing perception of 'Self' as 'Other', i.e., that in addition to being constructed as different and 'Other' in Western categories of knowledge, the colonised natives were forced by 'regimes' to perceive themselves as 'Other'.[71] In other words, not only has Japan taken account of the Western 'gaze' by constantly referring to it, it has gone so far as to internalise Western perceptions of itself, if in an oppositional manner. Befu has referred to the same phenomenon as 'do-it-yourself Orientalism'.[72] Even if it may be inappropriate to refer to the Japanese as the 'colonised natives', this mental internalisation of Western views and standards becomes evident in the process of dichotomisation that Fujiwara pursues throughout the volume; the consciousness of the inherent Western 'gaze' is demonstrated by the author's constant references, if seemingly deprecatory, to the hostile 'West'. Fujiwara's opus could be considered as another attempt in the vast number of *nihonjinron* works to overcome Japan's excessive dependence on the United States and Europe. However, this attempt is destined to fail due to its very starting point of internalised Western gaze, which is evident from the selection of symbols to embody so-called Japanese 'tradition' such as the 'warrior', an image that is in itself a Western projection of what is supposed to constitute Japanese identity. The enormous popularity of the book can be ascribed to the sense of cohesion and identity, be it imaginary, that he creates by referring to terms that are neither defined nor explained in detail but exert considerable fascination on readers spanning social strata, gender, and age groups. On a more general note, judging from readers' and reviewers' reactions, Fujiwara's arguments seem to have been perceived as an opportunity to engage in reflection on Japan's present state of affairs and to take a more positive attitude towards the country's history and culture. Reverting to the image of black and white lines sketched by

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70 Hanson, 'Making the Maori', 890.
71 Hall, 'Cultural Identity', 394–5.
72 Befu, *Hegemony*, 127.

Eisely that I cited at the beginning of this paper, Fujiwara's rhetoric could also be understood as an exigent attempt to reconfirm Japan's sense of existence against increasing apprehension felt by the author and readers about Japan's future national identity.

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The Limits of Invention: Traditions in Kyoto

Christoph Brumann

Few other social scientific paradigms have cast such a long shadow over their respective field of application as the 'invention of tradition'. Hobsbawm and Ranger's eponymous and now famous collection[1] continues to be widely cited in social scientific and humanities journals (Figure 1). This means that social scientists of all disciplinary backgrounds – and anthropologists in particular (Table 1) – tend to search for the meaning of traditions and heritage in the present, finding them in the contemporary interests and agendas that determine their deployment. Key among these is the wish to demarcate and elevate nations (the original volume's main concern), ethnic groups, status groups, or other collective entities: 'all invented traditions … use history as a legitimator of action and cement of group cohesions', writes Hobsbawm in his introduction.[2] For serving this purpose, traditions and heritage are imbued with an ancient aura, much as they are often fairly recent and consciously shaped in actual fact. For instance, the kilt serves as an immemorial symbol of Scottishness today although it is the eighteenth-century creation of an Englishman.[3] In the following, I will first analyze the dominance of the 'invention' paradigm in the social sciences in some more detail. I will then turn to two examples from Kyoto, the ancient Japanese capital, that deviate in significant ways from the predictions of the model. This can partly be explained by the special circumstances that I subsequently describe. But it also throws up a number of more general reservations about 'invention' that I discuss in the concluding section.

The Hegemony of 'Invention'

In my view, Hobsbawm and Ranger's approach has flourished in no small part because it has fitted in quite well with a broader intellectual climate that has favoured the deconstruction of hegemonic narratives, such as those upheld by the guardians of many traditions. The time was ripe, particularly in anthropology, as is attested to by the fact that several authors seem to have arrived at the 'inven-

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[1]   Hobsbawm and Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*.
[2]   Hobsbawm, 'Introduction', 12.
[3]   Trevor-Roper, 'The Invention of Tradition'.

tion' term independently.[4] Most anthropological analyses have pursued a more relativist bent than Hobsbawm and Ranger, however.[5] Hobsbawm distinguishes between authentic and fabricated traditions, saying that '… [T]he strength and adaptability of genuine traditions is not to be confused with the "invention of tradition". Where the old ways are alive, traditions need be neither revived nor invented'.[6]

In contrast, for the anthropologists Handler and Linnekin, all traditions are equally genuine or equally spurious: 'The origin of cultural practices is largely irrelevant to the experience of tradition; authenticity is always defined in the present. It is not pastness or givenness that defines something as traditional. Rather, the latter is an arbitrary symbolic designation; an assigned meaning rather than an objective quality'.[7] Tradition thus becomes a socially based attribution, and all – including academic – statements about the past come from motivated positions that need to be put into context.

The question whether all or only some traditions are believed to be invented aside, there is remarkable unity about the social consequences of traditions and heritage. '… [E]xclusionary practices … form the backbone of heritage politics', says Olwig,[8] and similar statements are widespread in anthropology.[9] Beyond the discipline, a very critical view of traditions and heritage is, if anything, even more common and less restrained by cultural-relativist commitments.[10]

Anthropologists have learned about the risks of deconstructing traditions and the past, as this endangers what is often an important resource of otherwise underprivileged groups such as indigenous peoples,[11] and there is even the case of Alan Hanson who, reacting to the public criticism[12] of his deconstruction of official

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[4] Handler and Linnekin, 'Tradition, Genuine or Spurious', 276, 279; Keesing and Tonkinson (eds.), 'Reinventing Traditional Culture'; Linnekin, 'Defining Tradition', 241.

[5] Cf. also Ranger, 'The Invention of Tradition Revisited', 63.

[6] Hobsbawm, 'Introduction', 8.

[7] Handler and Linnekin, 'Tradition, Genuine or Spurious', 286.

[8] Olwig, 'The Burden of Heritage', 370.

[9] Deltsou, 'Constructing a Space of Tradition', 131–2; Gable and Handler, 'After Authenticity', 574; Gewertz and Errington, 'The Individuation of Tradition', 121–3; Haley and Wilcoxon, 'Anthropology and the Making of Chumash Tradition', 776–7; Handler, *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec;* Herzfeld, *A Place in History*, 257; Owens, 'Monumentality, Identity, and the State', 297; Sant Cassia, 'Tradition, Tourism and Memory in Malta', 257; Scher, 'Copyright Heritage', 477–8; Sutton, 'Explosive Debates', 76.

[10] Hewison, 'Heritage', 21; Lowenthal, *Possessed by the Past,* 12, 122; Walsh, *The Representation of the Past*, 149.

[11] Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture,* 277–346.

[12] Cf. Linnekin, 'Cultural Invention'.

Maori history,[13] apologised for the use of the term 'invention'.[14] Nonetheless, 'invention'-style analysis remains very widespread and in some cases is applied in an almost automatic manner, with the interest in the studied traditions being limited to disclosing their recent and present-day strategic (ab)uses.

Traditional Kyoto

This can also be said for many anthropological and other social scientific writings on tradition and heritage in Japan, fitting for a country that is widely believed to be particularly conscious of its past. Two edited volumes on invented traditions in Japan have appeared,[15] and tradition has been found to be a tool for drawing social boundaries in contemporary urban life[16] as well as in the countryside.[17] The connection with imaginations of the nation has been pursued both in popular-rustic[18] and high-cultural registers.[19] Analytical approaches are variegated too, ranging from hard-nosed social anthropology[20] to postmodernist evocation.[21]

So when conducting ethnographic fieldwork in Kyoto for seventeen months in 1998/99 and two months in 2001,[22] watching out for 'invention' suggested itself.

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13   Hanson, 'The Making of the Maori'.

14   Hanson, 'Reply', 450.

15   Antoni (ed.), *Rituale und ihre Urheber*; Vlastos (ed.), *Mirror of Modernity*.

16   e.g. Bestor, *Neighborhood Tokyo*; Robertson, *Native and Newcomer*.

17   e.g. Ben-Ari, 'Uniqueness, Typicality, and Appraisal'; Kelly, 'Rationalization and Nostalgia'; Moon, *From Paddy Field to Ski Slope*.

18   e.g. Ehrentraut, 'The Visual Definition of Heritage'; Goldstein-Gidoni, 'The Production of Tradition and Culture'; Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*; Robertson, *Native and Newcomer*; Yano, *Tears of Longing*.

19   e.g. Antoni, 'Tradition und "Traditionalismus"'; Ehrentraut, 'Cultural Nationalism'; Fujitani, *Splendid Monarchy*; Shirane and Suzuki (eds.), *Inventing the Classics*.

20   e.g. Bestor, *Neighborhood Tokyo*.

21   e.g. Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*.

22   My general topic was the social uses of public traditions and heritage in Kyoto, and aside from the *Kyô-machiya* and the *Gion Matsuri*, I concentrated on the city's intense and often heated public disputes about how to preserve its historical townscape while harmonising modern-day development, particularly high-rise condominiums. Fieldwork included participant observation at public meetings and citizens' groups, as well as a very large number of interviews and informal meetings with public officials, planners, architects, preservation specialists, researchers, citizen activists, residents and proprietors of historical buildings, and ordinary Kyotoites concerned with these questions (for further details and other results, see Brumann, 'Die Stadt als Feld', 'Machiya vs. manshon', 'Deconstructing the Pont Des Arts', 'A Right to the Past', 'Whose Kyoto?', 'Copying Kyoto').

After all, Kyoto was the seat of the emperor from 794 to 1868 and one of the most important urban centres throughout Japan. Although outshined by Tokyo and Osaka today, the city continues to be a stronghold of many traditional institutions, including most Buddhist sects, the major schools of tea ceremony, famous geisha quarters, and many traditional arts and crafts such as the kimono industry. In addition, more than 40 million visitors each year come for the city's unmatched architectural heritage of Buddhist temples, Shintoist shrines, imperial palaces, and beautiful gardens. If anywhere, most Japanese would agree, ancient Japan and its refined traditions are to be found in Kyoto. There is thus no doubt that the city and its glorious past contribute to tales of national grandeur. Therefore, one could also expect two of the most celebrated local traditions to do likewise. One is the *Gion Matsuri*, arguably the most famous festival of Japan; the other is the *Kyô-machiya*, the traditional town houses of the city. No other tradition unfolding in the public space of central Kyoto is nearly as famous as these two,[23] and the fact that the festival is a nationally listed cultural property and that the houses, after a long period of neglect, have been the subject of a rather spectacular rediscovery in recent years, should provide favourable conditions for all kinds of invention. I start by introducing the two traditions in more detail before investigating their fit with the paradigm.

The Kyô-machiya

Kyô-machiya translates as 'Kyoto town houses'. These wooden structures have developed very gradually over more than a millennium and belong to the most refined traditional commoner dwellings in Japan. Locally specific features include their peculiar layout known as 'bedchamber of eels' (*unagi no nedoko*) in which on a long and narrow strip of land, a whole series of buildings is connected by tiny yet exquisite gardens. The construction of these houses ceased with the Second World War, however, and due to imported architectural models, lifestyle changes, shrinking household sizes, postwar building codes with little tolerance for flammable materials, and a continuing demand for high-rise redevelopment, their number has been declining rapidly. There are still about 25,000 *Kyô-machiya* today, but this is only a fraction of their former numbers, and many of the remaining houses are in critical condition, often mercilessly jammed in by modern structures.

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[23] The *Gozan okuribi* – the ceremonial lighting of fires that form specific characters or pictures in the hills surrounding Kyoto on 16 August – is the only close contender. This rite is not quite as famous, however, and has been historically carried on by villages outside Kyoto that have only become part of the city in the twentieth century.

However, what has been called a *Kyô-machiya bûmu* ('boom') in Anglo-Japanese began around 1990. While demolition continues to be a common occurrence, hundreds of houses have been renovated into cafes, restaurants, shops, and dwellings. Stylistic features of these vernacular structures have also started to appear in modern buildings of steel and concrete. Social activities focusing on the houses such as visits, exhibitions, concerts, residents' talks, symposiums, or citizens' groups' meetings abound and are amply featured in dozens of books, press coverage, and on the internet, and mediation services receive hundreds of search inquiries from prospective buyers or tenants each year. As tourist attractions, the houses now rival the famous temples, and there is no dearth of specialised guide books and walking maps. Major real estate companies slyly advertise their high-rise condominiums with the allure of those nearby traditional houses that they have not yet managed to force out. Feature articles in national magazines as well as theme restaurants and house or façade replicas in shopping streets and malls in Tokyo and international airports show that the fame of the *Kyô-machiya*? has spread. Almost everyone wants them preserved now, a remarkable turnaround from the situation of twenty years ago when they were widely regarded as little more than an economic liability.

The *Gion Matsuri*

The second case, the *Gion Matsuri*, stands out even in a country that is famous for its many festivals. It is dedicated to the Yasaka shrine (*Yasaka Jinja*), formerly the Gion shrine (*Gion-sha*), a Shintoist sanctuary on the eastern fringes of historical Kyoto. Its climax is the *Yamaboko Junkô*, an annual parade that takes place in the morning of July 17. Thirty-two floats leave their home base, a couple of adjoining neighbourhoods in the centre of town, and proceed in single file over several major avenues. Most floats are called *yama* (literally 'mountain') and have platforms on which life-sized puppets depict mythical or historical scenes. Even more spectacular are the *hoko* (literally 'halberds') that may reach as high as twenty-seven meters. They are set on large wooden wheels and have roofed platforms halfway up, seating troops of up to sixty musicians who play the special festival music called *gion-bayashi* on flutes, gongs, and drums. All floats are hung with antique tapestries and gobelins that have been imported from all over Eurasia, even during the centuries when Japan sealed itself off against all foreign contact. More than 100,000 spectators watch the parade each year, and several times as many visit the festival neighbourhoods during the preceding days and nights, admiring the floats being assembled and decorated and the family valuables put on display, amusing themselves at the fair stalls, visiting friends, and eating, drinking, shopping, and buying festival amulets.

The roots of the festival reach back to the tenth century, and the floats too have been paraded for more than 600 years. Their names, topics, and appearances have hardly changed since 1500, a spectacular case of cultural continuity. The biggest modifications have occurred in the postwar period: not only was the festival listed as an important cultural property of the Japanese state, it was also promoted as a tourist attraction. To accommodate more spectators, it was rerouted from Kyoto's narrow streets to its large avenues, and while it was formerly two parades, they have been fused into a single, more impressive one. Also, the population of the participating neighbourhoods has dropped – in some places to zero – requiring the integration of business firms and their employees. Yet while signs of crisis and anxiety over the future of the festival were recorded in the 1970s,[24] the crowds today are as large and the participants are as determined as ever.

Defrosted Traditions

In three important ways, the social appropriation of *Kyô-machiya* and *Gion Matsuri* deviates from the 'invention' paradigm. As I will show for both of them in the following, they are less 'frozen', more substantial, and more socially inclusive than might be expected.

Let me begin with the first of these points. The traditions enshrined in the service of ethnic and national interests are often presented as standing outside time, with, for example, the unchanging kilt standing metonymically for the unchanging essence of Scottishness, and everything is done to keep them in their historical condition. Yet such an approach to the two Kyoto traditions is difficult to substantiate. The conventional ideal of Japanese architectural preservation is called 'freezing preservation' (*tôketsu hozon*) and is premised on the retention of an unaltered physical structure. Yet while a few exceptional *Kyô-machiya* are indeed deliberately maintained in this way, the catchphrase of the movement is '*machiya* revitalisation' (*machiya saisei*), and there is widespread agreement that something original has to be done with them to make their continued existence viable and meaningful.

The most visible instances of such 'defrosting' are physical adaptations to modern usages, such as by replacing the traditional wooden latticework with window panes, removing walls, partitions, and ceilings, or installing new, non-wooden floors. This is sometimes justified by necessity but often the modifications become the very point of attraction and follow non-traditional aesthetic principles. Rafters and support beams are no longer hidden, facades are made more conspicuous with stained-glass windows, little turrets, or colourful paints, and mud

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[24] Yoneyama, *Gion Matsuri*, 35, 47–8, 53–4, 207.

walls and pillars full of dents and scars are juxtaposed with stainless-steel partitions and halogen lighting. Several distinct time frames may be combined, as in one *machiya* housing an antique shop: the nostalgic handwriting of the neon shop sign and the vinyl records, accessories, and trinkets on sale from the 1950s and 1960s clearly hint to the past, but to one postdating the heyday of *machiya* construction. Bringing in still another time period, newspapers from the 1930s and 1940s have been used as wallpaper (itself an innovation). In sharp contrast, the café in the former back garden has been covered by a modern steel-and-glass roof. The owner's tastes were similarly eclectic: he was a second-hand *manga* dealer in his forties who wore a reggae-style peaked cap when I interviewed him and emphasised his allegiance to all good things, be it Bob Marley or his grandmother's traditional house.

Other attempts to revitalise the houses emphasise their uses, the so-called *sofuto* (short for 'software'). For many long-time owners, these are the countless seasonal rituals, festival decorations, meals, and clothing habits of the past that they retain while almost everyone else discards them. Yet there are also modern interpretations of *sofuto*, for example by young artists and craftspeople who, in the old weavers' quarter known as Nishijin, have converted vacant, often run-down *machiya* into combined residences and studios. Raising the eyebrows of old-timers, they put Indian god posters in the *tokonoma*, the traditional place for a flower arrangement or a picture scroll, or grace the façade with a discarded electric guitar. As their leader, a Buddhist temple priest, emphasises, however, they are thereby honouring the silk weavers' precedent, turning their former homes into sites for creative expression once again.

Further evidence comes from a questionnaire that I distributed to the members of a citizens' group for *machiya* preservation that includes a cross-section of owners and residents, architects, craftsmen, researchers, local bureaucrats, and ordinary fans.[25] In the questionnaire, I asked for personal motives for engaging in *machiya* preservation, giving a long list of possible reasons. The results show a revealing contrast between the *machiya*'s being old (*furui*) – a reason for less than one fifth of the respondents – and their being traditional (*dentôteki*) – a reason for more than three fourths. This suggests that tradition is more than just age and must include the process of generation-to-generation transmission of skills and know-how that have led up to the present-day houses. What appears to matter is the link between the past and the present and further on into the future, with all the potential for adaptation and incremental innovation this suggests.

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[25] I mailed the questionnaires to approximately 100 members in 1999 with responses from 59 members. I also distributed the questionnaires to other groups and individuals, but return rates were lower, leaving a somewhat questionable sample, which I prefer to exclude here. General trends for these other informants, however, were similar.

'Freezing' is more prominent in the *Gion Matsuri*, both because of the involvement of state institutions for heritage preservation and because of the participants' preferences The festival has been listed as an 'Important Folk Cultural Property' (*jûyô minzoku bunkazai*) by the Japanese government, and this legitimises public subsidies for the festival that now cover almost the entire costs. In turn, however, the national Agency for Cultural Affairs (*Bunkachô*) has entrusted a standing advisory committee (*shingikai*) of scholars and preservation experts with approving all repairs, replacements, and applications for subsidies. The guiding principle of this body is in fact 'freezing', that is, to keep the festival as it was at the time of designation.

Normally, this arouses little opposition among participants. They take great care to preserve everything as is, and, in addition to relying on memory, they also prepare photographic documentation of festival displays and even detailed manuals in order to reproduce the previous years' festivals down to the details. One informant strongly engaged in both lines of tradition drew an explicit contrast: *Kyô-machiya* must be revived to be useful today, but the festival, she said, is a matter of preservation (*hozon*), not revitalisation (*saisei*). Without a doubt, practical aspects play a role here. The *Kyô-machiya* stand on prime real estate and must serve practical purposes in order to justify their continued existence against alternative uses whereas the festival floats are assembled on the streets and take up only relatively little storage space when dismantled. In any event, I never encountered anyone seriously considering the modernisation of festival floats, accessories, or costumes, quite in contrast to the *machiya* adaptations described above. One of the youngest participants in the Miyabiyama neighbourhood[26] remarked that it is easy to change culture but difficult to preserve it, suggesting that the latter task is valued for the very challenge it presents.

Keeping everything as is does not extend to every aspect of the festival, however. Since the sixteenth century, floats have been hung with tapestries and gobelins, many of them imported from all over Eurasia. The residents of the Miyabiyama neighbourhood see the acquisition of such symbols of cosmopolitanism during the period of national self-seclusion and under the tight social constraints of the Tokugawa period (1603–1868) as enterprising and bold. Through constant use in the parade, however, the tapestries become worn and must be replaced at some point, a financial burden, which is lightened considerably when applying for public subsidies. Yet the Miyabiyama neighbourhood residents have been under the impression that for this purpose, the authorities have favoured reproductions (*fukugen*) of the old tapestries over new pieces. Neighbourhood residents, however, object to the use of reproductions. A 'moving art museum' (*ugoku bijutsukan*) –

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26 In this neighbourhood – which in reality has a different name – I conducted participant observation throughout the entire festival cycle of 1999, followed by more than a dozen interviews and further informal meetings, some of them during a second visit in 2001.

as the parade is often called – should not include copies, they feel. The central festival committee assured residents that replicas are not mandatory, and they recently bought an antique tapestry in Europe, receiving public subsidies for this purpose. They thereby consciously followed the cosmopolitan precedent of their predecessors, remaining true to the spirit of the festival rather than 'freezing' its appearance.

Substantial Traditions

Conventional 'invention' analyses often suggest that the perceived traditionality of the objects and practices in question is the most significant aspect for their adherents: the Scottish kilt is an emblem of tradition, and its sensory and practical qualities are only secondary. This again is not true for my case. Among the nine most important reasons for *Kyô-machiya* preservation in the aforementioned questionnaire, eight are unrelated to the traditionality of the houses. They can be grouped into two sets, one concerning the aesthetic and emotional harmony that the houses are perceived to produce ('because *Kyô-machiya* are beautiful', '… fit well into Kyoto's townscape', '…have a soothing [*ochitsukeru*] effect', '… have a good atmosphere') and the other, their perceived closeness to nature ('because *Kyô-machiya* let one feel the changing seasons', '… are made of wood', '… are gentle to the environment', '… have gardens inside'). Both groups of reasons also stood out in interviews and public utterances, and people with otherwise very different preservation philosophies returned to the word *ochitsukeru* (to quieten, calm, soothe) and its grammatical variants to express what they experience in *Kyô-machiya*.

Pushing the natural quality to an extreme, there is also a widespread trope of the houses' being 'alive'. Thus, people liken the unimpeded air circulation in the houses with breathing or state that they feel like saying *tadaima* ('Hello, I'm back') when returning home even when there is nobody there. People and house can even start to merge, as for one of the artist network leaders who said that 'in such a house, the person too is just a part' (*kô iu yô na ie wa ningen mo ichibu desu*). No informant insisted that *machiya* are really alive. Yet in contrast to the mainstay of Japan's contemporary housing industry, the modern condominiums and prefabricated homes, *machiya* do invite such metaphors, however playfully deployed.

Heritage preservation is a more central concern in the *Gion Matsuri*, yet here too, participants also appreciate other unrelated aspects. For one, the sheer fun of festival participation is often emphasised. Despite the considerable workload it brings, most participants appeared to be cheerfully absorbed rather than nervously preoccupied during the festival days and also said so themselves. As to the

religious dimension, nobody denies that it has greatly decreased in importance, and the merged parade takes place now before the Yasaka shrine gods have even arrived in the city. Yet in the observed neighbourhood, all required rituals were painstakingly performed, and with the addition of memorial rites at the gravesite and the former home of the two historical figures depicted on the float, the ritual roster has even been expanded in recent years. Moreover, the violation of the most important taboo, namely the non-participation of households in mourning, continues to be out of the question.

Inclusive Traditions

Most important in invention analyses is usually the support that traditions provide for present-day collective identities and regimes of exclusion. But here again, the paradigm fails when applied to the two Kyoto traditions, for the more the houses and the festival have been defined as heritage, the more egalitarian and inclusive their social life has in fact become.

In the questionnaire, options that associate the *machiya* with collective entities ('because *Kyô-machiya* represent Kyoto', '… represent Japan', '… are Japanese architecture') were each chosen by a majority of respondents as a reason for their preservationist engagement. However, the most widespread reasons were the substantial ones already mentioned, and a connection to the city or the nation was not a central concern for anyone I met. I believe this is related to the fact that the *Kyô-machiya* preservation movement remains a grassroots affair. Despite efforts by the local government and citizens' groups, the main actors are the individuals, families, and small companies who own or rent the houses and the small architectural and craft firms who repair and renovate them. They are clearly aware of one another but lack central coordination. Instead, there is much diversity and no sense of forming a special group. A kind of *machiya* nobility of families who look back on local pedigrees of up to fifteen generations own the most splendid houses. Yet while some of them seek the limelight, they do not shut themselves off either and do not challenge non-owners of *machiya* and non-Kyotoites who are among the leading preservation activists. Identification with one's family and line of descent continues to be an important motive for some owners, but the extent of this varies greatly, and where this is a strong concern, it may even end up working against the house by making the demolition of the family space preferable to handing it over to some preservative scheme that would give visitors open access.

In my numerous interviews with people living in or occupying themselves with the *machiya*, personal motives stood out; if anything, informants were more intent on being true to themselves and their individual callings than on becoming

like others. Often, moving into a *machiya* includes plans to turn it into a gathering place, but this is an open-armed style of sociality, not one premised on boundaries. If powerful groups and organisations were more strongly involved, there would certainly be more pressure to follow set models, interpretations, and preservation approaches and a greater likelihood of the houses becoming emblems of collective causes. But so far, the composition of the movement works against this.

The *Gion Matsuri* is a more established collective symbol, and participants are aware of the festival's fame. Yet contributing to Kyoto or national glory does not loom large as a motive. Socially, the float parade develops its most cohesive force on the neighbourhood level, as particularly the residents of the observed neighbourhood emphasised. Yet single neighbourhoods participate in more or less complete independence from one another, and while there is a central festival committee, its authority is fairly limited. In 2001, all the pressure it mustered did not prevent one neighbourhood from placing female musicians on their float, and the committee finally had to abolish the gender barrier for all floats.

In the neighbourhood I observed, the festival has been greatly democratised too. Before the Second World War, landowners shared the costs and all decision-making among themselves, with the numerical majority of tenants and live-in employees having to grudgingly follow their orders. Now, however, public subsidies have eroded the basis for inequality, and there is no longer any distinction between house owners and tenants. Also, the chairman in office during my fieldwork multiplied the positions of responsibility, making a point of consulting his deputies, and, in contrast to earlier days, young people were no longer afraid to speak their minds. When the first high-rise condominium in the neighbourhood was built, the newly arrived residents were also invited to participate rather than shut out. Taking together all these observations, one is drawn to the conclusion that whatever social boundaries once surrounded the *Kyô-machiya* and the *Gion Matsuri* have been eroded rather than raised.

Documented Pasts, Local Audiences, and Urban Backgrounds

The preceding is not meant to say that 'invention' analyses always miss their mark or that they do so specifically in Japan, as there are three special circumstances that must be taken into account. First, both *Kyô-machiya* and the *Gion Matsuri* look back on long histories, and neither of them has been threatened by the prospect of complete extinction in later centuries. This is distinct from the countless instances of Japanese traditions revived from the brink of demise or en-

tirely recreated, be they Shintoist shrine festivals,[27] puppet performances and rituals,[28] or agrarian purification rites.[29] In these cases, there is the chance for sharp reversals, such as the shedding of former social stigmas[30] or of unseemingly obscene aspects.[31] But in Kyoto, the potential for reinterpretation is constrained by the social weight of the many carriers' personal memories and the written and acoustic documentation that will make any radical departures from precedent at least contentious.

Given that the documented history, particularly of the *Gion Matsuri*, is very considerable even without embellishment, there is also little need for beautifying history,[32] and the official story of the festival's origin is the only blatant instance.[33] Many people are quite aware of the less pleasant aspects such as the rigid status hierarchies of the past. Moreover, historical evidence counts in cases of conflict where, for example, old depictions showing female-looking figures on the floats became a strong argument in favour of present-day women's participation. If the traditions stood on shakier historical ground, I think there would be more of the hostility between heritage display and academic history that Samuel considers typical[34] and probably also a stronger tendency to construct an extra-historical space where unchanging traditions endlessly repeat themselves, such as that of the 'folk' in early Japanese folklore studies (*minzokugaku*).[35]

Second, the parade and the *Kyô-machiya* movement are largely carried by and primarily cater to an audience and clientele of fellow Kyotoites. Thus, contrary to otherwise comparable processes around urban vernacular architecture in Marrakech, Beijing, or the Cretan town of Rethemnos,[36] it is neither external actors who set the preservation agenda, nor visitors, foreigners, emigrants, or other outsiders who are chiefly addressed. Counterexamples concerning Japanese traditions abound,[37] and there is even a case where the praise of a foreigner – Bauhaus

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27 Moon, *From Paddy Field to Ski Slope*, 166, 175; Robertson, *Native and Newcomer*, 38–9.

28 Law, *Puppets of Nostalgia*.

29 Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*, 136–9.

30 Law, *Puppets of Nostalgia*, 227–9.

31 Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*, 137–9.

32 e.g. Sawa et al. (eds.), *Kyôto Daijiten*, 229.

33 Cf. Sekiguchi, 'Kodai/chûsei', 30; Yoshii, 'Joshô', 4–5.

34 Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, 268–71.

35 Harootunian, 'Figuring the Folk', 145–50, 151–2; Hashimoto, 'Chihô', 143.

36 Escher et al., 'Gentrification in der Medina von Marrakech'; Abramson, 'Beijing's Preservation Policy'; Herzfeld, *A Place in History*.

37 Chisolm, *Fenollosa*; Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*, 72–140; Kelly, 'Rationalization and Nostalgia', 610; Kikuchi, *Japanese Modernisation and Mingei Theory*; Law, *Puppets of Nostalgia*, 204–6; Moeran, *Lost Innocence*, 14–16.

architect Bruno Taut[38] who brought traditional Japanese architecture to international attention – seems to have been consciously and skilfully deployed by Japanese interested in impressing their compatriots.[39]

Not so in Kyoto, however. While tourist appreciation of the famous parade does have a long history and the *Kyô-machiya* are quickly catching up, if it were for strangers to Kyoto alone, the festival could hardly be sustained, and the *machiya* boom would shrink to a fraction of its actual size. Locals, however, are less easily deceived by too obvious and superficial stagings of 'old Kyoto', and if only tourist expectations were to be satisfied, there would be little need for the sophistication of some of the *machiya* renovations and activities. It is in a rather large and diverse city that also is an acclaimed academic and artistic centre where these individualistic, creative, and even postmodernist appropriations of the past can find an echo.

The most important deviation of the *Kyô-machiya* and the *Gion Matsuri* from other Japanese traditions, however, is their defiance of categorical boundaries. Due to their very specific urban environment in the historical capital, they are not quite folk culture, but they are not quite high culture either. Thus, they also evade the typical modes of nationalist and localist appropriation that have been observed for both of these categories. Traditional 'high culture' in Japan includes the arts and crafts historically patronised by the aristocratic, warrior, and clerical elites, such as the tea ceremony, *nô* theatre, or calligraphy. In the course of time, these arts have been joined by urban commoner entertainments of the Tokugawa period, such as *kabuki* and *bunraku* theatre. Bridging the social chasm that once separated these plebeian entertainments from those of the better classes, they all became 'Japanese traditional culture' in the course of the twentieth century, ubiquitous whenever Japan and its historical achievements are to be officially represented. There is comparatively little anthropological work scrutinising the social functions of this high cultural segment as cultural heritage,[40] probably because they are so obvious.

Instead, most analyses focus on the appropriation of popular and folk traditions in contemporary Japan. These include studies of the modern wedding ceremony[41] or the widespread romanticism for Shitamachi, the 'low city' of Edo/Tokyo and its vibrant commoner culture of markets, pleasure quarters, and theatres.[42] A ma-

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[38] Taut, *Das japanische Haus*; Taut and Balk, *Houses and People of Japan*.

[39] Inoue, *Tsukurareta Katsura Rikyû Shinwa*.

[40] But see Surak, '"Ethnic Practices" in Translation'.

[41] Goldstein-Gidoni, 'The Production of Tradition and Culture'; Shida, 'The Shintoist Wedding Ceremony'.

[42] Bestor, 'The Shitamachi Revival'; Gluck, 'The Invention of Edo', 280; Kondo, *Crafting Selves*, 57–75.

jority, however, deal with rural traditions[43] or those city-based traditions and uses of history that draw links to a rural past, be it village-like human relations,[44] a pioneer period of land reclamation that predated the present city for centuries,[45] or sentimental tears of longing shed for the abandoned home in the provinces.[46] The breakneck speed of postwar urbanisation and rural depopulation has only added to the idealisation of the countryside as the repository of authentic Japaneseness.[47] The idea that Japan is best understood as a 'village society' (*mura shakai*) remains widespread, both among Japanese social scientists[48] and in everyday discourse,[49] as I often observed. In what is a centuries-old trope,[50] the farm village is all that the city is not: 'Tourism, media, and advertising have waged a war on the urban present with destinations, dramas, and images of a bucolic and thatch-roofed past'.[51] In all this, the spatial remove of the countryside continues to be interpreted as temporal distance to urban modernity,[52] similar to the 'denial of coevalness' that Johannes Fabian has diagnosed for many ethnographic writings.[53] This development has not been unlike than what happened in Britain, Quebec, Hawaii,[54] and other modern nations and regions – although perhaps more intense.

In marked contrast to the intellectual colonisation of the countryside, however, the *Kyô-machiya* and the *Gion Matsuri* are urban heritage and could hardly be more so. They are based in the most prestigious and also historically most continuous districts of the nation's historically most prominent metropolis. The town house and the parade stood at the apex of commoner culture, not at its margins, and the pursuit of elegance and refinement, often encouraged by what

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43   Ben-Ari, 'Uniqueness, Typicality, and Appraisal'; Creighton, 'Consuming Rural Japan'; Ehrentraut, 'The Visual Definition of Heritage'; Ivy, *Discourses of the Vanishing*, 66–191; Kelly, 'Rationalization and Nostalgia'; Knight, 'Rural Kokusaika', 207–8; Law, *Puppets of Nostalgia*; Martinez, 'Tourism and the *Ama*'; Moeran, *Lost Innocence*; Moon, *From Paddy Field to Ski Slope*, 156–66; Reader, 'Back to the Future', 211.

44   Bestor, *Neighborhood Tokyo*, 46–9.

45   Robertson, *Native and Newcomer*, 73–109, 181–93.

46   Yano, *Tears of Longing*, 7, 17–21.

47   Creighton, 'Consuming Rural Japan', 239–40, 242.

48   Bestor, *Neighborhood Tokyo*, 46–8, 259.

49   LeBlanc, *Bicycle Citizens*, 35.

50   Gluck, 'The Invention of Edo', 178–81.

51   Law, *Puppets of Nostalgia*, 216.

52   Hashimoto, 'Re-Creating and Re-Imagining', 137, 138, 141; Martinez, 'Tourism and the *Ama*', 105; Robertson, *Native and Newcomer*, 117.

53   Fabian, *Time and the Other*.

54   Williams, *The Country and the City*; Handler, *Nationalism and the Politics of Culture in Quebec*, 52–80; Handler and Linnekin, 'Tradition, Genuine or Spurious', 282.

trickled down from the elite lifestyles that could be glimpsed at close quarters, would eschew any tinges of rusticity. The parade even stages the contrast between city and countryside: the volunteers and helpers moving the floats dress as peasants with cone-shaped hats and straw sandals on naked feet while the neighbourhood residents follow the float in *zôri* (elegant sandals), *shirotabi* (white socks, a common synonym for the ruling classes), and the prestigious samurai garments they were only allowed at this time, i.e., as urbanites. And while the Gion shrine lies outside the historical city limits, the parade never leaves them, contrary to many of the derivative festivals where the floats congregate at the shrine. A more conscientiously non-rural festival is difficult to imagine.

In another deviation from supposedly anonymous, unmarked, and unreflectively lived custom, there is also an element of conscious eclecticism and a strong high-cultural influence in both traditions. The float topics come from historical tales, legends, and myths that, even when they reached commoners through itinerant singers' versions, are derived from war epics, *nô* plays, and Japanese and Chinese classics,[55] i.e., high-cultural sources. These belong to a wider East Asian cultural sphere that was very much alive in the medieval period.[56] Imported Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism mix freely with native Shintoism, yielding a no less globalised picture than that of the tapestries and gobelins that were to appear in later times.

The builders of the town houses as well did their utmost to avoid any rustic features, economising on the use of wood, cultivating a deliberate frailty of the structural frame, and pursuing elegance rather than coarse functionality by careful finishing and by incorporating design elements in the sophisticated *sukiya* style, full-fledged *chashitsu* (tea ceremony rooms) or, after the turn of the twentieth century, Western-style sitting rooms. Clearly, the *Kyô-machiya* are the most refined and eclectic vernacular architecture in Japan.

Yet still, the parade and the town houses were not elite culture but belonged to the *machishû*, the ordinary townsfolk. Much as these merchants and craftsmen were the envy of their fellow commoners over most of the nation and were often rather prosperous, in the official rank order of Tokugawa society, they still stood below even the humblest peasant. Low in status too was everything connected with them, and while the elites watched the parade, the urban neighbourhoods financed it themselves. Therefore, postwar recognition of the festival as a nationally important cultural property and the even more recent elevation of commoner dwellings to interesting pieces of heritage and fashionable resources carry democratic overtones, making everyone's heritage worthy of preservation. A consequence of the growing cachet of the *Kyô-machiya* category is also its extension,

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[55] Wakita, *Chûsei Kyôto to Gion Matsuri*, 212.

[56] Cf. e.g. Kônoshi, 'Constructing Imperial Mythology', 60–1.

both upward and downward: it now includes everything from the rented abode of barely thirty square meters to the *chaya* ('tea houses', i.e. geisha houses), *ryokan* (traditional inns), or *buke yashiki* (samurai villas) that would have been carefully distinguished from a common *machiya* in the past.

Conclusion

Even when taking into account these special features, I nevertheless believe that something is also missing from other analyses of the social uses of traditions and heritage. Many socially marked traditions certainly do buttress collective identities, serve as tools for exclusion, stifle cultural innovation, falsify real history, and underwrite conservative values. But how much precisely is a matter of empirical investigation, and it need not be a great deal. I am not the first to note this point but I still feel that it has not found a sufficient hearing.

I think that it must be kept in mind that traditions are not just 'Thatcherism in period dress', historian Raphael Samuel's characterisation[57] of the often leftist criticism in Britain that expects the veneration of heritage to defend crumbling privileges of class, gender, race, and ethnicity. In actual fact, he says, preservationism since the nineteenth century 'owes at least as much to the Left as to the Right'[58] and is politically chameleonic, 'subject to quite startling reversals over very limited periods of time'.[59] Kyoto's urban heritage supports his point: it was neither a clearly elite affair in the past, nor can old or new elites be said to control its current appropriations. Conservative or nationalist political agendas are not strongly involved, and neither is there evidence of the traditions' being wrested out of the hands of their original carriers. Most of my informants do not seek escape to some nostalgically tinged idyll safely stowed away in the past but wish to integrate specific things and practices distinguished by age and traditionality – among other, no less important qualities – into their own, entirely contemporary lives. And even where there is more liberal 'cultural editing'[60] or sentimentalisation for the benefit of a wider, often tourist audience than in the Kyoto cases, studies of Japanese traditions have shown that this must not deprive their carriers

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[57] Samuel, *Theatres of Memory*, 290.

[58] Ibid., 288.

[59] Ibid., 303.

[60] Volkman, 'Visions and Revisions', 92.

of their agency and can help them ward off community disintegration[61] or overcome racism.[62]

Also, dealing with the past and its remnants and making them a meaningful part of one's own life can be a thoroughly personal desire, demonstrating a genuine concern for continuity and connectedness that is socially influenced but not necessarily linked with the acquisition of a group identity. Such personal readings and the more collectivist ones can also coexist.[63] I think that many invention-style analyses fail to adequately address this dimension. As my informants showed me, there are individual meanings and pleasures in perpetuating the past, and hearing what they have to say will provide a useful complement to many readings that take ideological functions for granted. It underrates human subtlety to assume that an interest in tradition always springs from a need for community, the larger and more imagined the better.

It also underrates human subtlety to assume that appropriations of traditions necessarily lack creativity, as I hope to have shown particularly for the revitalisation of the *Kyô-machiya*. There is also what has been called 'inventiveness of tradition'[64] and 'invention *by* tradition'.[65] Interestingly, Sahlins uses a Japanese example – modern sumo – to demonstrate that while current ritual embellishments were created rather recently and consciously, the cultural resources drawn on are much older and cannot be fully accounted for by 'some group's quest for power, material gain, resistance or a need of identity'.[66] Instead, '[m]odern sumo is clearly a permutation of older forms and relationships, made appropriate to novel situations. … This is a living tradition, precisely one that has been able to traverse history. That it might be suitably reinvented to fit the occasion might better be understood as a sign of vitality rather than of decadence. … [T]raditions are invented in the specific terms of the people who construct them'.[67]

Similarly innovative uses of the past will flourish also in other urban environments. Cities offer a greater plurality of lifestyles and values than the countryside and are the hotbeds for cultural change, conditions which should also be conducive to innovative uses of traditions. The systematic study of traditions in cities may allow us to identify their distinctly urban side and uncover similarly eclectic and cosmopolitan features as in Kyoto. Recent revitalisation waves of traditional

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61 Kelly, 'Rationalization and Nostalgia', 609–10; Martinez, 'Tourism and the *Ama*', 98; Moon, *From Paddy Field to Ski Slope*, 175–7.

62 Law, *Puppets of Nostalgia*, 263.

63 Ibid., 219.

64 Sahlins, 'Two or Three Things', 408.

65 Ranger, 'The Invention of Tradition Revisited', 76, original emphasis.

66 Sahlins, 'Two or Three Things', 407.

67 Ibid., 408–9.

town houses such as the *riad* of Marrakech or the *siheyuan* of Beijing[68] suggest as much.

Kyoto's urban heritage is certainly reflectively appropriated and edited just like all traditions, but to analytically 'fix their historical appearance at some time short of the origin of things is always possible'.[69] Loyalty to traditions can be more than invention, 'fakelore',[70] or collective symbolism, and anthropologists as well as other social scientists will be well advised to probe deeper, listening to their informants and taking into account the innovative ideas that past things provoke in present-day people.
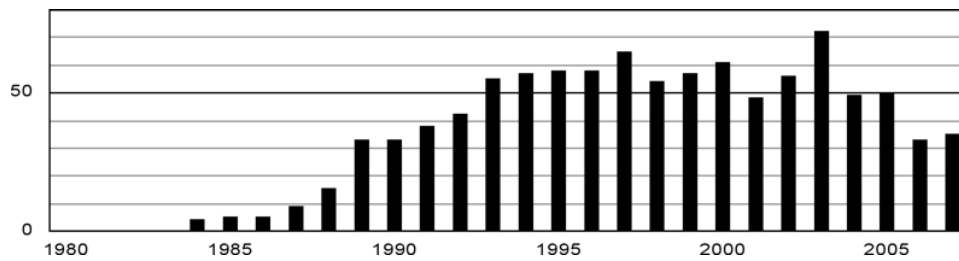
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[68] Escher et al.,'Gentrification in der Medina von Marrakech'; Abramson, 'Beijing's Preservation Policy'.

[69] Sahlins, 'Two or Three Things', 409.

[70] Dorson, 'Folklore and Fakelore'.

Figure 1: Number of journal articles that cite *Invention of Tradition* by publication year (n = 994)

Source: Social Sciences Citation Index and Arts and Humanities Citation Index, 31 January 2008 (Figures for 2007 may still be incomplete).

Table 1: Number of journal articles that cite *Invention of Tradition* per discipline (n = 994)

Anthropology	195
History	181
Sociology	126
Area studies	78
Geography	60
Multidisciplinary humanities	56
Folklore	50
Political science	46
Interdisciplinary social sciences	46
Ethnic studies	36
Music	34
Communication	33
Literature	33
Environmental studies	28
Asian studies	27
International relations	17
Planning and development	17
Religion	16
History of social sciences	15
Education and educational research	14
Economics	11
Women's studies	11
Language and linguistics	10
Multidisciplinary psychology	10

Source: see Figure 1.

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