Transnational Death

Edited by
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Samira Saramo

Introductory Essay

Making transnational death familiar[1]

The recent death of a beloved great-aunt rapidly set into action my family's transnational network. While Finland is our family's home country, my great-aunt lived primarily in Sweden, and other close relatives have established homes throughout Canada and in England. With no children of her own and no will that explicitly expressed her final wishes, we, the bereaved, were left to determine where she would be buried, how her homes and belongings would be reconciled between two countries, and how to bring the family together at this time of grief. In this moment of family rupture, we joined countless other families, today and in centuries past, in the processes and emotions of transnational death. Such intimate negotiations, hinged on individual deaths, collectively shape and reshape identities, traditions, symbols, and cultural borders.

The inevitability of death occurring away from one's homeland and hometown accompanies migration and the resultant separation of families and communities. Mobile people, now as in the past, have to develop and utilize multiple strategies to deal with the realities of death at a distance. Death demands its own solemn rituals and practices across cultures and times. Such practices often solidify the attachments to place held by those who are dying and also those who mourn them. Migration, then, provides unique opportunities for individuals, families, and communities to reflect on how such place- and culture-bound practices can operate in new geosocial contexts. Transnational death raises questions about identity, belonging, and customs, but also about the logistical care of bodies, rituals, and commemoration.

From the perspectives of Ethnology, History, and Folklore Studies, both death *and* migration have been much studied, but scholarship on death in the context of migration and transnational lives has received far less attention

until recent years. To delve into the expansive territory of *transnational death* as a field of inquiry, we must consider migrants' ruminations on mortality away from the home community, how individual migrants and migrant communities respond to deaths in the home community, and how the home community mobilizes when their migrant members die. On individual and collective levels, to borrow the words of Alistair Hunter and Eva Soom Ammann, "the end of life is a critical juncture in migration and settlement processes, precipitating novel intercultural negotiations."[2] In order to situate the developing field and the present collection, this chapter introduces some of the main issues and themes that migrants, their communities, and researchers encounter in the context of transnational death.

Deadly migration

In both historical and contemporary contexts, migration is an uncertain endeavor, and one where death continually reminds of its presence. Migratory journeys over vast waters or difficult terrains, even in the best and safest conditions, pose risks.[3] For many, the voyage has been deadly, such as for the 50,000 Irish immigrants who died on their way to North America during the "black" year of 1847,[4] the 6,000 undocumented migrants reported dead in the Mexico-U.S. borderlands between 1998 and 2014,[5] and thousands of refugees still facing grave dangers daily on the Mediterranean Sea.[6] These are but a few examples. For those who safely arrive at their destination, the realities of immigrant life keep the presence of death ever near. Migrants today often confront the same obstacles of poverty and ghettoization that characterized nineteenth- and twentieth-century immigrant life.[7] Instead

2   Alistair Hunter and Eva Soom Ammann, "End-of-life Care and Rituals in Contexts of Postmigration Diversity in Europe: An Introduction," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 37, no. 2 (2016): 97.

3   For an historical overview of mortality rates on immigrant-carrying ships from Europe to the United States, see Raymond L. Cohn, "Mortality on Immigrant Voyages to New York, 1836–1853," *The Journal of Economic History* 44, no. 2 (June 1984): 289–300.

4   For a case study of this deadly migration to Toronto, Canada, see Mark G. McGowan, *Death or Canada: The Irish Famine Migration to Toronto, 1847* (Toronto: Novalis, 2009). See also Philip Hoare, "'The sea does not care': The wretched history of migrant voyages." *The Guardian*, April 21, 2015. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/21/the-sea-does-not-care-wretched-history-migrant-voyages-mediterranean-tragedy.

5   Alex Nowrasteh, "People Die Trying to Get to America, Too." Foundation for Economic Education Blog, October 22, 2015. Available at: https://fee.org/articles/people-die-trying-to-get-to-america-too/. The reported number of deaths may well be less than the actual number of lives lost in the Mexico-U.S. borderlands.

6   UN Refugee Agency, "UNHCR seeks support for alternatives to dangerous refugee journeys," July 18, 2017. Available at http://data2.unhcr.org/en/news/16417.

7   See, for example, Roger Waldinger, "Not the Promised City: Los Angeles and Its Immigrants," *Pacific Historical Review* 68, no. 2 (May 1999): 253–272; and

of encountering improved conditions, in the past decades "unprecedented numbers" of newcomers to Canada, for example, have been "enduring chronic unemployment, and severe income shortfalls […] leading to dependence on food banks and, for some, exposure to homelessness."[8] Poverty, in turn, results in increased risk of physical and mental illness, disease, and mortality.

Though socioeconomics are but one factor, comparing the health of migrants with that of native populations in eleven European countries, Aïda Solé-Auró and Eileen Crimmins concluded that "migrants generally have worse health."[9] While new immigrants may arrive in the settlement destination in better health than the native population because of immigration screening processes, "the health of immigrants tends to worsen over time."[10] In an international review of immigrant women's health, DeAnne Messias found that "for immigrant women living in urban environments characterized by poverty, squalid living conditions, violence, lack of sanitation, and exposure to infectious diseases, the risks for poor physical, mental, and environmental health are exponentially higher."[11] Language barriers, cultural differences, and difficulties in navigating new healthcare systems often create obstacles for immigrants' access to healthcare.[12] Undocumented and even low-paying employment often leave migrants without occupational safeguards, and work-place injuries and fatalities are all too commonplace.[13] Furthermore, a 2012 governmental study on the mental health of recent immigrants to Canada made clear the link between poverty and psychological distress: "Recent immigrants in the lowest income quartile were significantly more likely to report experiencing high levels of stress and emotional problems compared to those in the highest income quartile."[14] Suicide risk in immigrant

Garnett Picot, Feng Hou, and Simon Coulombe, "Poverty Dynamics among Recent Immigrants to Canada," *The International Migration Review* 42, no. 2 (Summer 2008): 393–424.

8   Heather Smith and David Ley, "Even in Canada? The Multiscalar Construction and Experience of Concentrated Immigrant Poverty in Gateway Cities," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 98, no. 3 (September 2008): 689.

9   Aïda Solé-Auró and Eileen M. Crimmins, "Health of Immigrants in European Countries," *The International Migration Review* 42, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 873.

10 Laurence J. Kirmayer et al., "Common mental health problems in immigrants and refugees: General approach in primary care," *CMAJ* 183, 12 (2011). Available at https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3168672/.

11 DeAnne K. Hilfinger Messias, "The Health and Well-Being of Immigrant Women in Urban Areas," in *Women's Health and the Worlds Cities*, ed. Afaf Ibrahim Meleis, Eugenie L. Birch, and Susan M. Wachter (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia, 2011), 151. For a historical example, see Esyllt Jones, "Politicizing the Laboring Body: Working Families, Death, and Burial in Winnipeg's Influenza Epidemic, 1918–1919," *Labour: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas* 3, no. 3 (2006): 57–75.

12 Messias, 158.

13 Michael C. Kearl, *Endings: A Sociology of Death and Dying* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 250–261.

14 Anne-Marie Robert and Tara Gilkinson, "Mental health and well-being of recent immigrants in Canada: Evidence from the Longitudinal Survey of Immigrants to Canada," Citizenship and Immigration Canada Report (November 2012), iii.

populations has also raised concerns.[15] For all of these reasons, poverty has been linked to increased mortality risk.[16] These risks may be further compounded for migrants, who face a multitude of structural, cultural, and psychological barriers to their well-being.

Immigrant health and well-being, and culturally diverse notions of "good death,"[17] especially in the context of aging immigrant populations, are increasingly significant considerations for receiving countries, healthcare and social work professionals, and, of course, researchers of transnational death.[18] Though migration is often conceived of as an opportunity for a better standard of living and greater freedom, it is accompanied by great risks, uncertainties, and even feelings of exile.[19] The idea of "deadly migration" can be seen as shaping cultural attitudes and imaginations about emigration. Acknowledging the inherent relationship between migration and death serves as a useful entry point for unpacking the emotional toll of transnationalism felt by individuals, families, and communities.

Transnational community building and reciprocity

For generations, economic uncertainty, workplace dangers, and multifaceted traumas have become unfortunate hallmarks of immigrant experiences. For immigrant communities, then, death and care of the dying and deceased have often been primary concerns. In her foundational study of Finns in Canada, Varpu Lindström reflects on early immigrants' "preoccupation" with death: "Having seen unmarked shallow graves where 'some foreigner' was hastily buried – no name, no place of birth to identify the victim – they feared meeting the same fate. Who would send a message to Finland

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15 Much research has focused on suicide in immigrant populations. See, for example, Katarzyna Anna Ratkowska and Diego De Leo, "Suicide in Immigrants: An Overview," *Open Journal of Medical Psychology* 2 (2013): 124–133; and Tim Wadsworth and Charis E. Kubrin, "Hispanic Suicide in U.S. Metropolitan Areas: Examining the Effects of Immigration, Assimilation, Affluence, and Disadvantage," *American Journal of Sociology* 112, no. 6 (May 2007): 1848–1885.

16 See, for example, Hyun Joo Oh, "An Exploration of the Influence of Household Poverty Spells on Mortality Risk," *Journal of Marriage and Family* 63, no. 1 (February 2001): 224–234.

17 In Michael C. Kearl's words: "Deaths become good when they serve the needs of the dying, their survivors, and the social order." Kearl, 122. For a recent assessment of notions of "good death" in the context of diversity and medicalized palliative care, see Eva Soom Ammann, Corina Salis Gross, and Gabriela Rauber, "The Art of Enduring Contradictory Goals: Challenges in the Institutional Co-construction of a 'Good Death,'" *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 37, no. 2 (2016): 118–132.

18 See, for example, Sandra Torres, Pernilla Ågård, and Anna Milberg, "The 'Other' in End-of-life Care: Providers' Understandings of Patients with Migrant Backgrounds," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 37, no. 2 (2016): 103–117.

19 See, for example, David A. Gerber, "Moving Backward and Moving On: Nostalgia, Significant Others, and Social Reintegration in Nineteenth-Century British Immigrant Personal Correspondence," *The History of the Family* 21, no. 3 (2016): 292, 310.

to my old parents? Who would see to it that my remains were disposed of with dignity?"[20] The solution reached by many immigrant communities in the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries, Finns included, was the establishment of mutual aid sickness and funeral funds. These were often tied to ethnic cultural organizations, unions, temperance societies, or religious organizations. These collectives aided in funeral arrangements, provided financial contributions, and sent word to kin, if necessary.[21] Exemplifying how widely spread such funds were and "the value placed upon dignified burial," in her study of the city of Winnipeg in 1918, Jones found "approximately forty functioning mutual benefit organizations in this period, including Jewish, Italian, German, English, Chinese, Bohemian, Polish, Ruthenian, and Hungarian groups."[22] In North American Finnish enclaves, fifty-dollar burial benefits were organized as early as 1888.[23]

Regulations and customs pertaining to the care of corpses and burial procedures vary greatly from place to place. This makes transplanting death traditions to new settlement areas difficult, and many migrant communities today are facing the challenges head-on. The University of Reading-led research project "Deathscapes and Diversity: Making Space for Death and Remembrance in Multicultural England and Wales" identified failures to address the rites and needs of minority religious communities in many studied burial facilities.[24] Other research case studies confirm the project's findings. For example, British Hindus have struggled to establish religiously adherent open-air crematoriums.[25] In such cases, ethno-religious communities come together to negotiate and rework rituals that acknowledge the unique conditions posed by migration, while remaining faithful to traditional practices. The result may be the establishment, for example, of ethno-religious cemeteries or fine-tuning the processes of corpse repatriation for traditional burial in the homeland. Accordingly, funerary services catering

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20 Varpu Lindström, *Defiant Sisters: A Social History of Finnish Immigrant Women in Canada* (Multicultural History Society of Ontario: Toronto, 1988), 56.

21 For example, see Lindström, 57; Marc Metsäranta et al., *Project Bay Street: Activities of Finnish-Canadians in Thunder Bay Before 1915* (Thunder Bay: Thunder Bay Finnish-Canadian Historical Society, 1989), 54, 128–129; Carmela Patrias, *Patriots and Proletarians: Politicizing Hungarian Immigrants in Interwar Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994), 79, 100. See also Samira Saramo, "Terveisiä: A Century of Finnish Immigrant Letters from Canada," in *Hard Work Conquers All: Building the Finnish Community in Canada*, eds. M. Beaulieu, D. Ratz, and R. Harpelle (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2018), 171–172.

22 Jones, 63.

23 Carl Ross, *The Finn Factor in American Labor, Culture and Society*, Second Edition (New York Mills, MN: Parta Printers, Inc., 1978), 23.

24 Avril Maddrell, Yasminah Beebeejaun, Katie McClymont, Brenda Mathijssen, Danny McNally and Sufyan Abid Dogra, "Diversity-Ready Cemeteries and Crematoria in England and Wales" Briefing Note (2018). Available at: http://blogs.reading.ac.uk/deathscapes-and-diversity/files/2018/07/Policynote_Diversity_Cemeteries_Crematoria_Online.pdf

25 Alistair Hunter, "Deathscapes in Diaspora: Contesting Space and Negotiating Home in Contexts of Post-Migration Diversity," *Social and Cultural Geography* 17, no. 2 (2016): 256–258.
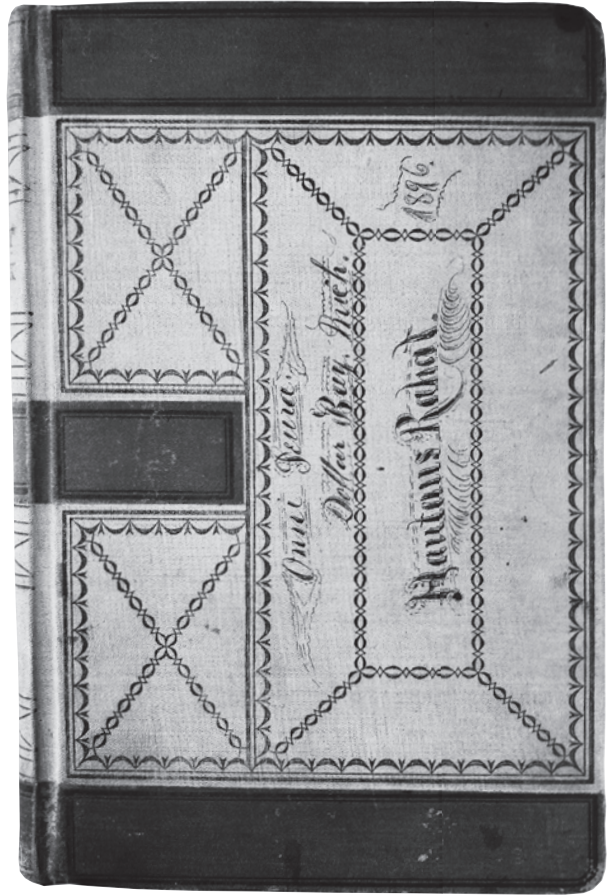
Image 01: Dollar Bay, Michigan, Finnish immigrants' "Onni" Funeral Fund, 1896. Finnish American Heritage Center / Photo by Samira Saramo.

to specific ethnic communities are often offered by members of the group, such as Berlin's Muslim undertakers, studied by Osman Balkan.[26] As in generations past, migrant ethno-religious communities today continue to organize formal mutual benefit funds to cover member deaths and, as Jordi Moreras and Ariadna Solé Arraràs have shown for Moroccan and Senegalese communities in Spain, the costs of repatriating corpses to the homeland.[27]

Such intragroup reciprocity, however, often takes more informal and spontaneous forms. Where formal mutual aid funds or insurances are not in place or do not cover the needs of bereaved families, kinship and community networks are activated. The significance of these informal systems is as great or even greater than formalized insurances, considering the social and emotional support structures they have built in. Monetary collections are regularly organized, for example, by Burmese Buddhist

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26 Osman Balkan, "Between Civil Society and the State: Bureaucratic Competence and Cultural Mediation among Muslim Undertakers in Berlin," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 37, no. 2 (2016): 147–161.

27 Jordi Moreras and Ariadna Solé Arraràs, "Genealogies of Death: Repatriation among Moroccan and Senegalese in Catalonia," in the current volume.

communities in North America and by Yalaltecos in California.[28] In both cases, such traditional practices are brought by migrants, though the forms have developed according to new, local sociocultural realities. Through their participation in collections for deceased members in both the homeland and hometown, as well as in the immigrant enclave, migrants can stay firmly connected with their transnational community. However, it is worth noting that such dual social obligations—essentially to contribute to two places—can place a difficult financial burden on migrants and their families.[29]

Cash donations are complemented by *in kind* assistance to the dying and, after death, participation in mourning events and rituals. With families dispersed across the world, positive "death kin work," as Anna Matyska demonstrates, is the "cumulative effort of an entire transnational family."[30] People fulfill different necessary roles according to their abilities and where they are located. As Gutiérrez Nájera and Alonso Ortiz explain, the system of reciprocity ensures that ideally each community member's contributions are matched and returned when their life eventually comes to an end.[31] For Burmese Buddhists, "merit-making," referring to religious/spiritual participation and taking care of monks, both solidifies migrants' place in their transnational ethno-religious community and also ensures a good and respectful rebirth for the deceased.[32] Reciprocity in the form of assistance and adherence to religious and cultural rituals serves as a powerful tool for creating group cohesion and easing grief at times of death.

The emotional weight of transnational death

Karen Wilson Baptist, writing about the death of her parents, reflected on the feeling of being weighed down by grief while simultaneously feeling "unfettered and groundless, for the landscape of home and of family seemed now lost to me forever."[33] The death of a loved one represents a significant rupture in a bereaved person's life. Such a rupture calls into question one's identity, place, relationships, and life direction. It stirs multiple and ambiguous emotions. When faced with death, as Amy-Katerini Prodromou points out, "the whole concept of self must be reworked and revisited when we attempt to define ourselves within the literal (geographical) and

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28 Chipamong Chowdhury, "The Spirit of the Gift: Burmese Buddhist Death Rituals in North America," in the current volume; Lourdes Gutiérrez Nájera and Ana Alonso Ortiz, "Expressing Communality: Zapotec Death and Mourning across Transnational Frontiers," in the current volume.

29 See, for example, Gutiérrez Nájera and Alonso Ortiz, 91–93.

30 Anna Matyska, "Doing Transnational Death Kin Work in Polish Transnational Families," in the current volume, 53.

31 Gutiérrez Nájera and Alonso Ortiz, 90.

32 Chowdhury, 113.

33 Karen Wilson Baptist, "Diaspora: Death without a Landscape," *Mortality* 15, no. 4 (November 2010): 294.

psychically altered space that results from this new absence."[34] In the context of migration, when the deceased and bereaved are separated by borders and geography, belonging and mourning are hard to pin down.

Migrants commonly already tackle questions of what "home" means to them and how to best fit into and fulfill their social roles while straddling multiple physical and psychological spaces. Death exacerbates the need for such negotiations. For many, with passing years and the passing of relatives and friends in the home community, "the 'home' of their imagination and memory shift[s] and disappear[s] in their absence."[35] By turning to memories, migrants can assert their place. David Gerber's multidisciplinary analysis positions immigrants' *nostalgia* as "an adaptive mental strategy for negotiating continuity and change."[36] In "Bittersweet: Everyday Life and Nostalgia for the 1950s," Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto and Hanna Snellman conclude that "nostalgia is often attached to topics and periods of time that are linked to a certain amount of struggle and misery, and above all contradictions."[37] Through shared nostalgia, intimate transnational networks can create shared frames of reference and build collective futures. Nostalgic reminiscences of the deceased can also simply be consoling. As one of Gerber's studied immigrants wrote in 1824, memories allowed her to "lose the present in the past."[38]

Bridging the past with the present through nostalgic recollection frequently has therapeutic—or at least beneficial—results. However, others struggle to reconcile the ways in which their past experiences and connections link to the person they have become and the position they find themselves in. For example, Susan Matt traces several examples, from Guinean slaves in Early America to Irish immigrants in the twentieth-century United States, where the profound, melancholic longing for home – that is, "homesickness" – was seen to both cause death and be alleviated only by death.[39] For some, thoughts of both living and dying away from familiar people, places, and customs prove very difficult. This may be especially true in cases of forced displacement and resettlement. As Zophia Rosinska notes, the "inability to return home [...] intensifies the desire to return and the sense of longing for home."[40]

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34 Amy-Katerini Prodromou, *Navigating Loss in Women's Contemporary Memoir* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 6.

35 Laura Ishiguro, "Relative Distances: Family and Empire between Britain, British Columbia and India, 1858–1901" (PhD Dissertation, University College London, 2011), 204.

36 Gerber, 292.

37 Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto and Hanna Snellman, "Bittersweet: Everyday Life and Nostalgia for the 1950s," *Journal of Finnish Studies* 19, no. 2 (July 2016): 5.

38 Letter by Mary Ann Archibald, January 1, 1824. Quoted in Gerber, 309.

39 Susan J. Matt, *Homesickness: An American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 13, 28–30, 145.

40 Zophia Rosinka, "Emigratory Expience: The Melancholy of No Return," in *Memory and Migration: Multidisciplinary Approaches to Memory Studies*, ed. Julia Creet and Andreas Kitzmann (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 34.

In her study of transnational family relationships in the context of the British Empire, Laura Ishiguro notes: "Death challenged the boundaries of family, changed its relationships, and provided disconcerting reminders of disconnection and distances of all kinds."[41] Being absent at the time of death can result in complicated feelings, including guilt. In Matyska's study of Polish transnational families, interlocutors emphasized the difficulty of being away from dying elderly parents.[42] Others carry regrets of not having been in more regular contact.[43] For some, absence results in a feeling of exclusion from the mourning process, which calls into question one's sense of belonging.[44] Distance challenges the ability of mourners to work through the emotions of loss.

Connecting through transnational death

Before the advent of telecommunications and social media, word of death arrived by letter. Letter correspondence involves unique forms of self-expression and temporal limitations – especially in the absence of efficient, modernized international postal systems. Yet, letter exchange nonetheless shares much in common with the ways that distance is navigated in contemporary transnational relationships. Migrants today typically incorporate various communication technologies into their grieving process, and condolence letters are most often composed in email, Facebook Messenger, SMS, or expressed via Skype or a telephone call (from among a list of many other available communication platforms). As Ishiguro perfectly summarizes, the condolence letter, now, just as then, "[is] both insufficient and indispensable for expressing grief and consolation at a distance."[45] Written communications, be they letters or social media posts, are indispensable in that they serve as "a heart-to-heart conversation with a trusted correspondent who is a sounding board" for the ambiguous memories and emotions propelled by death.[46]

For generations, it has been common to include mementos, such as photographs or obituary clippings, in letters dealing with a death in a transnational family. Today, photographs and videos shared online serve the same function. Complementing written language, transnational mourning is, likewise, now often expressed through the use of emoji in online spaces.[47]

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41 Ishiguro, "Relative Distances," 180.
42 Matyska, in the current volume.
43 Samira Saramo, "'I have such sad news': Loss in Finnish North American Letters," *European Journal of Life Writing*, 7 (2018): 59–60.
44 Saramo, "I have such sad news," 62; Laura Ishiguro, "'How I wish I might be near': Distance and the Epistolary Family in Late-Nineteenth-Century Condolence Letters," *Within and Without the Nation: Canadian History as Transnational History*, ed. Henry Yu, Adele Perry, and Karen Dubinsky (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015), 219.
45 Ishiguro, "Relative Distances," 195.
46 Gerber, 301.
47 Gutiérrez Nájera and Alonso Ortiz, 94–96.

When unable to find the words to convey the great loss and sympathy we may feel, emoji may fill gaps where written language fails. Yet, most often, such communications insufficiently fulfill the needs of mourners. Letters, online communication, and even livestreaming does not satisfy the physical needs of closeness. Josiane Le Gall and Lilyane Rachédi's study of bereaved migrants in Quebec demonstrates the importance of proximity for full and satisfactory participation in social support networks which are integral at times of death.[48] We crave tangibility – the objects of death, the physical embraces of loved ones, setting oneself in place – which transnational death by its nature inherently denies.

With migration and technology, death has become "unbounded."[49] At these difficult times, people renew familial and community solidarities, despite distance. The letters of Finnish immigrants in North America, for example, show the frequency with which death facilitates (or at least attempts at) reconnection and repair of estranged relationships.[50] In 2019, technological advances in communications and transportation assist many families and communities with creating presence and togetherness, be it physically or virtually, and with organizing the practicalities that accompany death. It is important to note, however, that these advances are unevenly accessible to migrants, and they may be out of reach for those living with the realities of poverty, war, or displacement. Many migrants, despite their deepest wishes, cannot return home when the death of a loved one calls. Social media tools lend themselves to the needs of individual mourning and commemoration, but they also serve to connect dispersed diasporic communities. By expediting news of death, community-organized assistance initiatives (based on the principle of reciprocity discussed above), and the sharing of gestures of condolence, communication technologies help transnational communities to weave intricate webs of loss and belonging.

Situating and commemorating transnational death

Both migrants themselves and the communities that surround them engage in situating transnational people in place – and, often, thereby, in ethnic sociocultural identifications. Hanna Snellman's examination of the burial choices of Finnish immigrants in Sweden in the 1970s demonstrates how the decisions and meanings behind them speak to identities and belonging.[51] When these migrant interviewees were asked bluntly and out-of-the-blue whether they would like to be buried in Sweden or in Finland, they had to quickly work through conceptions – likely largely subconscious – of who

48 Josiane Le Gall and Lilyane Rachédi, "The Emotional Costs of Being Unable to Attend the Funeral of a Relative in One's Country of Origin," in the current volume.
49 The idea of "unbounded" death is used well in Mattias Frihammar and Helaine Silverman, eds., *Heritage of Death: Landscapes of Emotion, Memory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2017).
50 Saramo, "I have such sad news," 62.
51 Hanna Snellman, "Negotiating Belonging through Death among Finnish Immigrants in Sweden," in the current volume.

they were. While participants were divided in their location preference, they overwhelmingly focused on the need for familiar Finnish death rituals and burial proximity to family. Joining ritual and proximity, Finns generally place importance on caring for the graves of their deceased relatives, through maintenance and the placing of flowers and candles, as well as on burial in group family graves.[52] First-generation migrants everywhere face the decision of where to be buried. They may choose to continue their traditional lineage by being returned to the homeland burial grounds of their ancestors, although economic and political realities preclude this option for many. Or they may choose to break new ground by establishing a family grave in the adopted place.[53] Alternatively, if local laws permit, cremated remains may be divided to allow for the deceased to literally inhabit in death multiple places or nations. Through these decisions, migrants directly contribute to inscribing *deathscapes* that span across borders.

Hunter summarizes conceptualizations of deathscapes as "spaces marked in some way by the dead and dying, but are also constituted by the meanings ascribed to such places by the living."[54] Following death, survivors play a vital role in eternalizing the deceased's connections to place. In this way, deathscapes are "intense site[s] of place-making, where the living find a 'spatial fix' for grief and memorialisation."[55] As Avril Maddrell argues, "mourning is an inherently spatial as well as temporal phenomenon, experienced in and expressed in/through corporeal and psychological spaces, virtual communities and physical sites of memorialization."[56] In this spatial and temporal situating, mourners attach social and cultural identifications to the deceased. The dead are defined by those who survive them through rhetoric, placing, memories, and commemoration. For individuals, this often means their entrenchment in familial roles (mother, daughter, sister, etc.), religion, ethnicity, and place (such as a Hungarian Canadian, for example). At times, individuals take on collective symbolic significance for their communities. As Katarzyna Herd has shown, in the case of the Croatian professional footballer Ivan Turina, following his unexpected death in 2013, his Swedish fans established him firmly in Swedish football culture, stripping him of "foreignness" through commemoration and ritual.[57] Cordula Weisskoeppel has analyzed the ways in which individual victims of terrorism have been transformed through death into martyrs representing the collective

52 For research on Finnish death customs, see Ilona Pajari, "Kuolema maalla ja kaupungissa: Suomalaisen hautajais- ja kuoleman kulttuurinmuutos 1800-luvun lopulta nykypäivään," *Historiallinen aikakauskirja*, 112, 4 (2014): 393–405.

53 See Moreras and Solé Arràs, in current volume; Hunter, 249–250.

54 Hunter, 259. See also James D. Sidaway and Avril Maddrell, eds., *Deathscapes: Spaces for Death, Dying, Mourning and Remembrance* (London: Ashgate, 2010).

55 Hunter, 248.

56 Avril Maddrell, "Memory, mourning and landscape in the Scottish mountains: Discourses of wilderness, gender and entitlement in online and media debates on mountainside memorials," in *Memory, Mourning and Landscape*, ed. E. Anderson, A. Maddrell, K. McLouglin, and A. Vincent (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2010), 123.

57 Katarzyna Herd, "Our Foreign Hero: A Croatian Goalkeeper and His Swedish Death," in the current volume.

persecution of Coptic Orthodox Christians in the Middle East and North Africa.[58] Through placement of images of the victims in both sacred and online spaces attended by the transnational community, they have become iconized and entrenched in important physical and virtual deathscapes.

Both the private memorialization of individuals and the public commemoration of collective loss or martyrs participate in the building of cultural heritage.[59] Such placing and defining can be highly politicized and contested acts. While deceased Copts have become individual symbols of communal strength and struggle, in other cases individualism is downplayed in order to emphasize collective loss and belonging. In the aftermath of nationalist conflicts over land and the right to rule, ethnic and place identities are shaped and reshaped, used and re-used, to suit changing political and cultural needs. When borders are redrawn, as in the case of Eastern Lapland ceded by Finland to the Soviet Union (now the Russian Federation) after WWII, commemoration of the lives and land that were lost becomes a complicated matter. As the works of Oula Seitsonen and Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto demonstrate, Finnish homesteads and religious spaces were left on the other side of the Russian border in annexed Salla, while the graves of Soviet soldiers that lie on the Finnish side in Mäntyvaara were inaccessible to Russian mourners.[60] While local residents long cared for these sites, local and national governments asserted the commemorative power of the graves for ethno-nationalist purposes when they suited their political needs. In this way, the bodies resting in these transnational spaces are simultaneously representative of individual families' losses and the loss faced by a nation. Such ambiguous multiplicities are good examples of the complex nature of transnational death, where the intimate and the collective collide.

Conclusion

My great-aunt's fluid transnational identity was honored through the arrangement of dual memorial ceremonies: one held in her Swedish community and the other the internment of her ashes at the family grave in Finland. Her death brought together people from different countries and regions, and practical arrangements necessitated involvement with funerary services, government agencies, and legal authorities in both Sweden and Finland. Through the experience, our family reconfirmed its bonds, despite the geographical and even cultural distances we live with every day. Through this recent and very personal encounter with the negotiations of

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58 Cordula Weisskoeppel, "Coping with the Consequences of Terror: The Transnational Visual Narratives of Coptic Orthodox Martyrdom," in the current volume.

59 See Frihammar and Silverman's *Heritage of Death*.

60 Oula Seitsonen, "Transnationally Forgotten and Re-Remembered: Second World War Soviet Mass Graves at Mäntyvaara, Eastern Finnish Lapland," in the current volume; Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto, "Transnational Heritage Work and Commemorative Rituals across the Finnish-Russian Border in the Old Salla Region," in the current volume.

transnational death, I faced head-on many of the feelings and decisions that I have known to be significant from a professional researcher's perspective. Joining these viewpoints, I renewed my commitment to making familiar the interdisciplinary field of transnational death studies.

This collection of articles is one way of encouraging dialogue on transnational death. The anthology arose from the editors' collective desire to highlight new, diverse voices from the emerging field of transnational death studies. The significant and international response to the volume's call for papers confirmed that transnational death is indeed being extensively studied from a wide range of scholarly perspectives, but also that publishing has not yet caught up with the demand for work on the subject.[61] The themes addressed in this introductory chapter are further explored and developed through in-depth ethnological and ethnographic case studies in the following chapters. The work is organized into three thematic sections: Families, Communities, and Commemoration. Together they delve into individual and collective responses to the challenge of death in a transnational context, and they analyze the ways in which constructions of pasts and futures are used to solidify identity, place, and belonging.

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61 A welcome recent exception is Alistair Hunter and Eva Soom Ammann, eds. *End-of-life Care and Rituals in Contexts of Postmigration Diversity in Europe*, Special Issue of *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 37, 2 (2016).

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Families I

Hanna Snellman

Negotiating belonging through death among Finnish immigrants in Sweden[1]

By choosing their final resting place, immigrants can decide to either become the family's first forebear in the new country or be returned home, linking their family to their old line of ancestors. In fact, the repatriation of bodies has recently developed into a business.[2] It has been argued that the desired burial location even reveals – in the same way as language skills, employment, and education – how well a person has integrated into a new country.[3] It has also been claimed that the cemetery enables those separated through migratory dislocation to forge new connections with their places of origin – in effect, to "bridge time and place."[4]

It is natural for people born in Finland – who will probably die there, too – to think about their final resting place there as their end draws near, but what about a person who has left his or her home country and thus faces death abroad? In this chapter, I will examine the postmortal imagery of transnational belonging with the aid of interviews conducted with Finnish immigrants in Sweden in the mid-1970s.

In recent years, several thanatological studies have been conducted on people's preferred place of burial, but to date only a small number of scholars have concentrated on immigrants. One is Alistair Hunter, a researcher at the University of Edinburgh, who has studied old age and death in migration communities. According to Hunter, when people meditate on their future

2   Roger Marjavaara, "The Final Trip: Post-Mortal Mobility in Sweden," *Mortality* 37, no. 2 (2012): 258.
3   Alistair Hunter, "Staking a Claim to Land, Faith and Family: Burial Location Preferences of Middle Eastern Christian Migrants," *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 37, no. 2 (2016): 189–191.
4   Doris Francis, Leonie Kellaher, and Georgina Neophytou, "Cemeteries as Ethnic Homeland," in *The Secret Cemetery,* eds. Doris Francis, Lenoie Kellaher and Georgina Neophytou, (Oxford and New York: 2005), 179.

resting place they simultaneously consider location, identity, and discussions about the spot. The term for places of death, *deathscapes*, refers not only to graveyards but also to rituals connected with death.[5] Relying on the theories of Emile Durkheim, Eva Reimers argues that rituals should not be primarily viewed as expressions and communications of religious experience but as expressions of social experience, communal life, and common ideas.[6] Anthropologists have long taken a broad approach to the study of death and its implications in many diverse cultures, and, regarding treatment of the body itself, they have demonstrated how great the variation in practices is. Such practices include inhumation (burial in the ground), cremation (destruction by fire), exposure (lodging the body in caves or treetops or setting it adrift in a canoe), and mummification (preservation of the body by means of special treatment of the tissues).[7]

Hunter's research is based on interviews with 67 Christian immigrants from the Middle East who had moved to Sweden, Denmark, or Great Britain. His study emphasizes that, almost without exception, previous burial place studies of immigrants have focused on Muslim populations. For example, Muslim communities have been researched by Gerdien Jonker in Berlin, Katy Gardner and Humauyn Ansari in Great Britain, and Claudia Venhorst in the Netherlands.[8] Indeed, death and funerals have also been a popular subject in Finnish research. However, the subject has not been approached from the perspective of which burial site is preferred.

Research material and its interpretation

Between 1972 and 1999, the Nordic Museum (*Nordiska museet*) in Stockholm ran a project called Migration Finland-Sweden (*Migrationen Finland-Sverige*), during which hundreds of Finnish immigrants living in different parts of Sweden were interviewed. Although official contemporary documentation did not begin at the museum until later, it was considered important, especially with this project, to record the present situation. At that time, museums in general started to shift their focus from the past to the present—and, indeed, to the future, as my study will show.

When the project was launched, museums and their mission were the topic of fierce debate. Göran Rosander, the leader of the project, published his guidelines on material collection in 1972. According to him, an item

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5 Hunter, 180.
6 Eva Reimers, "Death and Identity: Graves and Funerals as Cultural Communication", *Mortality* 4, no. 2 (1999): 162.
7 Raymond Firth, "Foreword," in *The Secret Cemetary*, eds. Doris Francis, Lenoie Kellaher and Georgina Neophytou, (Oxford and New York: Berg), xvi.
8 Gerdien Jonker, "The Knife's Edge: Muslim Burial in Diaspora," *Mortality 1,* no. 1 (1995): 27–43; Katy Gardner, 2002, *Age, Narrative and Migration: The Life Course and Life Histories of Bengali Elders in London* (Oxford: Berg); Humayun Ansari, "Burying the Dead': Making Muslim Space in Britain," *Historical Research* 80, no. 210: 545–566; C. J. H. Venhorst, "*Muslims Ritualizing Death in the Netherlands: Death Rites in a Small Town Context*" (Munster: LIT Verlag, 2013)

had to pass at least one of the following six tests before it could be accepted into a collection: it had to be a very common, new, and often technical innovation (1); it should have symbolic value (2) and be typical of a certain field or certain location (3); it had to be linked to a famous person (4) or historical event (5); or, finally, the item should represent different variations of the object in question (6). Karl-Olov Arnstberg, an ethnologist and avid debater of the 1970s, strongly opposed Rosander and his guidelines. Arnstberg argued that museums should be experts on society, not objects, as people should take precedence over artifacts. Thus, material collection should always begin with interviews – whether the idea was to study a certain residential area, workplace, field of industry, or minority group. Only after these interviews should one decide what objects and items were worth taking into a collection. Arnstberg's policy was widely accepted, and it was adapted for the Migration Finland-Sweden project.[9]

The interviews with immigrants followed a certain pattern. First, there was a surprise visit to the interviewee, where the actual date for the interview was agreed on. Subsequently, the interview was conducted as planned. The interviewer would begin by asking general questions about the person's life and then progress to questions about the person's living arrangements, education, move to Sweden, intentions of staying in Sweden, language skills, hobbies and interests, annual festivities and personal celebrations, food habits, and use of stimulants. At the end of the session, a new time was set for a second interview. During the second visit, the interviewee's home, its occupants, and its surroundings were photographed. Occasionally, a third visit was required to clarify some answers, and then the person was given a free ticket to the Nordic Museum or a package of coffee. In some cases the third visit was replaced by a phone interview in which the participants were asked if they had exercised their newly acquired right to vote in municipal elections. All the interviewees were asked the same questions in the same order—this was a typical method and in line with the positivist paradigm of the time. The interviews were not taped, and transcriptions were based on hand-written notes—as was customary in 1970s ethnological research. The interviews were conducted in the interviewees' native language, and afterwards they were transcribed into Finnish or Swedish. The interviewers were either curators from the Nordic Museum or Finnish ethnology students. The material is stored in the archives of the Nordic Museum in Stockholm.

This chapter studies 56 interviews with Finnish-born immigrants. The interviews occurred in Upplands Väsby and Virsbo during 1974 and 1975. The material also includes a great number of photographs from both locations. The interviews were conducted in the participants' homes, and in the case of couples both the husband and wife were almost always present. Sometimes their children, relatives, or neighbors were also in the same room. Single people were interviewed alone or with neighbors. For this reason,

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9   Eva Silvén, "I samtiden eller för framtiden", in *Samhällsideal och framtids-bilder. Perspektiv på Nordiska museets dokumentation och forskning*, eds. Cecilia Hammarlund-Larsson, Nilsson Bo G. and Eva Silvén, (Stockholm: Carlssons, 2004), 179–181.

the number of interviewees was about two times higher than the number of interviews. Two-thirds of the people interviewed spoke Finnish as their mother tongue, while one-third were Swedish speaking. One session could last from two to 15 hours.

The interviews contained three questions on funerals, which were included in a section called Festivities (*högtider*). First, the interviewees were asked if they had ever attended a funeral in Sweden. If the answer was yes, they were asked to describe the differences between Swedish and Finnish funerals. Second, they were asked if they had any experience of sending someone who had died in Sweden back to Finland. If the answer was affirmative, they were asked to describe that experience in more detail. Finally, the interviewees were asked about their preference for their own future burial site. This question was addressed to every interviewee, irrespective of their age or length of residence in Sweden. The youngest interviewees (with a few exceptions) were in their twenties and the oldest in their sixties, and they had all immigrated to Sweden either between 1958 and 1963 or between 1970 and 1972. Death was not a pressing question for any of the interviewees. However, many had lost a close family member, colleague, or neighbor in Sweden. Judging by the material, fatal accidents at work were extremely common at the time.

A similar set of three questions has been used with immigrants living in other parts of Europe, and the results have been analyzed with quantitative methods.[10] It would have been possible to use quantitative methods with the Nordic Museum material as well, but I opted for qualitative methods. My analysis is based on close and repeated reading. In fact, I have read and studied the same material repeatedly since 2006, for different research purposes. In line with the principles of close reading, each perusal has revealed previously unnoticed details.[11]

The citations in the text are the result of multiple translating. Birger Grape, a researcher at the Nordic museum, spoke *meänkieli*, a Finnish dialect from the northern Tornio region. Using this dialect, mixed with standard Finnish, he conducted the interviews, took notes in Swedish, and transcribed the interviews into Swedish. I then translated these transcriptions into Finnish. A student of ethnology, Lea Joskitt, both conducted the interviews and wrote the transcriptions in Finnish. Her transcriptions were then translated into Swedish. I have translated the citations in the Swedish transcriptions back into Finnish. In addition, Annette Rosengren and Annika Tryfelt, researchers from the Nordic Museum, interviewed their Swedish-speaking interviewees in Swedish, and I later translated their Swedish transcriptions

10 Claudine Attias Donfut and François-Charles Wolff, "The Preferred Burial Location of Persons Born outside France" in *Population* (English edition) 605, no. 6 (2005): 699–720; Aimée Casal, Juan Ignacio Aragonés and Gabriel Moser, "Attachment Forever: Environmental and Social Dimensions, Temporal Perspective, and Choice of One's Last Resting Place," *Environment and Behavior* 42, no. 6 (2010): 765–778.

11 See Jyrki Pöysä, *Lähiluvun tieto. Näkökulmia kirjoitetun muistelukerronnan tulkintaan* (Joensuu: Suomen Kansantietouden Tutkijain Seura, 2015).

into Finnish. For this chapter, the citations have been translated into English by yet another person.[12] Naturally, with transcriptions based on hand-written notes and manifold translating, there is a danger of the "broken telephone" effect. Consequently, the citations used in this chapter cannot be treated as word-to-word transcriptions of a person's speech, and thus it is impossible to interpret the way something was said or not said, or the tone of an expression. Nevertheless, I feel that the speaker's voice can be heard through the material, and as I wish to transmit this voice to my readers, I have included several direct quotations. These citations also demonstrate the scarcity of the material. In my analysis, I concentrate on the interviewees' thoughts on their future burial place.

The interviewer was obliged to ask all the questions on the list: irrespective of the embarrassment of the interviewees, all the questions were put to them. Consequently, almost all of the participants answered the question on their preferred burial site. Surprisingly, many had already considered the matter – despite their young age. Many also explained that they had plenty of time to think about the matter before it became pertinent.[13]

The material was supposed to demonstrate a clear contrast between Swedishness and Finnishness, and it seems that the interviewers had such a clear idea of Finnish culture that they failed even to look for variations. For example, when an interviewer was talking with immigrants originally from Karelia (now part of Russia), they were not asked if they were members of the Orthodox Church. This is unsurprising, considering that from the formation of the Swedish nation-state until the end of the 1980s, Swedes viewed Finns as a culturally unified people. As the historian of Finnish minorities Miika Tervonen observes, this was also the case in Finland. Finnishness was assumed to refer to people with a shared origin and cultural background.[14] However, one of the interviewees took the interviewers to Virsbo Cemetery and showed them the grave of every person with Finnish origins, and she especially pointed out those who had belonged to the Orthodox Church. Some, but not all, of the headstones had text in Finnish. None of the headstones, however, bore the Orthodox cross.[15] This is a perfect example of grave memorials carrying symbols of ethnic affiliation and features of syncretism and assimilation into the dominant culture, a topic discussed in earlier research.[16] The graveyard was owned and administered by the local authority and the Church of Sweden, which was the official Protestant state church until the year 2000. According to the ethnologist Eva Silvén, cemeteries are considered public spaces and, within certain limits, people

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12 I would like to thank Ms. Marja Hakola for translating the first draft of the article into English.
13 E.g., Nm:K15: Alfred & Alina.
14 Miika Tervonen, "Historiankirjoitus ja myytti yhden kulttuurin Suomesta," in *Kotiseutu ja kansakunta. Miten suomalaista historiaa on rakennettu*, eds. Pirjo Markkola, Hanna Snellman, and Ann-Catrin Östman (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2014), 155, 158.
15 Nm:K25: Saara.
16 Francis, Kellaher and Neophytou, 189.

are free to make their own choices regarding their headstone and the text and decoration on it.[17]

How closely can we look?

Several ethical questions require consideration. For example, is it ethical to photograph and publish pictures of headstones when gravestones reveal so much personal information, such as the name, occupation (sometimes), and date of birth and death of the deceased? Moreover, researchers should be sensitive regarding the sorrow and grief linked to graves and to the relatives of the deceased who visit them. With good reason, Eva Silvén asks, "How closely can we look?"[18] Several photographs of headstones are available in the archives of the Nordic Museum, but I have decided not to publish them. However, I do comment on the texts and symbols on the headstones.

The interview material at the Nordic Museum raises an even greater problem: how to protect the privacy of the interviewees. In my previous research on Finns in Gothenburg, I created a system where the pseudonyms of interviewees also revealed their approximate year of birth. In that study, I grouped the interviewees according to the key experiences they had shared in their childhood and youth in Finland. Each person belonging to the same group was given a pseudonym beginning with the same letter. This allowed the reader to determine the gender and approximate date of birth of the interviewee. In another study on Finnish women in Mälardalen, I grouped the interviewees according to their shared experiences of immigration and gave them pseudonyms accordingly.[19] Dorothea Breier has used a similar system in her PhD dissertation,[20] and it has proved practical: it protects the anonymity of the interviewees but reveals necessary background information.[21]

In the following, I have sorted the interviewees into four groups according to their ages. Interviewees born before 1925, who were thus in their fifties or older at the time of the interview, have pseudonyms beginning with the letter S. Interviewees born between 1926 and 1934, and thus in their forties at the time of the interview, have pseudonyms beginning with the letter T. The largest group, those born between 1935 and 1943, and therefore in their

17 Eva Silvén, "Graveside Shrines: Private or Public Space" in *Heritage of Death. Landscapes of Emotion, Memory and Practice*, eds. Mattias Frihammar and Helaine Silverman, (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 25–26.

18 Silvén, (Helsinki, Unigrafia, 2017), 33.

19 Hanna Snellman and Lotta Weckström, 2017, "The Apple Never Falls Far from the Tree – Or does it? Finnish Female Migrant Transnational Generations on the Swedish Labor Market," *Journal of Finnish Studies* 20, no. 2 (2017): 80.

20 Dorothea Breier, *The Vague Feeling of Belonging of A Transcultural Generation: An Ethnographic Study on Germans and Their Descendants in Contemporary Helsinki, Finland*, Academic dissertation (Helsinki, Unigrafia, 2017), 37–38.

21 On the anonymization of qualitative data, see Data Management Guidelines (www. fsd.uta.fi). Accessed February 23, 2018.

thirties at the time of the interview, have pseudonyms beginning with the letter A. Finally, interviewees who were then in their twenties (born 1946–1951) have pseudonyms beginning with the letter B. Children present during the interview have not been given pseudonyms. The interview material also contains information about people other than the interviewees themselves. Their names have also been anonymized by means of pseudonyms beginning with random letters. Their ages are not known.

"Where would you like to be buried?"

In the following, I will apply Alistair Hunter's typology on immigrants' motives for determining their preferred place of burial. According to Hunter, for some the choice is based on practical reasons (1) and for others the choice is dictated by family ties (2). There are those who place importance on the region (3) and those who place more value on religion (4).[22]

1) When Hunter scrutinized the practical reasons in detail, it became clear that they were linked to the costs of the funeral and memorial service (financial expense) or the paperwork connected to death (organizational costs), as well as to the security situation. Here, security refers to specific national contexts, such as whether one can trust that the cemetery will not be demolished or whether it is safe or even possible to travel back to the country in question for the funeral.
2) In turn, family ties went as far back as distant ancestors or they only concerned the deceased person's parents and descendants, as well as other family members or friends (nearest and dearest).
3) The motives for favoring a particular burial site were connected to a physical place, a place a person considers important because of all the years lived there, or because it has a certain meaning (preponderant presence). This can be the country where a person was born or the country to which s/he moved (the nation), or a landscape in which s/he feels that s/he belongs (emotional landscape).
4) Religion often plays a central role in the literature on immigrants, and this is also the case with Hunter's typology. Religious motives that determine the preferred burial site are linked to a desire to "do the same" (theological conformity), to do the opposite—thereby moving away from one's religious community (religious disassociation), or to sanctify the place one has chosen (sacralization*)*.

With a small number of exceptions, the material collected in Sweden during 1974 and 1975 fits well into Hunter's typology. However, different motives can be combined in a single comment. Indeed, the cultural anthropologist Yvon van der Pijl argues against the existence of a single, correct script to be followed; instead, multiple answers and cultural metaphors from a number

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22 Hunter, 184.

of scripts should be included.[23] For example, in the data from the present study, a 25-year-old woman and mother who had recently moved to Sweden was concerned about the financial side of the matter, but she was also anxious about funerary rituals. In addition, she knew something about the costs of repatriating a body:

> "I want to be buried in Finland, absolutely," both Bo and Barbara answer at the same time. "Why?" "Well, there are my nearest and dearest," says the husband. "When my aunt's husband died, she didn't know what to do. She was so confused that she couldn't think straight. They both had Swedish citizenship, and the husband was buried in Eskilstuna. Afterwards, my aunt moved to Finland, and Johan is now in Eskilstuna. My aunt is not well; she is in poor health and cannot come over anymore. It is customary to send the deceased to Finland. The coffin is shipped to Finland. Cremation is not usual there where I come from (Närpiö in the Ostrobothnia region). Usually, we rent a car that takes the coffin to the burial place. And for that matter, if you are a Swedish citizen and you want to be buried in Finland, it costs a lot! And you need to pay all by yourself. It can cost up to 10,000 kronor."[24]

A woman with five adult children had moved to Sweden two years before. One of the children lived in Sweden close to her, and another was planning to move to Sweden soon. The woman, a 48-year-old divorcée, was considering returning to Finland. While her home region in Finland seemed a natural location for her final resting place, she was also worried about the costs of moving the body:

> I want to be buried in Korpilahti in Finland. I don't plan to die here in Sweden—unless something unexpected happens and I don't have time to go to Finland. I was just visiting my daughter in Finland, and she asked what they should do if I died suddenly. I said bring me to Finland if there is enough money for it. Maybe one can get some financial support if the family doesn't have funds to bring the body home. I want to be buried in Korpilahti because both my father and mother are resting there. At least someone is sure to visit my grave as well.[25]

A married couple, both in their fifties, had moved to Sweden more than ten years before. This couple, too, was well aware of the high funeral costs. The husband's brother had died in Sweden at the age of 29, and he had been buried in his home town of Porvoo, Finland. It had been less expensive to repatriate the body than for the funeral guests to travel to Sweden. For the wife, there was no question about the matter—she wanted to be buried in Sweden, as the following extract from the interviewer's notes makes clear:

23 Yvon van der Pijl, "Death in the Family Revisited: Ritual Expression and Controversy in a Creole Transnational Mortuary Sphere," *Ethnography* 17, no. 2 (2015): 151.
24 Nm:K10: Bo & Barbara.
25 Nm:K14: Tyyni.

When Birger [the husband's brother] died, his brother and sister came here from Finland to make arrangements for the funeral and to get his things. It was agreed that the sister would do everything as she saw fit. To ship the coffin to Turku costs only double the normal passenger ticket. It would have been much more expensive for the guests to come to Sweden for the funeral. The brother's coffin was a square box, without a high top, and it was made of oak. The interviewee had never seen such a coffin, and people in Porvoo came especially to see it.

For the wife, there was no question about the matter – she wanted to be buried in Sweden, as the following extract from the interviewer's notes makes clear: "We are registered here. Who would take us anywhere from here? Our children are here. We want to be buried where we live."[26]

Another interviewee, a woman who had moved to Sweden in 1959, seemed hurt by the interviewer's suggestive question. She asked what in the world they would do in Finland, as they had "all we need here." She also referred to the funeral costs by saying that everything was more expensive in Finland and that in Sweden everything was better than in Finland.[27]

In Hunter's study, material security was a motive for the choice of burial place. People were reluctant to send a body to a country that was at war, as they wished to ensure that the grave would be safe.[28] However, none of the Finnish immigrants interviewed in the 1970s mentioned security when asked about their preferred resting place. This is unsurprising, as both Finland and Sweden were considered very safe and secure countries. Security may have once been an issue: after the Second World War, many Finns migrated to Sweden for fear that their country would become part of the Soviet Union. However, the Finns interviewed by the Nordic Museum had moved to Sweden much later, and their reasons for immigration – at least according to the transcriptions – were not dictated by fear of the Cold War. Nevertheless, some sort of self-censorship may have also occurred. For instance, one of the interviewees asked that his comment on the Soviet Union be removed, because he thought it might be dangerous. To whom it might be dangerous is not explained in the fieldwork diary.[29]

Family ties

Some of the people in Hunter's material felt that it was important to be close to the graves of their forefathers or to the graves of future generations.[30] However, the Finnish immigrants interviewed in the Nordic Museum project did not think this far, either into the past or into the future. For them, it was important to be close to their spouse, parents, or children – and past or future generations did not seem to matter. In the Nordic Museum's material, family ties were the most common motive for choosing the future burial

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26 Nm:K11: Sixten & Tilde.
27 Nm:K20: Barbro.
28 Hunter, 185.
29 For ethical reasons, I will not reveal the reference here.
30 Hunter, 186.

place. Couples used the word "us" when talking about each other, signaling that for them it was obvious they would be buried in the same grave:

> "Our children are here, so our grave should be here, too," says the husband. The wife [adds]: "If we live here and our children live here, I guess we will be buried here, so that the grave is not far away from them. As such, it doesn't make any difference to us whether our grave is in Finland or here."[31]

It seemed that the closer the interviewees were to death, the easier it was for them to discuss it. The oldest person interviewed took the interviewers to see the grave of her husband, who had died ten years earlier. On the headstone was a space for her name. She said that her husband had died only four years after they had moved to Sweden. Her husband had wanted to go back to Finland, but he died suddenly. The couple's children had moved to Sweden before their parents, and so it seemed natural to bury him in Sweden.[32] She showed the curators of the Museum another Finnish grave. The text "G. Henriksson's family grave" was in Swedish on top of the grave, but the interviewee said that the only person buried in that grave so far was Hjördis (1925–1968), and the family had originally come from Finland.[33] Another interviewee spoke about his father, who had died suddenly during a trip to Finland. It had been natural to bury him there. His wife, still living in Sweden, said that she wished to be buried in Finland in the same family grave as her husband.[34]

Another woman told the story of her father, who, although he had lived in Sweden, had been buried in Finland at her mother's request. She added, "I have never really thought about it before, but I guess that's where I want to be buried, too. All my relatives are there." To her husband, the matter was of no importance, but if he was forced to say where he wanted to be buried, his answer would be Sweden – because his closest family members lived there, he explained. Six out of his seven siblings were living in Sweden, and his mother spent her winters there, too.[35] In addition, a Swedish-speaking couple had come to the conclusion that they would probably be buried in Sweden because their children had no plans to move to Finland. After all, the children had no prospects in Finland, as they could not speak the language.[36]

In Hunter's research material, the term "close family members" refers to a person's own children, friends, and other people close to that individual. In his material, an important motive for choosing one's final resting place was to ensure that somebody would visit one's grave.[37] Similarly, according to the Nordic Museum's material, to many it made no difference whether their grave was in Finland or Sweden – as long as it was close to their children. "Wherever the children are, that's where I want to be buried. It is not so

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31 Nm:K11: Arvid & Anja.
32 Nm:K25: Saara.
33 Nm:K19. B.622/17.
34 Nm:K25: Arja.
35 Nm:K14: Armas & Ansa.
36 Nm:K16: Teresa, Taavetti, & child.
37 Hunter, 186.

important if it is in Finland or in Sweden," said a mother of three who had moved to Upplands Väsby a few years earlier. Her youngest child had been born in Sweden.[38]

Not all couples agreed on the question of whether to be buried in the same grave and where. In fact, this unexpected question provoked the occasional quarrel between husband and wife. The question that caused the most friction was whether the common resting place should be close to the husband's or the wife's family. It was self-evident that these couples wanted to be buried in Finland, but the exact location remained a point of contention.

> The husband: "In Tampere, Messukylä cemetery, next to my parents. My mother rests there already, and when my father dies, there is a place for him there, too. I say, a man must have a goal! And since we are all going to die, why can't the cemetery be that goal?"
> The wife: "We have talked about this before. Do you mean that we are going to be buried in different places?" (She is speaking to her husband with a resigned voice.) "So, it is more important for you to be with your family than with me. I don't care where I am buried. The children can decide."
> The husband: "Of course, it's the family, your roots. They are more important to you than your spouse. In fact, your spouse is a stranger, not part of your family."[39]

Many of those interviewed were aware that the memory work attached to a grave links the deceased not only to a place but also to other family members. When deciding the location of the grave, in the case of transnational death one must also take into account – if only on a metaphorical level – the country in which the family line will continue and which family line will be chosen. The only options are to break with the dead or break with the living.[40]

Territorial considerations

For Finnish immigrants who had lived in Sweden for an extended period of time, the wish to be buried in Finland was often linked to a nostalgic conception of the past. In their mind, life in Finland was, if not better, at least positive in many ways. In this kind of thinking, Sweden was "not Finland," and memories of happier times were easily connected with the past and Finland, either to a person's hometown or country.[41] The basic idea of the Migration Finland-Sweden study was to obtain information on Finns' integration into Sweden. Thus, the question on the preferred place of burial – either Finland or Sweden – was considered crucial. In some cases, the question was asked in a leading way, revealing the interviewer's own

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38 Nm:K10: Augusta.
39 Nm:K14: Aukusti & Anneli.
40 Attias Donftut et al., 702; Hunter, 185; Reimers, 155.
41 Ilona Pajari, "Kuolema maalla ja kaupungissa. Suomalaisten hautajais- ja kuole-mankulttuurinmuutos 1800-luvulta nykypäivään," *Historiallinen aikakauskirja* 112, no. 4 (2014a): 393.

nostalgia-based preconception of the interviewee's categorical desire to be buried in Finland.[42] Indeed, many of the immigrants wanted to return to Finland after their death, but their motives for returning were not based on Finland as a nation or on a strong sense of nationalism. They simply wanted to return to Finland, and there was no need to explain why:

> Wife: "In Övermark [where her husband was born] or in Luumäki [her own place of birth], it does not matter, but Finland, Finland."
> Husband: "On Finnish soil."[43]

In Hunter's typology, the emotional landscape refers to choices which are based not on the nation or citizenship but on something harder to define: the feeling of belonging to a certain place.[44] For the immigrants interviewed by the Nordic Museum, the emotional landscape meant either the place where they had grown up or the place where they assumed they would be living at the time of their death. Nevertheless, some couples failed to agree on the matter – even if they had been born in the same region. For example, a 28-year-old man who had moved to Sweden a few years earlier said he wished to be buried in his home region in Finland. However, his wife reported that she felt a different location in Finland to be home.[45] As Pijl observes, "not only life but also death often includes more than one locality."[46]

It was apparent, too, that some interviewees had quickly become estranged from Finland. For instance, a man born in Sortavala (today part of Russia) claimed it did not matter if he was buried in Finland or in Sweden. "There, where I live and work," was his answer.[47] A man born in Petsamo (today part of Russia) remarked sadly that those who had a family grave in Sweden probably wanted to be buried in Sweden, and those who had a family grave in Finland probably wanted to be buried in Finland. He himself lacked a family grave in either country; his family grave was now across the border.[48] The same was true of an interviewee born in Eno (today part of Russia), who, after lengthy consideration, explained that she no longer felt at home in Finland. She was the only interviewee who talked about cremation in a neutral and matter-of-fact way. She was also the only one to mention the custom of having two funerals: the first ceremony in the new home country in connection with the cremation, and the second ceremony—the urn burial—in the deceased's native country:

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42 On nostalgia and researchers, see David Berliner, "Are Anthropologists Nostalgist?" in *Anthropology and Nostalgia,* eds. Olivia Angé and David Berliner, (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2015); Hanna Snellman, "An Ethnography of Nostalgia. Nordic Museum Curators Interviewing Finnish Immigrants in Sweden," *Journal of Finnish Studies* 19, no. 2 (2016): 158–176.

43 Nm:K12: Atte & Aune.

44 Hunter 2016, 187.

45 Nm:K14: Aatos & Annukka.

46 Pijl, 154.

47 Nm:K9: Aarne.

48 Nm:K15: Antero.

"It is quite common for Finns to send their dead to Finland to be buried there," Aura remarks. One of her friends at work had just been to a funeral that took place both in Sweden and in Finland. The body was cremated and the urn sent to Finland for a family burial. "As far as I am concerned, I am at my wits' end about this burial place, though we have talked about it, yes. We do have a family grave, but there is room for only two. My father is there already, my mother is still waiting. And it feels so strange after all this time."[49]

According to Hunter, both the number of years spent in one's native country and the number of years spent in one's new home country affect the preferred burial site.[50] This factor, termed "preponderant presence" in Hunter's typology, is also an important element in the material collected among Finnish immigrants. When asked about their future burial site, some interviewees realized that they had become so rooted in their new home country that it would feel unnatural to return to Finland after death. They were also aware that their attitudes had changed over the years. For example, a 31-year-old mother of three who had lived in Sweden for about ten years reported, after a moment's consideration, that she wished to be buried there in the cemetery in Upplands Väsby. Her husband replied that he had previously wished to be buried in Finland, but now it no longer mattered so much.[51] Some interviewees had come to the same conclusion, but more quickly. For example, a 25-year-old Finnish woman married to a Swedish man had moved to Sweden some three years before and was hoping soon to become a mother. Her answer to the interviewer's somewhat leading question on a burial in Finland was: "I really don't think so."[52] The number of years was not so relevant, compared to the quality of the time spent in the new country. "After all, we live here," many replied, apparently slightly hurt that they had been asked the question at all.[53]

Funeral customs

Previous studies have underlined religious motives in selecting the place of burial.[54] This is partly due to religion being a central focus of those studies – as is often the case in research on immigrants. In my own material, religion was not mentioned even once as the motive for choosing the preferred burial site. This is unsurprising for two reasons: first, Finland and Sweden have a rather similar religious profile and, secondly, the researchers were following a unified picture of Finnishness, as discussed above. In the Nordic

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49 Nm:K10: Adam & Aura.
50 Hunter, 187.
51 Nm:K12: Tauno & Tuovi.
52 Nm:K:12: Benita.
53 Nm:K16: Tyra.
54 Attias Donfut et al.; Casal et al.; Cora Alexa Doving, *Norsk-pakistanske begravelseritualer – en migrasjonsstudie* Oslo: Det historisk-filosofise fakultet, Universitetet I Oslo, 2005); Hunter.

Museum material, the interviewees were asked about their religious customs in connection with important personal celebrations and church attendance, but they were not asked about their faith. The assumption was that Finnish immigrants belonged to the Lutheran Church and were more religious than Swedes. It is likely that several interviewees were originally Orthodox, but the interviewers were interested solely in whether their families had a Bible or hymnbook in Finnish or Swedish.[55] One couple emphasized that they were part of a revivalist movement, but this had no bearing on their preferred place of burial.

One of the interviewees wished to take her interviewers for a walk in Virsbo Cemetery to tell them about the migration history of Finns there. The oldest graves were from the beginning of the 1920s, with Swedish names and texts. Apparently the deceased were domestic help who had migrated from Finland to Sweden (e.g., Anna Pettersson). However, some of the graves had Finnish texts. For instance, Mauritz Majonen (1952–1957), who had died in a car accident as a young child, had the words *lepää rauhassa* ("rest in peace") on his grave. The interviewee told the interviewers that the family was Orthodox. There was no reference to religion on the grave, simply the rays of a rising sun. At the grave of Juha Karmunen (1915–1969), Annette Rosengren had written, "note, not an Orthodox cross," even though the deceased was Orthodox. Moreover, Jelena Makarov's (1878–1966) name and her birthplace in Russian Karelia (Saajärvi) suggests that she might also have been Orthodox, but the cross on the grave was not Orthodox. The walk in the cemetery initiated by the interviewee was the only time that the interviewers mentioned the Orthodox faith in the material.[56]

Although many of the participants expressed a preference for being buried in Finland or, conversely, in Sweden, the difference between the two countries was never considered so large that the country itself was significant in the choice. "They are both the same country," said one interviewee laughing.[57] The Finnish word for country or land, *maa*, can mean many things here. Thus, the interviewee might have meant that, for him, Sweden and Finland were culturally alike. Or he might have been referring to the funeral ritual where, as the coffin is lowered into the grave, the priest throws soil on the coffin and utters the words "Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust." This ritual has deep significance regardless of whether a person is religious, and, according to Pijl, cultural metaphors play a crucial role in funerary rites.[58] Indeed, funeral customs and rituals seem to matter a great deal when people consider their future resting place.

In her article on Finnish death, Ilona Pajari writes that Heikki Waris had already discovered that the first generation to live in a city tended, whenever possible, to follow the customs and lifestyle of their home region. The same

55 E.g., Nm:K15: Antero.
56 Nm:K19. B.622/11; B.622/21; B.539/20; B.539/19; B.539/17; B539/18; B. 539/21; B539/22; B. 539/25; B. 539/26; B. 539/24; B539/23; B.539/27; B.622/7; B.622/8; B. 622/9; B. 622/16; B.622/15; B.622/17; B.622/10; B.622/12; B.622/14; B.622/13.
57 Nm:K9: Selim & Ada.
58 Pijl, 151.

was true a hundred years later with communities of Finnish workers in Sweden: for many, the wish to be buried in Finland concerned the differences in funeral rituals. Small things matter; for instance, would it be possible for the funeral guests to bid farewell to the deceased in an open coffin? Who would be the coffin bearers and how would they dress? What artifacts would be involved? And where would the memorial service be held?[59] In the 1970s, death in Sweden was, in comparison to Finland, more distanced from everyday life. For example, the pallbearers were professionals, whereas in Finland family members carried the coffin. In the Finnish countryside, the memorial service was usually held at home, while in Sweden it occurred in a public building. If the burial was in Finland, everything was clear; there would be "no problems," as one of the interviewees put it—although he wanted to be buried in Sweden himself.[60]

The most significant difference between Finnish and Swedish burials concerned cremation. Some interviewees wished to be cremated because they thought that it would be easier to take an urn, rather than a coffin, to Finland.[61] Nevertheless, few were familiar with the custom of cremation. For a couple who had immigrated to Sweden a few years before to live with their son's family, it was the question of cremation that determined their future burial place:

> "Many [Finns who have died in Sweden] have been buried in Finland," says Stig. "I know one from the factory; he died accidentally. And then there was the husband of Ragna's aunt. The one from the factory had a family grave in Finland. That is probably why he was buried there. He didn't have a family here in Sweden. He was not that old, and his parents lived in Finland. The other one that died, they had a son and a daughter buried over there. The Nordbergs had a family grave at Vöyri, Finland, and they were wondering if they should get one in Sweden, too." When Sandra is asked where she and her husband want to be buried, she answers, "No, I feel that…" They haven't talked about the matter, and she says that she doesn't know what she should answer. Stig says that, as a matter of fact, he was thinking about this the other day when he was driving past the place where they are going to build Hammarby's new church. "If they bury people there without cremation, then, yes, I think I could be buried there," he says. "That's what I was thinking when I drove past the place." Cremation is not common in their home region, and Stig and Sandra do not want to be cremated. But they are not sure if burial without cremation is possible in Sweden.[62]

59 On Finnish funeral customs, see Ilona Pajari, "Kuolemanrituaalit", in *Kuoleman kulttuurit Suomessa*, eds. Outi Hakola, Sari Kivistö and Virpi Mäkinen (Helsinki, Gaudeamus, 2014b), 92–102.
60 Nm:K16: Samuel.
61 E.g., Nm: K25:Alpo.
62 Nm:K11: Stig & Sandra.
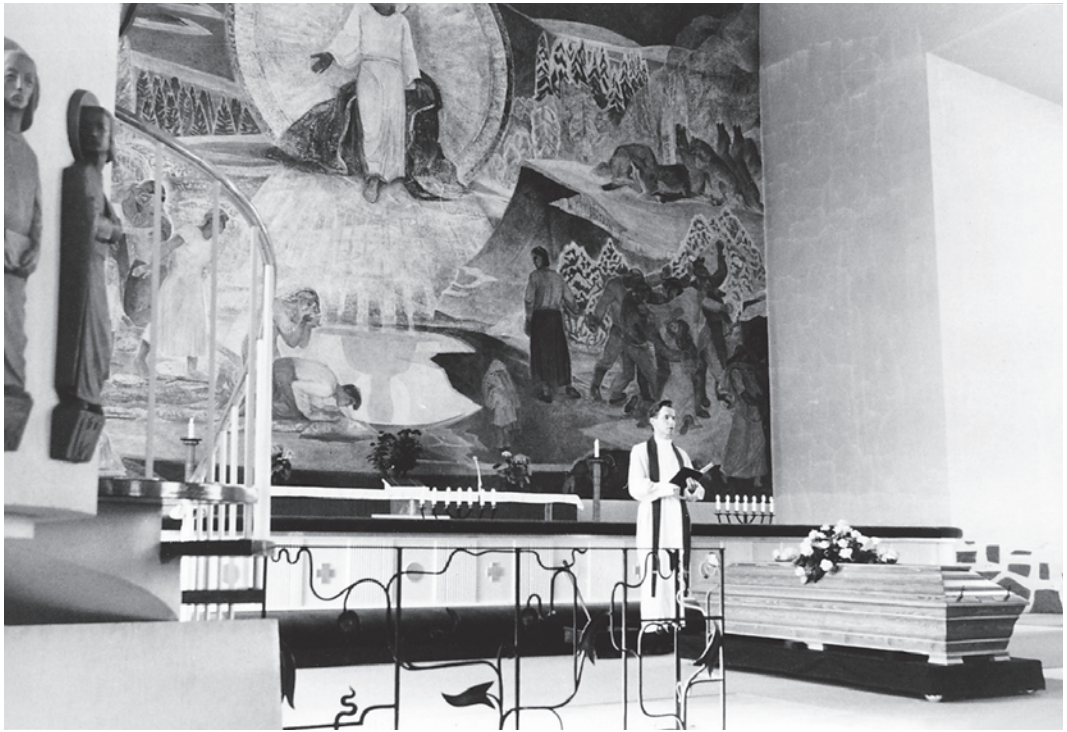
Images 002, 003, 004: The funeral of the grandmother of the author of this chapter in 1976 in Rovaniemi, Finland. Private collection.

Wherever

Just as Hunter observed in his own material, some Finnish immigrants interviewed by the Nordic Museum were totally indifferent to the idea of their future burial place.[63] This might be explained by the suddenness of the question; some interviewees were unprepared for it, and they were unsure how to react. For others, the question was simply not pertinent. Nevertheless, here the role of the interviewer is also significant in terms of his or her skill in asking such a delicate question. Some interviewees disliked the way Swedes and Finns were treated as two fundamentally different groups in the survey, and consequently they questioned several of the ideas that arose during the session. One interviewee replied bluntly that it made no difference to him where he was eaten by worms, since they were the same material everywhere (*det är samma material överallt*). However, it is slightly unclear whether the term "material" was taken here to mean Finns, Swedes, worms, earth, or soil.[64] Another interviewee, this time a woman, replied "I don't care where I am buried," and her husband added: "It is not that important… Once the

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63 Hunter, 184; K9: Aapeli & Birgitta.
64 Nm:K10: Terttu.

soul takes off, it doesn't matter where your body lies."[65] "I do not care where they scatter my ashes," said another.[66] Finally, a 23-year-old woman who had lived in Sweden for less than a year replied that she would like her ashes to be scattered where she was living at the time of her death.[67]

By contrast, a 25-year-old woman who had lived in Sweden for a few years at the time of the interview reported that her spouse's parents, although now living in Sweden, would certainly want to be buried in Finland. For her own part, she had not thought about the matter. The interview occurred in the kitchen, and her husband happened to appear just as the matter was being discussed. According to the interviewer, the husband was surprised by the question and said that for him it made no difference where he was buried.[68] In addition, a 32-year-old man who had lived in Sweden for more than ten years said that he had never considered where he would like to be buried. Nevertheless, when presented with the question he became grave, noting that the matter was very important. "So many things are connected to it," he said. However, he explained that his spouse's father had wished to be buried in Sweden, so that was probably an option for him, too.[69]

Transnational Finnish death in 1974

The group of people interviewed by the Nordic Museum in Sweden was extremely heterogeneous. Consisting of both Finnish- and Swedish-speaking Finns, it included people who had recently moved to Sweden and those who had had it as their country of residence for almost twenty years. Some had families, some were divorced, and others were widowed. Some couples had been together for many years, and some were apparently very tired of each other. By contrast, some were young couples just starting their life together. Many lived close to old friends or siblings that came, for example, from the same village in Ostrobothnia, while some had no friends from Finland at all in Sweden. There were families with children born either in Finland or in Sweden, or in both. There were families with several children and families with only one child. The children were either biological, adopted, or the spouse's children from a previous marriage. With the exception of the children present during the interviews, none of the interviewees had moved to Sweden with their parents. This is because only individuals who had moved to Sweden independently were selected for the survey. Consequently, the group consisted solely of first-generation immigrants. Some of the interviewees were Finnish citizens and some were Swedish. The sample included those who dreamed of moving back to Finland and those who were offended by the mere question of returning. For some, their old home region was out of reach because it was on the other side of the border

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65 Nm:K9: Santeri & Taimi.
66 Nm:K14: Armas & Ansa.
67 Nm:K16: Birgit.
68 Nm:K10: Berta & Benjamin.
69 Nm:K10: Algot.

with the Soviet Union; for others, it would have been possible to return. The interviewees also lived in a variety of dwellings. Some lived in one-room apartments, some in single family houses, and some in townhouses, though most resided in apartment buildings. In addition, some lived in Upplands Väsby, near Stockholm, while others resided in the countryside in an old ironworks community in Virsbo. The list of differences is endless, and this in itself demonstrates the richness of the qualitative material and also explains the difficulty of analyzing it.

My findings based on the Nordic Museum's material deviate from Hunter's typology only where religious motives are discussed: religious motives were less important to Finnish immigrants when selecting their preferred place of burial. Different funeral rituals, by contrast, were more significant to them.

Funeral rituals have been discussed in earlier studies on immigrants' preferred burial sites,[70] which have demonstrated that new or unfamiliar practices are often avoided. Cremation was unusual in 1970s Finland, especially in the countryside.[71] For many, this was the decisive element in selecting their future burial place. The Swedish-style coffin seemed strange, not to mention the urn. Immigrants who had attended a funeral in Sweden considered the funeral and memorial ceremony slightly odd and unfamiliar. As the ceremony proceeded, small things caused uneasiness. While differences between the two countries in terms of emotional outbursts were not mentioned, one seldom witnesses displays of strong emotions at funerals in Finland; according to Ilona Pajari, it is considered "not very Finnish" to cry out loud at a funeral.[72]

Death does not end with the funeral. Afterwards, the grave remains in the cemetery and has a life of its own—if the deceased, or their closest relations, so wish. Maintaining the grave is a ritual that was mentioned in many interviews. Although the interviewees discussed "taking care of the grave," they were not solely referring to plants and flowers or neat-looking graves. It was also a reminder of the act of caring, both for themselves and for those who were likely to visit their grave. In his 1965 ethnological dissertation, Mats Rehnberg wrote that plants and candles in cemeteries had become more common in the 1900s as the number of family graves increased. The family name engraved on the headstone entitled one to take care of the grave.[73] Having their name engraved on the headstone, or just having a grave owned by their family or relatives, certainly had an important meaning for the immigrants in the Nordic Museum study—irrespective of whether the grave connected them with Finland or Sweden.

The term "family grave" occurs frequently in the material. Visiting a grave is a ritual that underlines the sense of belonging together, and actually caring for the grave is part of that ritual. The ritual of visiting (and tending)

70 Attias Donfut et al., 700; Pijl; Reimers, 148.
71 Ida Marie Høeg and Ilona Pajari, "Introduction to the Nordic issue of Mortality" in *Mortality* 18, no. 2 (2013): 114.
72 Pajari 2014b, 95.
73 Mats Rehnberg, *Ljusen på gravarna och andra ljusseder. Nya traditioner under 1900-talet*. Nordiska museets handlingar: 61 Stockholm: Nordiska museet, 1965), 242.

the grave also strengthens one's family ties. Although most couples wished to be buried in the same grave, the meaning of family was not self-evident in those cases where the husband and wife both wished to be buried with their own parents. Since in a grave a person is usually connected with only one family, this subject provoked discussion between couples on many levels. In earlier studies, such conversations about family lines and which family line to connect with were followed by similar discussions on the state and country.[74] In the Nordic Museum study, the simplest solution for beginning the discussion on belonging was to talk about children and the wish to be buried in the country where one's children resided—in most cases, Sweden. In this way, the interviewees, perhaps not realizing it themselves, made the decision to begin a new family line through their transnational death, linking future generations to the country where they themselves had been pioneers.

Funeral arrangements are an integral part of death, and they provide the family with an outlet for sorrow. The survey revealed many practical reasons for choosing one's final resting place. Many of these reasons were financial, since the costs of burying a Swedish citizen in Finland were high. Moreover, since cremation was unusual in 1970s Finland, the body was, in most cases, transported to Finland in a coffin. Even so, it was often less expensive to transport the deceased overseas than for the funeral guests to travel to Sweden. Whether it was costly to bury a Finnish citizen in Sweden was not discussed in the material. According to previous research, Finnish immigrants often changed their citizenship for practical reasons: Swedish citizenship allowed them to avoid military service in Finland, made it easier for them to travel to southern Europe on holiday (a new trend in those days), and enabled them to realize their dream of buying a house or summer cottage.[75]

A large number of interviewees expressed the wish to be buried in Finland, and they did not give any further explanation. As this was also the interviewers' assumption, they did not ask for more detail. For many, home – being the region where they had grown up– determined the future site of the grave. Through this decision, the interviewees connected themselves, but not necessarily their children or grandchildren, to the country and region from which they had only temporarily emigrated. However, some participants felt that they had moved their lives to Sweden and thus they wished to be buried there. The decisive factors in this case were the number and quality of years spent in Finland and Sweden.

Belonging through death

In the survey conducted by the Nordic Museum, immigrants were asked about their preferred burial site. This unexpected question forced them

74 For example, Marjavaara; Alistair Hunter, "Deathscapes in Diaspora: Contesting Space and Negotiating Home in Contexts of Post-Migration Diversity", *Social & Cultural Geography* 17, no. 2 (2015): 247–261.

75 Hanna Snellman, *Sallan suurin kylä – Göteborg* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2003a).

to decide on short notice how to view their life – whether to look to the past, the present, or the future. Images of death connected with home, family members, friends, and their home region constituted a picture of a "good death." In many cases, these meditations were textbook examples of a sentiment colored by nostalgia. Nostalgia is connected with the thought that everything was better in days gone by and that the familiar is better than the strange.[76]

In the case of a Finnish death, things were seen as being done according to custom: it was possible to bid farewell to the deceased in an open coffin, the coffin looked correct, the pallbearers were people close to the deceased, and the rituals in the church, at the grave, and in the memorial service followed a familiar pattern. For someone attending a funeral for the first time, it was easy to follow the correct pattern by imitating others. How to dress, what to do with the flowers, what was served at the memorial service, the choreography of the funeral day – all this was culturally shared common knowledge. Visits to the grave, even years after the burial, were part of this knowledge. Every candle or flower taken to the grave, every payment for the care of the grave, and every short visit to the grave strengthened the sense of belonging.

Even though many Swedish funeral rituals were considered strange, it was also considered possible to have a good death in Sweden. A family grave in Sweden was the final proof of having settled in the new country, signifying that the feeling of permanent transiency – a sentiment shared by many immigrants – had finally been overcome. From the perspective of ethnic identity, Olga Davydova studied the funeral of a man who had moved to Finland from Russia. According to her, a Finnish funeral signaled public identification with Finnishness, a fulfillment of Finnishness,[77] and the same can be seen to apply to Finnish immigrants in Sweden.

Burial locations are by no means neutral. In July 2017, for instance, Members of the European Parliament discussed pleas for help from Syriac Christians and Assyrians from Southeast Turkey after the Turkish state had confiscated churches, monasteries, and cemeteries from villages and placed them under the control of the Department of Religious Affairs, a powerful state institution that oversees Muslim places of worship. Approximately 350,000 Syriacs and Assyrians currently reside in Europe, and many are deeply concerned about the fate of cemeteries in the cities of Midyat and Mardin in Southeast Turkey.[78] Moreover, small-scale disputes frequently occur. For example, the Swedish ethnologist Lynn Åkesson writes about a court case where the children from a man's first marriage opposed the will of his second wife, which specified that she be buried in the same grave as her husband. The court decided that the second wife should not be removed

76 Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto, "Negotiating the Past at the Kitchen Table: Nostalgia as a Narrative Strategy in an Intergenerational Context," *Journal of Finnish Studies* 19, no. 2 (2016): 9–10.
77 Olga Davydova-Minguet, "Rituaali, identiteetti ja ylirajaisuus. Joitakin ajatuksia paluumuuttajan hautajaisista," *Elore*, 12, no. 1 (2005): 16–17.
78 *Svenska Dagbladet*, July 6, 2017.

from the grave, and the children announced that they would never visit their father's final resting place.[79] Moreover, even royalty have burial wishes as cultural markers of belonging: when the Queen of Denmark's spouse died in 2018, it was announced that he did not wish to be buried in the same grave as his wife.[80] Finally, failing to express burial wishes also has consequences, at least with public figures, as demonstrated by the struggle for Greta Garbo's ashes.[81]

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Folder 9 (=K9): Aapeli & Birgitta; Aarne; Santeri & Taimi; Selim & Ada.

Folder 10 (=K10): Terttu; Berta & Benjamin; Algot; Bo & Barbara; Adam & Aura; Augusta.

Folder 11 (=K11): Sixten & Tilde; Arvid & Anja; Stig & Sandra.

Folder 12 (=K12): Atte & Aune; Benita; Tauno & Tuovi.

Folder 14 (=K14): Tyyni; Armas & Ansa; Aukusti & Anneli; Aatos & Annukka.

Folder 15 (=K15): Alfred & Alina; Antero.

Folder 16 (=K16): Tyra; Teresa, Taavetti, & child; Birgit; Samuel.

Folder 19 (=K19): Photos by Annika Tyrfelt and texts by Annette Rosengren.

Folder 25 (=K25): Saara; Arja; Alpo.

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Anna Matyska

Doing death kin work in Polish transnational families

Transnational families "do" kinship on an everyday basis through acts of support and negotiations that defy distance. Can they also "do" death? In this chapter, I am interested in death as a process of phased transitions,[1] which underlines the forging and conclusion of the transnational relationships they embody. In particular, I investigate how Polish migrants to Finland assist their kin in Poland in transitioning from life to death, engaging in what I call "transnational death kin work." Transnational death kin work draws on the concept of kin work developed by Micaela Di Leonardo[2] in kinship studies and on the concept of death work, as conceived in death studies.[3] It allows me to draw attention to the role of death in the making of transnational families and to stress that death, similarly to kinship, is work rather than a biologically determined phenomenon, enacted through mutual agency and effort by the dying and the survivors, who as transnational family members simultaneously do transnational kinship by doing death. In this chapter, I trace transnational death kin work from the dying stage, through the liminality of biological death, to its conclusion in a funeral, with the stages being interconnected and mutually influencing one another.

Transnational family studies have shown that families can be made and can maintain a sense of togetherness across borders, and that bounded locality does not determine the quality of family life.[4] At the same time, the analytical

1 Antonius C. G. M. *Robben*, *Death, Mourning, and Burial: A Cross-Cultural Reader* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2004), 1–16.
2 Micaela Di Leonardo, "The Female World of Cards and Holidays: Women, Families and the Work of Kinship," *Signs* 12, no. 3 (1987): 440–453.
3 Eva Soom Ammann, Corina Salis Gross, and Gabriela Rauber, "The Art of Enduring Contradictory Goals: Challenges in the Institutional Co-construction of a 'Good Death,'" *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 37, no. 2 (2016): 118–132; Wallace Chi Ho Chan and Agnes Fong Tin, "Beyond Knowledge and Skills: Self-Competence in Working with Death, Dying, and Bereavement," *Death Studies* 36, no. 10 (2012): 899–913.
4 Loretta Baldassar and Laura Merla (eds.), *Transnational Families, Migration and the Circulation of Care: Understanding Mobility and Absence in Family Life* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Deborah Bryceson and Ulla Vuorela,(eds.), *Transnational Families: New European Frontiers and Global Networks* (Oxford: Berghahn, 2002);

links between transnational living, dying, and death remain considerably underexplored. To paraphrase Zygmunt Bauman,[5] in transnational family studies the "livable present" – and even the present marked by chronic illness and the aging of elderly kin – often triumphs over "future death."[6] The increasingly popular studies on the death of migrants only partially address transnational family engagement,[7] whereas studies on transnational family caregiving in old age do not approach the forthcoming death of the elderly kin as an analytical problem.[8]

My aim is to acknowledge the inevitable presence of death throughout the course of family life and its increasingly unbounded character, and to show what it takes to partake in the dying and death of a loved one in the Polish transnational context. I see death as one of the crucial transitions in a transnational family, a transnational "rite of passage"[9] that concludes embodied transnational relationships. Peter Metcalf and Richard Huntington argue that "life becomes transparent against the background of death."[10] Death illuminates the material and cultural contingencies of transnational living and speaks to the importance of kinship in the Poles' moral sense of self and the evaluation of their migration projects; in my study, in particular, this is related to the fact that those who survive are also those who moved, while those who die are also those who stayed behind. In the following section, I provide a brief methodological reflection, followed by an empirical discussion of death kin work at different stages and the interrelated practices involved.

Anna Matyska, *Transnational Families in the Making: The Polish Experience of Living between Poland and Finland during and after the Cold War* (Tampere: University of Tampere Press, 2013); Tatiana Tiaynen, *Babushka in Flux: Grandmothers and Family-making between Russian Karelia and Finland* (Tampere: University of Tampere Press, 2013).

5 Zygmunt Bauman, *Mortality, Immortality and Other Life Strategies* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992), 141.

6 Writing my dissertation on transnational family-making between Poland and Finland, I struggled with including my data on death in the narrative of family life; I ended up excluding most of it.

7 Adrián Félix, "Posthumous Transnationalism: Postmortem Repatriation from the United States to Mexico," *Latin American Research Review* 46, no. 3 (2011); Kathy Gardner, "Desh-Bidesh: Sylheti Images of Home and Away," *Man: New Series* 28, no. 1 (1993): 1–15.

8 See, for instance, Loretta Baldassar, Cora Vellekoop Baldock, and Raelene Wilding, *Families Caring Across Borders: Migration, Ageing and Transnational Caregiving* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Cora Vellekoop Baldock, "Migrants and their Parents: Caregiving from a Distance," *Journal of Family Issues*, 21, no. 2 (2000): 205–224; for the Polish transnational context see Łukasz Krzyżowski, *Polscy migranci i ich starzejący się rodzice* (Warszawa: Scholar, 2013).

9 Arnold van Gennep, *Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1960).

10 Peter Metcalf and Richard Huntington, *Celebrations of Death: The Anthropology of Mortuary Rituals* (Cambridge University Press, 1991), 25.

Studying death while studying transnational kinship

The chapter draws on ethnographic conversations and observations I collected during my multi-sited fieldwork among Polish people living in Finland and their kin in Poland in 2006–2009, as well as continuous interaction with many of my interlocutors after the fieldwork period.[11] I conducted interviews and participated in multiple social gatherings and informal conversations with my interlocutors in Finland. Most of my migrant interlocutors participated in some type of death kin work, either during my fieldwork or previously. Altogether, I draw on interviews with forty-three migrant interlocutors and interviews with seven elderly parents, which I conducted in Poland.

My aim was to study transnational family life, but I was not a deliberate "death researcher."[12] When I realized the omnipresence of death in transnational family life, I was hardly prepared to talk about it straightforwardly. When my interlocutors brought up the topic themselves, I was both grateful and ill at ease. It seemed easier for us to talk about previous deaths; it was more difficult to talk about dying itself and anticipated deaths. Death was easier to call by name (in Polish, *śmierć*) when people were already dead than when they were still alive. In the latter situations, euphemisms were preferred over the explicit word 'death.' However, this way of framing death should not be treated as a methodological shortcoming of my study, but rather as an indication of the cultural atmosphere underpinning my interlocutors' death kin work. On the one hand, people were faced with death as a fact of life which, through cultural norms (often pronounced vis-à-vis Catholic faith) and affective need, demanded their practical response. On the other hand, their ability to candidly deal with death was complicated by the decline of the cultural metanarrative about death and the medicalization of dying.[13] This double perspective on death, with death being present and absent at the same time, permeates my data and constitutes part of the transnational death kin work.

Caring for the dying and taming death

Alina and Jan were among my oldest interlocutors, both in their eighties. We met in Poland on the recommendation of their son Krzysztof and his wife Magda, who have resided in Finland since the 1990s. I knew from Krzysztof and Magda that they had helped Alina and Jan financially and

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11 The research was financially supported by the Finnish Cultural Foundation, Kone Foundation, Tampere University Foundation, and Ehrnrooth Foundation. The article was concluded during my Marie Curie Fellowship at KU Leuven.

12 Jenny Hockey, "Closing in on Death? Reflections on Research and Researchers in the Field of Death and Dying," *Health Sociology Review* 16 (2007): 436–446.

13 Allan Kellehear, *A Social History of Dying* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Zygmunt Bauman. Mortality, Immortality and Other Life Strategies (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012).

emotionally, something which the elderly couple confirmed. Alina made a point of mentioning their support during a recent health crisis. Yet, at some point, Alina solemnly stated, as if summing up our conversation: "All they can do is to come and bury us." The sentence startled me. Not only did it bring Alina and Jan's old age and death into the picture, it also decreased the significance of all the positive acts of transnational caring that we had discussed previously by suggesting their ultimate futility in the face of death.

Death in contemporary Europe rarely comes suddenly. Most often it is a consequence of long-term ailments and chronic diseases that are managed with the help of medicine. Dying becomes extended over time and imagined as living with, rather than dying from, diseases.[14] In transnational family studies, this process is usually discussed from the perspective of transnational caregiving for frail and aging kin.[15] However, I would argue that what is tacitly at stake here is the attempt to keep death at bay and under control by "taming" and "timing" it.[16] The taming and timing of death are twin aspects of the process of managing and curtailing the chaos and uncertainty of death: how it will come and when. Philippe Ariès used the term "tame death" to describe the traditional model of dying, in which death was a familiar and community matter, and juxtaposed it with the contemporary "invisible death."[17] However, I follow Allan Kellehear's argument that it is more fruitful to see the taming of death as a historically contingent process, which has shifted from religious to more secular, and medically informed efforts aimed at rendering death less wild and threatening.[18]

My migrant interlocutors rarely talked about transnational caregiving for their frail kin, usually elderly parents, in relation to assistance with dying; parents themselves, like Alina, would not necessarily equate their current life with dying already. Death was expected, though. As Alina's daughter-in-law told me: "We try to visit them as often as possible, because they are old and you never know…" Alina's aforementioned statement seemed to invalidate the rationale of these practices, considering that no amount of support can obviate death. What such support can do, however, is affect people's dying trajectory, including how and when they will die, and whether it will be a "good death," that is, a contemporary version of a "tame," domesticated death.[19]

In the medicine-dominated death narrative, people always die of something. In a Polish cultural scenario, part of successful (in the sense of morally and emotionally rewarding) death kin work, I argue, is to create conditions in which the potential cause of death would be mitigated and life is prolonged. In other words, this would mean producing a "well-managed

14 Kay Price and Julianne Cheek, "Avoiding Death: The Ultimate Challenge in the Provision of Contemporary Healthcare?" *Health Sociology Review* 16 (2007): 397–404.

15 Baldassar, Baldock and Wilding ; Krzyżowski.

16 Kellehear.

17 Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death* (London: Penguin, [1977] 1987).

18 Kellehear, 169–187.

19 Kellehear; James Green, *Beyond the Good Death: The Anthropology of Modern Dying* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 8–30.

death," to use Kellehear's expression.[20] An equally important aspect of death work is to ensure the emotional well-being of the dying person, which is predicated on family care and social embeddedness.[21] Standard medicine limits the cause of death to medically recognizable health crises; however, from a more holistic point of view, culturally and medically speaking, loneliness and feelings of abandonment can also be considered an illness, which leads to physical deterioration [22] Consequently, one of the major issues faced by migrants in their efforts of death kin work is how to physically tame their kin's death without their emotional welfare being upset.

Most of my migrant interlocutors were in a fortunate situation of having other family members in Poland who could provide care for their dying kin. This allowed them to contribute financially, connect through calls, and provide hands-on care during visits. Death kin work here was the cumulative effort of an entire transnational family. Migrants may have still been accused of not doing enough when contributing, or they may have felt guilty that they could have done more, but at least they were able to avoid falling back on long-term institutional help, which in Poland continues to be stigmatized[23] and used sparingly, despite the medicalization of death (only 7.9 percent of Poles died in hospices or elderly care facilities in 2016).[24] They also had the assurance that their parents were not alone in case of an emergency. For instance, when Alina became sick and was hospitalized, her son called her and her doctor to monitor her situation daily. He also wanted to come personally, but Alina told him to wait for his scheduled visit, as she felt she already had enough support in Poland. When Krzysztof and Magda came, they took care of Alina. "I was moved to tears," Alina said. The importance of such caring practices notwithstanding, the local presence of a tight-knit family releases migrants from the responsibility of returning and fully engaging in death work.

For those few of my migrant interlocutors who did not have kinship support in Poland, either due to small families, migration, or estrangement between other siblings and elderly parents, the situation was more difficult. They had to face the dilemma of how to address their parents' impending death without the support of kin, while also being aware that their parents found institutional help deplorable. There were at least two solutions with divergent consequences; neither were ideal, but they both illuminated the moral dilemmas surrounding death work at a distance.

20 Kellehear, 147–168.
21 Agata Maksymowicz, "Jakość życia z ciężkimi chorobami przewlekłymi i terminalnymi oraz jakość umierania w Polsce z perspektywy badań socjologicznych – dyskusja wokół literatury przedmiotowej," *Studia Humanistyczne AGH*, 11, no. 4 (2012): 223–229.
22 Jolanta Twardowska-Rajewska (ed.), *Przeciw samotności* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM, 2005).
23 This perception is strengthened by the media, which tends to stress the failures of such facilities.
24 Piotr Szukalski, "Gdzie umierają Polacy?", *Demografia i Gerontologia Społeczna – Biuletyn Informacyjny*, 10 (2016): 1–4.

The first scenario included placing parents in a nursing facility, despite their reluctance, which also meant making a concession to sharing everyday death work with professional staff. This happened among my interlocutors in only one case. Aleksandra, a devoted Catholic, was faced with her mother's gradual decline; she required 24-hour care after a stroke. Although Aleksandra's brother lived in Poland, he constantly traveled for work. Thus, they agreed to place their mother in a nursing home, which was paid for by Aleksandra. Although she struggled in order to keep her mother alive, Aleksandra was aware that her mother was dying. She told me: "I know that my mother is old and scared and needs help, and my moral obligation – an obligation of a child towards an old parent – is to guide her to the other side." Aleksandra was aware that her mother wanted to be at home, but Aleksandra felt that this was impossible: "She cannot live by herself. Somebody needs to watch over her." At the same time, Aleksandra's defensive tone of voice and argumentation suggested that she was torn. In Poland, nursing homes are often considered places where people wait for death, abandoned by their kin. [25] They are "waiting rooms for death," to use the expression of my two interlocutors. This imaginary would imply that Aleksandra was waiting for her mother's death and wanted to distance herself from it by the institutionalization of her care. Aleksandra told me emphatically that it was a high-quality center and that she remained in control by staying in frequent contact with the supervisor, by calling and visiting her mother at least monthly, and by having other kin visit as well. Aleksandra also underlined that her mother was rehabilitated in the facility; thus, she foregrounded her role in helping her mother get better, rather than merely surrendering to her death. The fact that in Finland nursing homes are an acceptable place for living/dying, as many of my interlocutors observed, seemed to enhance and not decrease Aleksandra's need for moral self-defense. For many of my migrant interlocutors, the "Polish ways" of familism were better, but the same people usually did not have to make tough choices, as they had other kin involved in their relatives' care.

The second scenario, pursued by several of my interlocutors, was not to pressure parents into anything and to support them as much as possible in living alone. This scenario was implementable in practice if the parents were able to "self-manage" their health[26] at least partially or, speaking from the perspective of death, do their death work by themselves. Thus, it was presumably not an option for Aleksandra and her dependent mother. In such cases, migrants' death kin work included monitoring of the parents' own self-management practices (checking via phone whether they took their medicine, for instance) and providing help during visits. It also usually included part-time external help. Although this scenario released my interlocutors from the shame of working against their parents' will and the cultural stigma of involving an institution, it also carried risks and anxieties of its own.

25 Anna Wiatr, *Pomiędzy życiem a śmiercią: Opowieść o tożsamości i umieraniu* (Kraków: Nomos, 2013), 9–13, 111–142.
26 Price and Cheek, 399–400.

One of my interlocutors, Adam, an only child, decided to support his mother's independent living. After she broke her hand, which he considered the first sign of her progressing fragility, he suggested that she stay in a nursing facility, at least until she recovered. "I even found a very good, nice, and clean place run by nuns," he said. However, Adam recalled, "When I only mentioned it, she reacted so badly that I instantly regretted it. She is scared. An old people's home is something horrible for her." Consequently, he brought his mother to Finland, but soon she insisted on returning. Consequently, he decided "not to force" his mother into anything, "because she has to spend her last years as she wants to." When we talked, Adam was faced with an emotionally unsettling and uncertain future. "I call my mom twice per day, mostly to check up on her and see whether she has taken her medication." Adam hoped that if the situation got critical, he would be able to find help, but his mother refused to have strangers in her home.

In the Polish context of medicalized yet family-embedded death, where death has to have its causes and can be considered premature (as Bauman argues, nowadays "one does not just die," but dies of something; death is inevitable yet in its individual case, contingent),[27] Adam risked failing to manage his mother's health well, thereby potentially contributing to her lonely – and possibly avoidable – death. This is one of the paradoxes of the professionalization of dying. It creates an expectation of trying, and it posits the medical extension of life as the most rational one, obscuring the dilemma (such as seen in Adam's case) of what is less harmful: to place somebody in a facility, even against their own will, disregarding their agency in deciding about their own life, or to let them be, even if transnational care could never substitute for 24-hour care. The result is a sense of anxiety and guilt on the part of the transnational caregiver, as no solution is fully satisfactory. The guilt is exacerbated if parents eventually die alone. A negative example is provided by Wladyslaw, whose father, refusing to move out, collapsed at home and was found by neighbors too late for him to recover. Wladyslaw explained: "My father died alone, on the floor. Damn. Because there was nobody around to help him. Actually, he didn't die immediately. He was taken to the hospital where he regained consciousness, but after three days he lost it. […] Two weeks later he passed away." Wladyslaw's suggestion that there could have been somebody around to help his father implies that he felt partially to blame for his father's demise, rather than merely his father's old age or even his father's decision to remain at home. Wladyslaw's absence contributed to a shameful and untamed death that he could not atone for. His words echo the words of another of my interlocutors, whose mother died alone at home and who acknowledged that his main feeling about her death was guilt.

The painful aspect of the narrative above is that migrants without local kinship support often engage in transnational death work intensively, yet may still appear to others – and also to themselves – as not fulfilling their caregiving roles as well as those who have better local care structures in place. Thus, the guilt is not related so much to the amount of sheer transnational

27 Bauman, 138.

death work performed but to the way in which it is embedded and rests on the readiness of other kin to help. In other words, it is easier for migrants to perform well during pivotal moments of death if they have kin who are able to take the lead at other times.

Timing of death and final closure

Death kin work implies that dying does not just happen, but demands that a set of tasks be met. While the migrants' presence at the final stage is not necessary to ensure that their loved ones die well, they should nonetheless ascertain that the dying have support. At the same time, from the perspective of a particular relationship, a good death demands closure, which confirms affection and addresses unresolved issues. Consequently, closure is one of the vital parts of death kin work, not only in Polish, but also in a larger Euro-American context.[28] For the achievement of closure, the timing of death is crucial. On one hand, many of my interlocutors believed that their dying kin were able or should have been able to wait until they came to say goodbye. In this context, waiting appeared as a death-work obligation for which the dying themselves were responsible. When the dying did manage to "wait" for my interlocutors – as happened in several cases – it seemed to confirm their relationship's special status; the affective power of kinship defied not only distance, but also delayed death. When the dying failed to wait, the failure seemed to be theirs, but the survivors' guilt came from their inability to show up in time. This suggests that "waiting" is a feasible idea only if it is matched by the survivors' ability to do their part in the achievement of closure, such as arriving on time, regardless of the obstacles imposed by transnational space. A good example of contrasting experiences was given by Mariusz, whose parents died several years before. Mariusz had never gotten along with his father, but he was close with his mother. Yet, it was his father who had waited for him on his deathbed, while his mother had not. He was on his way to Poland when she died. Mariusz recalled:

> I never got along with my father. But I'm glad that when my father was dying I went to see him and I got to hold his hand. I did not manage to see my mom before she died, though. I was on my way when she died and somehow I cannot come to terms with that. I got along well with my mum; it was good between us, but I still have a bad taste that I was late, that she did not wait for me. It still weighs heavily on me. Whereas the fact that I was with my dad when he died, that I held his hand, meant a lot. I somehow felt that we finally understood each other. That he understood that I loved him. Because he always had an opinion that nobody loved him, that I did not love him. So, it was something very special for me that I could be with him when he died.

Mariusz points to the healing aspect of closure and the lasting pain of its lack. His statement that his mother did not wait for him does not seem to be a mere figure of speech, but arguably reflects Mariusz's (and other interlocutors')

28 Green; Kellehear.

belief that the dying have the ability, even if a tenuous one, to time their death, especially when the closure of a loved relationship is at stake. At the same time, though, Mariusz assumed responsibility for his "bad" timing and his inability to match his mothers' pace of death. Migration looms large here, given that distance is conducive to guilt or moral and emotional fulfilment. When closure does not happen, the whole history of the relationship is at stake, and it is difficult (or impossible) to blame the dying party solely, while migration also is not a sufficient factor to excuse the migrant survivor for not showing up.

In the case of prolonged dying, however, it is not only about the individual's agency and ability to time death; professional care plays its part, too. According to Polish national statistics, while most of the dying trajectory happens at home, approximately 51 percent of Polish people die in the hospital.[29] I would argue that hospitalization creates the sense of a dire health crisis and facilitates an explicit recognition of dying as dying proper. Thus, it may prompt people to come urgently for what could be the final reunion, but it also potentially gives them more time to do so, given that the hospital's aim is to manage and tame death.[30] One of the most evocative examples of the above comes from Dorota. Dorota's mother was chronically ill for years but suddenly got worse. I asked Dorota, "How did you feel in that situation, being far away?" Together with her husband, she responded:

> Dorota: It was difficult… but we supervised (*myśmy nadzorowali*) everything from here [Finland], so to speak, because Radek arranged the hospital for my mother through his friend. Because they didn't want to admit her anywhere, at this age, immobile, a cancer survivor. They didn't want to admit her anywhere.
> Radek: I called my friend […] and he arranged that they quickly admit her, because otherwise they didn't want to do it. We had a trip to London to visit our son planned. [Dorota's] mother was still alive back then but she was sick already. Dorota flew from London to Poland and her mother died on the same day.

As Dorota started to cry, we changed the topic. Her mother's death was clearly painful to her, but as she suggested, hospitalization and professional support gave her a sense of being in control of her mother's death. The fact that she managed to see her before she died, I would argue, enhanced this feeling. Failure to do so would have probably generated a different narrative; it probably would have caused guilt that the death work she performed via the hospital ended up being insufficient for a final reunion to occur. In other words, the taming of death would not have produced proper timing from the perspective of closure. The above also shows that if closure is left solely to perfect timing, regardless of how much individual agency or professional skill is involved in shaping it, there is a chance that it will not happen. Closure can also be prevented by structural obstacles common to transnational space (e.g., a lack of airline tickets) or the sense that the dying has one more day to live and this turns out not to be the case. Only an open dialogue about death and a conscious farewell done in advance can obviate lack of closure.

29   GUS 2012.
30   Wiatr, 69.

However, this path was reported by only one of my interlocutors, Tomek, although even here death was revealed belatedly.

When Tomek's mother was diagnosed with terminal cancer, she kept it a secret from everybody, Tomek included, for a year. "She visited us here [in Finland] and even then she didn't tell us," Tomek said quietly. Finally, she sent him a letter in which she told him she wanted to say goodbye "before it would be too late." Tomek went to Poland and stayed with his mother for a while. She died one month later. Tomek was upset that she did not disclose her illness earlier, but he was grateful that she finally did, thereby allowing him to act rather than unwittingly stand by.

Tomek's case illustrates another challenge in the achievement of closure, when dying remains hidden from migrants because they are left in the dark on purpose. At least three of my migrant interlocutors were not told that their close kin in Poland were dying of terminal illness, even though the rest of the family was aware of it. This act of hiding was exemplary of the emotional work of protection through concealment[31] aimed at protecting people from their own emotional responses to death, which were presumed to be more complicated to address due to transnational separation and also enhanced by the migrants' difficult situations. The migrants' emotionally vulnerable positions notwithstanding, concealment is the provenance of a larger modern trend of "inventive affectivity," as Ariès put it,[32] which hides the knowledge of terminal illness from the dying themselves. It is a striking example of treating death as a toxic state, rather than as a natural human destiny, with its existence being denied so as not to undermine people's emotional well-being. From this perspective, one could consider transnational death kin work to be an unwanted challenge for migrants. Yet, the effect of death concealment is contrary to its intention. Although it may protect migrants temporarily, it leaves a sense of unfinished relationships, exacerbating pain rather than diminishing it. It doubles the distance, adding an (unwanted) distance caused by death to the existing spatial remove. The lie poisons death.[33] It also upsets transnational living. "They should have told me," was the concluding statement of Jan, whose family hid his mother's illness from him.

Biological death and the funeral

Until now I have described events which culminate in biological death. The final farewell is the funeral. The funeral embodies people's resistance to accept the self-contained nature of biological death, and it prolongs the transition from the living to the dead.[34] It is a crucial element of death kin work, which sets the cultural stage for the conclusion of the biological death. Without a funeral, the departed are not fully dead. From a transnational

31 Matyska, 164–168.
32 Ariès, 612.
33 Ibid.
34 Robben, 8.

perspective, the funeral gives migrants an opportunity to participate in their kin's death, taking it to a perfect end. It can make up for failures during the dying stage, but it can also create new reasons for guilt.

In the funeral context, death consists of organizing and/or attending the funeral, whereas in the case of prolonged dying, death kin work is the effect of the reciprocal agency of the dying and the survivors; when people die, the weight of the agency falls on the survivors. First, it is related to their ability to interpret and realize the dead person's wishes regarding their burial, including where and how they would like to be buried. Polish funerals are still fairly homogenous in style, with around 90 percent of funerals being Catholic, but there is an increasing space for difference around the question of the burial of the body versus cremation.[35] Making decisions on the behalf of the departed means allowing the departed to fulfill themselves as members of particular cultural communities and setting them up for a possible transcendental future. It can also serve as ultimate testimony to the intimacy and importance of the relationship, which does not demand immediate physical presence. This is illustrated by the experience of my interlocutor Nina, whose cousin died unexpectedly of an epileptic attack. A few weeks later, she was still reliving his death. "People usually don't die because of epilepsy," she told me. "One night he just fell asleep on his stomach and suffocated, while my aunt [the cousin's mother] slept in the next room. […] Pawel was my closest kin. When we visited Poland the last time, at the grill party, Pawel told me he wanted to lay next to his father. I remember it very well. And he died shortly after it… My aunt called me asking if should we bury [his body] or cremate him. I said, 'If he wanted to lay next to his father, we better cremate him.'" I asked Nina why her aunt had called her, and she answered: "Because she knows she can count on me and she didn't want to make such decisions alone. She wasn't able to. She wanted somebody else to do it for her." From our previous conversations, I knew that as an only child, Nina treated her cousin like a brother and her aunt like a second mother. The events surrounding Pawel's death confirmed the intimacy of their relationship and Nina's continuous inclusion in the family circle. Nina was saddened by his death but also elevated by the trust granted to her by her cousin, who had revealed his postmortem desires to her, and by her aunt, who had included her in the funeral arrangements, despite her physical absence. Three days later, Nina flew to Poland to attend her cousin's funeral.

Funeral attendance gives survivors the possibility to complete the final step of the mortuary farewell and see the departed for the last time. All of my interlocutors experienced emotional and moral pressure to attend the funeral of their closest kin at least. "Too many deaths happen to attend all the funerals," one of my interlocutors told me. Transnational separation means that it is not always possible to attend. The obstacles are financial and, much as in the context of closure, due to timing. People in Poland are

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35 Anna Kubiak, "Kultura pochówku w Polsce", in Jan Hartman and Marta Szabat (eds.), *Problematyka umierania i śmierci w perspektywie medyczno-kulturowej* (Warszawa: Wolters Kluwer SA, 2016), 35–48.

usually buried within three days of their biological death,[36] and this ritual remains unchanged, despite the increasing diversity of mortuary rituals there. I discussed this three-day rule with my migrant interlocutors; from a transnational perspective, compared to Finland where the funeral takes place up to several weeks after death, three days seems fairly quick. My interlocutors acknowledged that more time allows for better preparation and, accordingly, being able to have more people present for the funeral. However, they also suggested (following Polish tradition) that a funeral is something that should take precedence over other events, something for which one should simply drop everything and go. If the dying are thought of as being able to wait, the dead, as it is culturally believed, should not wait any longer. Consequently, when my interlocutors managed to overcome distance, despite limited time and in spite of various practical and material challenges, they appeared victorious vis-à-vis a fairly demanding (as least from the transnational or Finnish perspective) Polish mortuary tradition. It encouraged them to take an affirmative approach to transnational living and to celebrate their own agency as transnational family members, thereby giving the funeral an enhanced moral significance. Considering that Polish funerals are relatively modest and their organization is not very expensive, travel to the funeral emerged as the biggest financial and practical hurdle for my migrant interlocutors to overcome. For instance, Bronislaw, one of my older interlocutors, told me with a sense of pride how he managed to attend his father's funeral despite the Cold War political divisions in the 1970s that discouraged transnational travel. Bronislaw recalled:

> In Poland, people are buried very quickly. So, after I got a telegram that my dad had died, I quickly bought a ticket to Warsaw with all my savings. […] There was still an obligatory currency exchange, but because I spent my savings on the ticket I had no money left to exchange. I thought to myself: "Maybe the immigration control will let me through anyhow." But once I arrived at the Warsaw airport they didn't want to let me out. I didn't exchange currency; I had no money. They told me: "Well, in that case you'll have to return to Helsinki on the next plane." But I knew my cousin was waiting for me in the arrivals hall, so I told the guard, "Please sir, I can't return. I came for my father's funeral. If you let me out for a second, I'll get legal dollars from my cousin, who's waiting for me[…]." The guard said, "No, you can't go through." Finally, though, my begging moved one of the guards. […] They gave me an escort of two soldiers, whom I went out to the arrivals hall with. I got the dollars and we went back. I made the exchange and only then could I go to my dad's funeral.

Although nowadays travel to Poland has become far less complicated, due to open borders and technological advances, funerals still demand setting everything aside and traveling long distances with pressures of time. In such travel, the liminality of the departed, whose status lingers in-between the dead and the living,[37] is paralleled with the liminality of the traveling

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36 While exceptions happen, they rarely exceed several days.

37 Van Gennep; Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, [1974] 1987).

kin, who cross the space of transnational in-betweenness to attend the funeral. This parallel liminality is symbolically enhanced when migrants come across unexpected difficulties in their journey, which give them the sense of being stuck, unable to move faster or to move at all. For two of my interlocutors, getting stuck resulted in their failure to attend the funeral. These cases are worth discussing in more detail because they reflect well the interconnectedness between the different stages of death kin work and the importance of the funeral's timing, and they evocatively illuminate the concurrent liminality of travel and death. The first one regards Henryk, whose father was in the last stage of cancer when he came to Poland for his regular summer visit. Henryk recalled:

> When I arrived [in Poland], he was already in a critical state. He was weak and falling off his feet. He could not manage anymore. They wanted to take him to the military hospital […], but the conditions there were horrible. Thus, […] I helped to arrange for him to stay at a small hospital where he got to have his own room, where it was clean and comfortable. So, these last two weeks were good for him at least, because it was impossible [to take care of him] at home anymore. And a strange thing happened, because on Thursday I was still with him, helping with his MRI […]. I took him back to the room. Because, of course, there was a shortage of nurses, there was nobody to take him, so I came to help and then I saw him on Friday. In the evening I went to Warsaw […] and on Saturday morning I caught a plane to Helsinki. I departed around 10 am and arrived at 11 am. I turned my phone on and I got the message from my niece that my dad had died at 10 am. So there I was, barely back. I started to wonder how I should go back. I asked around for the ticket prices. Only business class was left, extremely expensive. I could not afford it. I called my mom. She told me, "Listen, Henryk, don't come. We'll manage to organize the funeral without you. Anyhow, you were with dad until the end. He died just after you had left." Of course, when I was leaving, I said goodbye to him. He was already very weak but we kissed and I said, "Bye, dad." So [my mom said] that I was all right […]. Because everything with the funeral happens very fast in Poland and I had little time, only three days, finally, I didn't go.

As visible from the quote above, being absent from the funeral can generate a sense of anxiety and remorse, as often happens when ritual is not fulfilled,[38] but its moral and emotional weight can be played down when other aspects of phased transition are met, meaning that distance becomes a legitimate excuse for failing to attend a funeral. Henryk stressed his role in the final moments of his father's life and suggested that, despite failing to attend the funeral, he did not leave things unfinished; his mother confirmed this, thereby alleviating Henryk's remorse. Things can look differently, however, if the stages preceding death are more troublesome and the family is less forthcoming in the granting of moral atonement. This was the case for Wladyslaw, whose father collapsed and was found too late to be saved. Wladyslaw still managed to see his father in the hospital, but he went back

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38 Renato Rosaldo, "Grief and Headhunter's Rage," in *Death, Mourning, and Burial: A Cross-Cultural Reader, ed.* Antonius C. G. M *Robben (*Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2004).

to Finland before his father died. Wladyslaw failed to return again, in order to attend the funeral, to his own and his brother's disappointment:

> When I was leaving, he was unconscious. I had to return [to Finland] because of work. Two weeks later, he passed away. I didn't even go to the funeral. I was here alone. The funeral was there. I didn't know anything, who, how, what [was going on]… At some point, my brother told me: "I will never, ever forgive you for not coming. How could you?" But I was unable to come. I was just unable. It was right before May 1; he died on April 30. And in Finland it was already a holiday; all the shops were closed. There was no possibility to buy either a plane ticket or a green card [for the car]. If I would have had a green card, I would have gone by car. So, I was trapped. This is precisely "the charm" of [being] abroad. When you are there, you are there. And this way, a fat lot of good you are.

Wladyslaw's words indicate the extent to which death without funeral attendance can appear as an incomplete and unprocessed death. To know and to see the body's final state is important to close the earthly stage of the relationship. It also helps the mourning process,[39] and in the long run it contributes to the positive evaluation of one's choice to migrate.

Concluding remarks

As I have argued, Polish transnational families are concerned not just with the "livable present" and reconnecting for the sake of keeping the relationship with their family going. They are also concerned with reconnecting for the sake of concluding relationships and helping transnational kin die well, through practices which I refer to as transnational death kin work. In the contemporary Polish transnational context, death kin work involves attempts at taming and timing death, and it culminates in the funeral as the final moment of life-to-death transition. Through transnational death kin work, the living and dying trajectories of transnational family members become intertwined. Despite living at a distance, migrants are able to weigh in on how long their kin should live and in what way they should die. At the same time, their decisions and actions have considerable moral and affective repercussions for the migrants themselves, constituting the basis for lasting emotional impressions, memories, and moral self-judgment. The above is presupposed by the fact that death, although inevitable in terms of the human body's biological failure, is also a cultural process influenced by culturally driven individuals – agents who negotiate, rather than surrender to, forces apparently beyond their control.[40] That is not to say that these individuals are always successful.

I have shown that Polish transnational families can "do" death, but there are limits to what they can or desire to do. My migrant interlocutors did not always succeed in meeting all the aspects of transnational death kin work,

39 See, for example, Gardner.
40 Sherry B. Ortner, *Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power, and the Acting Subject* (Duke University Press: Durham and London, 2006).

as prescribed by the cultural norms of Polish Catholicism, familism, and contemporary medical standards. Death kin work was easier if migrants had supportive kinship networks at home and if death was preceded by medically recognized symptoms and openly discussed. But even then, the very moment of death could come unpredictably, being untamed and ill-timed, impeding the possibility of achieving closure through funeral attendance and a final farewell. My interlocutors widely indicated that the agency of their dying kin also had an impact, sometimes going against the migrants' desires.

Death researchers argue that the contemporary model of the well-managed and tamed death is more of an ideal than a reality for most of the dying people around the globe.[41] But this also has consequences for those aiming to support their kin in the transition. For my interlocutors, a failure to live up to the ideal generated guilt and left the emotional weight of the relationships unresolved. However, the ability to ensure kin with a good death helped to normalize transnational separation.

From the nationalist perspective of bounded nation-states, transnational families are a moral aberration. Separation figures as a context of family disintegration and disorganization.[42] My study suggests that when death kin work is performed well, it can attest to the families' ability to maintain and conclude transnational relationships and not only to break them, as the transnational detractors would like to suggest. More research is needed which would investigate what conditions facilitate or challenge successful transnational death kin work and what the latter entails in different cultural contexts. This would especially include the question on how the contemporary processes of death institutionalization and sequestration resonate with contemporary transnationalism. As the first analytical step, however, transnational family living has to be acknowledged as the life lived in the shadow of death, past, present and impending.

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41 Kellehear; Robinson.
42 Matyska.

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Josiane Le Gall and Lilyane Rachédi

The emotional costs of being unable to attend the funeral of a relative in one's country of origin

Two years after his arrival in Montreal, Faisal received a phone call from his sister in Senegal announcing the death of their father. He promptly posted the news on Facebook to inform his family members and friends living in the United States and Europe. He also sent emails and communicated widely via Skype. Within a matter of a few hours, many had already reached out to him and offered their condolences for his loss. With their support, and the generous support of the Senegalese community in Montreal, a significant sum of money was raised and sent to Senegal to help the family with the funeral arrangements. By maintaining frequent contact with his mother and his siblings living in Senegal, Faisal was able to actively participate in the preparations for the ceremony. Although Faisal had a keen desire to be with his loved ones for his father's funeral, he could not attend, as he was scared of losing his job if he was absent for too long. Moreover, his mother advised against him coming, as he would have missed the ceremonial burial, which according to traditional Muslim practice is celebrated shortly after death. The pain of the loss of his father was accentuated by the fact that he had been unable to be by his side in his last moments and that he could not be present for the funeral. Faisal was very attached to his father, and he had not seen him since leaving Senegal for Montreal.

Faisal's example clearly demonstrates how migrants, as a result of rapidly developing and new communications technologies, are increasingly able to actively participate in the planning, financing, and administration of funeral ceremonies in their country of origin.[1] At the same time, as shared by several migrants, it highlights the need for physical co-presence in times of crisis. Attending rituals from afar is not a deliberate decision. Rather, it appears as a creative way to overcome the geographical distance. As Ryan et al. indicate, physical co-presence is far from possible for all migrants.[2]

1   Valentina Mazzucato, Mirjam Kabbi, and Lothar Smith, "Transnational Migration and the Economy of Funerals: Changing Practices in Ghana." *Development and Change* 37, no. 5 (2006): 1047–1072.
2   Louise Ryan, Amanda Klekowski Von Koppenfels, and Jon Mulholland, "The Distance between Us: A Comparative Examination of the Technical, Spatial and Temporal Dimensions of the Transnational Social Relationships of Highly Skilled Migrants," *Global Networks* 15, no. 2 (2015): 198–216.

Despite better and more popular accessibility to travel, migrants who want to travel may face many constraints. Is transnational communication sufficient in times of crisis? What does it mean for migrants to be unable to accompany a loved one during their last days or be physically present at their funeral? What are the emotional costs?

In this chapter, we explore the limits of virtual co-presence when a loved one is nearing the end of their life, as well as afterwards. Our interviews with bereaved migrants who have settled in Quebec and lost a relative in their home country reveal that much of the virtual contact made with the dying person and the family does not easily replace face-to-face presence. Having to endure this difficult period far from loved ones entails various emotional costs. Such costs take several forms and stem from both the arduousness of receiving support from a distance and providing support to loved ones abroad.

Death in the country of origin: Multiple-location events

While globalization has facilitated the geographic dispersion of families around the world, long-distance communication has become more accessible and less costly. The development of mobile telephone services and internet communication platforms has changed the ways of "being together" and made way for new modes of co-presence for families separated by distance.[3] The end of life, death, burial rituals, and mourning appear to be significant occasions for inducing exchange and generating the movement of capital, goods, and individuals across national borders.[4] Health problems or the death of family members dispersed around the world often lead to an intensification of phone calls, emails, or contact through social media. Digital technologies, particularly webcams, can facilitate visual interaction with the dying person anywhere in the world. They can also be used by migrants to virtually participate in the funeral ceremonies that follow death. And in addition to encouraging virtual co-presence, the internet can provide access to information, especially regarding the legal obligations surrounding

3   Andoni Alonso and Pedro Oiarzabal, *Diasporas in the New Media Age: Identity, Politics, and Community* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2015); Loretta Baldassar, Mihaela Nedelcu, Laura Merla, and Raelene Wilding, "ICT-based Co-Presence in Transnational Families and Communities: Challenging the Premise of Face-to-face Proximity in Sustaining Relationships" in *Global Networks,* 16, 1 (2016): 133–144; Mirca Madianou, "Ambiant Co-presence: Transnational Family Practices in Polymedia Environments" in *Global Networks*, 16, 1 (2016): 183–201; Mihaela Nedelcu and Malika Wyss, "Doing Family Through ICT-mediated Ordinary Co- presence: Transnational Communication Practices of Romanian Migrants in Switzerland," *Global Networks,* 16, 2 (2016): 202–218.
4   Katy Gardner and Ralph Grillo, "Transnational Households and Rituals: an Overview," *Global Networks,* 2, 3 (2002): 179–90; Lilyane Rachédi, Josiane Le Gall, and Véronique Leduc, "Familles immigrantes au Québec, deuils et liens transnationaux: réflexions pour la pratique," *Lien social et politiques*, 64 (2010): 175–187.

death, funeral arrangements, and the conditions and cause of death, as well as financial costs.[5]

However, some recent studies have recognized that transnational connections are rarely considered a truly meaningful substitute for physical presence.[6] As John Urry maintains, despite the possibilities to stay connected through the use of new technologies, the need for physical contact retains precedence: "virtual and imaginative travel will not simply substitute for corporeal travel since intermittent co-presence appears obligatory for sustaining much social life."[7] The opportunities to see, hear, smell, touch, and physically interact with the dying person allows for a form of intimacy that is not attainable through long-distance communication. If some activities can be carried out easily at a distance (via telephone, etc.), others require a physical presence. Moreover, the limits imposed by distance become even more apparent in moments of crisis, when the need for physical contact is amplified.[8] Important occasions such as births, weddings, and funerals are "rites of passage," when the physical presence of family members is usually considered important.[9] As emphasized by Jennifer Mason, visits to the motherland are crucial for being there at "key moments," and they contribute to maintaining transnational family ties.[10] In addition to increasing exchanges beyond local borders, stages of the end of life and death often provoke a greater need for visits. The requisite need for physical presence is intensified in these critical moments, both to ensure care of the dying person and to offer emotional support, as these are not necessarily feasible from a distance. It is also a time when family members, including those who live far away, feel the need to be there for their own well-being.[11]

If the limits of intimacy or virtual co-presence are becoming more known,[12] less is known about the emotional costs associated with being far from loved ones during major life transition periods, such as weddings, the birth of a child, or the death of a loved one. In the last few years, scholars

5   Avril Maddrell, "Mapping Grief. A Conceptual Framework for Understanding the Spatial Dimensions of Bereavement, Mourning and Remembrance," *Social & Cultural Geography* 17, no. 2 (2016): 166–188.

6   Gonzalo Bacigalupe and Maria Camara, "Transnational Families and Social Technologies: Reassessing Immigration Psychology," *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies,* 38 (2012): 1425–1438; Josiane Le Gall, "La mort d'un proche au pays d'origine" in *Quand la mort frappe l'immigrant: défis et adaptations*, eds. Lilyane Rachédi and Beatrice Halsouet, 51–59 (Montreal: Presses Universitaires de Montreal, 2017); Ryan et al.

7   John Urry, "Mobility and Proximity," *Sociology,* 36, 2 (2001): 258.

8   Annick Masselot, "Highly Skilled Migrants and Transnational Care Practices: Balancing Work, Life and Crisis over Large Geographical Distances," *Canterbury Law Review,* 17, 2 (2011): 299–315.

9   Arnold Van Gennep, *Les rites de passage* (Paris: Picard, 1981 [1909]).

10 Jennifer Mason, "Managing Kinship over Long Distances: the Significance of the Visit." *Social Policy & Society*, 3, 4 (2004): 421–429.

11 Loretta Baldassar, "Guilty Feelings and the Guilt Trip: Emotions and Motivation in Migration and Transnational Caregiving." *Emotion, Space and Society*, 16 (2015): 81–89.

12 Bacigalupe and Camara.

have begun to address the emotional implications of mobility.[13] Exploring the role of emotions moves scholarship away from traditional studies on purely economic factors as the means of explaining the mobility of individuals.[14] We adopt Maruska Svasek's broad definition of emotions as "processes in which individuals experience, shape and interpret the world around them, anticipate future action and shape their subjectivities."[15] According to Zlatko Skrbis, emotions are a fundamental part of transnational families' experiences, and several aspects of migrants' lives can lead to negative emotions, such as anxiety, stress, sadness, and frustration.[16] The feeling of guilt triggered by geographical distance and physical absence is another emotion considered to be an integral part of the migration process.[17] Loretta Baldassar argues that the physical separation and absence that come with migration contribute to the migrants' feelings of guilt for not fulfilling their moral duty of being present.[18] It is this feeling of guilt which she believes would explain why migrants often continue to participate in the care of their elderly parents in their country of origin. Coupled with a multitude of other negative emotions, these feelings of guilt are particularly pronounced on some occasions, especially when there is a birth or, as we illustrate in this chapter, a death.

Our observations stem from data collected as part of research conducted from 2013 to 2015 on the bereavement of Quebec immigrants, specifically those who have experienced the loss of a loved one in their country of origin.[19] The main objectives of this research were to understand their experiences of mourning, the role of social networks (and, in particular, transnational networks) in this process, and the meanings and transformations of traditional ritual practices associated with death and

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13 Loretta Baldassar, "Ce 'sentiment de culpabilité': Réflexion sur la relation entre émotions et motivation dans les migrations et le soin transnational." *Recherches sociologiques et anthropologiques*, XLI, 1 (2010): 15–37; Loretta Baldassar, "Guilty Feelings and the Guilt Trip: Emotions and Motivation in Migration and Transnational Caregiving." *Emotion, Space and Society*, 16 (2015): 81–89; David Conradson and Deirdre McKay, "Translocal Subjectivities: Mobility, Connection, Emotion." *Mobilities*, 2, 2 (2007): 167–174; Nicola Mai and Russel King, "Love, Sexuality and Migration: Mapping the Issue(s)." *Mobilities*, 4, 3 (2009): 295–307; Maruska Svasek, "Who Cares? Families and Feelings in Movement." *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 29, 3 (2008): 213–230.

14 Paola Boccagni and Loretta Baldassar, "Emotions on the Move: Mapping the Emergent Field of Emotion and Migration." *Emotion, Space and Society*, 16 (2015): 73–80.

15 Maruska, 218.

16 Zlatko Skrbis, "Transnational Families: Theorizing Migration, Emotions and Belonging," *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 29, 3 (2008): 231–246.

17 Baldassar 2010; Maruska Svasek, "Who Cares? Families and Feelings in Movement" in *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 29, 3 (2008): 213–230.

18 Baldassar 2010.

19 This research, entitled "Deuil des immigrants au Québec: pratiques rituelles funéraires et réseaux transnationaux," was conducted by Lilyane Rachédi, Catherine Montgomery, Josiane Le Gall, Suzanne Mongeau, Mathieu Boisvert, and Michèle Vatz Laaroussi under the coordination of Béatrice Halsouet. It received funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC).

bereavement. Individual interviews were conducted with immigrants of Muslim, Christian, and Hindu faith from diverse origins, who experienced the death of a relative or loved one who passed away in their country of origin (16) or in the host country (5). The participants included men (10) and women (11) of different ages and from various countries of origin, such as Africa (Egypt, Guinea, Morocco, and Senegal), South America (Colombia and Mexico), Asia (Bhutan, India, and Pakistan), and Eastern Europe (Bosnia). The death of the loved one ranged between six months to five years before the interview. The participants were almost all residents of Montreal, including the large metropolitan area and its surrounding sectors. The city of Montreal is known for its religious diversity and for welcoming the largest number of immigrants in the province of Quebec. Respondents were invited to speak openly about experiencing their loved one's death and the bereavement process. The following analysis focuses on the stories of participants whose relative or loved one had died in the country of origin.

Transnational rituals

Beliefs surrounding the conception of death, which have a significant influence on all aspects of funeral rituals, vary greatly from one place to another. Despite these differences, all of the 16 interviewees who lost a loved one while abroad considered their participation in the funeral and burial rites as an obligation. However, only two were able to return to their home country in time for the funeral. Three of the participants arrived the following day, and 11 remained in Quebec. In all of the cases, participants spoke of networks outside the boundaries of the local society, fostered via technologies such as Facebook, Skype, and telephone calls made through prepaid cards and on mobile phones. Telephone communication was almost always used to announce the death and to manage the decisions surrounding the funeral arrangements. The migrants were often informed over time about the preparations for the funeral, and as was the case with Faisal (cited above), they participated in the financing and organization of the rituals. When it was not possible to directly assist with the funeral, participants reported taking part in the rituals by telephone. In such cases, relatives related the events that were unfolding during the ceremony, described the atmosphere, or listed the attendees. For example, upon the death of his mother in Mexico, Salvador maintained continuous contact by mobile phone and Skype with his father and other family members. These new modes of interacting permitted him to follow along as they conducted their traditional rituals: the vigil of the body at home, the lighting of candles, prayers and recitation of the rosary, the celebration of Mass, and the family meal in the evening. Friends who came from outside the country also offered their condolences.

In some rare cases, the ceremony can be followed by videoconferencing. With Skype, calls can be made via the internet. Migrants can have audio-visual conversations with their relatives in their home country, and they can see live what is taking place. For instance, Jacinta, a woman of Mexican origin, recounted how she was virtually present via Skype at her father's

funeral: "I was in contact during Mass, the burial, and the prayers. My sister and a cousin helped me with Skype. I would also call and I heard everything. There were a lot of people. I wouldn't talk. I would just accompany them via the internet." That being said, the funerals were never recorded and saved to immortalize the ritual.

For our interviewees, interactions at a distance from the family in the home country or elsewhere in the world became a source of invaluable moral support to help them get through this difficult time. They were in contact with family members who shared their grief, which allowed them to feel less alone and powerless in the face of their loss. The family proved a place of safety that could meet their emotional needs. For example, Jacinta received a sympathetic ear from her family to talk about her sorrow and anguish. When asked what gave her the greatest comfort when her father died, she answered without hesitation: "the support of my partner and the communication with my family."

The limits of virtual co-presence

The participants stated being satisfied overall with the ties they were able to preserve with their family and friends through the use of new technologies. However, their testimony demonstrated that virtual co-presence in no way completely replaces physical co-presence. Whatever their country of origin or religion, all of the participants who were unable to attend the funeral in their country of origin, as well as those who arrived too late (14 out of 16 participants), wished that they had been able to be physically present with their family for the funeral. However, as was the case with Faisal, they faced several restrictions that prevented them from traveling to their country of origin. For example, finding a last-minute plane ticket or obtaining a visa, especially for those with refugee status, often proved to be a time-consuming and difficult task. For example, if Salvador had left Canada for Mexico upon receiving the news of his father's death, he would have risked compromising his plan to relocate permanently in Canada. He had been in Canada for less than six months and did not have Canadian citizenship. Obtaining a visa is practically impossible for people who are refugees or for undocumented immigrants. When his father fell seriously ill, Nariman, a man of Iranian origin, was unable to make it back in time to his father's bedside. At that point, he possessed refugee status and could not obtain a visa in such short order. He arrived in Iran only after the burial of his father.

Moreover, the high cost of the trip prevented those with limited financial resources from traveling. Many also mentioned the difficulty of missing work for several consecutive days or the burden of family obligations, such as taking care of young children. Faisal shared some of the obstacles that made him decide not to travel to Senegal at the time of death of his father: "You cannot get up and leave like that, leave your work. There are always repercussions in the end. So, you have to have time off to go. [...] You must be prepared financially and psychologically." This was only a few months after he started working for a company in Montreal. Since it was his first job

in Quebec, he wanted to avoid losing it by taking more days off than what he was allowed.

In many cases, due to geographical distance, migrants do not have a good knowledge of the seriousness of the illness and the actual health status of their relatives. This prevents them from foreseeing an imminent death and finalizing preparations for a trip home in time. As illustrated by Baldassar, it is also not unusual for the family in the home country to conceal the prognosis of a seriously ill person, so as not to worry their relatives.[20] And sometimes the family informs them only after a person has died. Moreover, unless someone is suffering from a serious illness and shows signs of deteriorating health, death is usually sudden and often difficult to predict. Hence, it is necessary to act and make decisions quickly. As different beliefs and religions naturally have different ritual funeral and burial practices, some migrants may face further challenges. Some ritual practices amplify the urgency to visit the person in their home country. For example, such as with Faisal, Muslims are obliged to perform the burial ritual within 24 hours of death.

The death of a loved one transforms the lives of the bereaved. Given that the relationship to the deceased and the rest of the family, the cause of death, and other contextual factors can influence how loss is experienced,[21] it is no wonder that all interviewees reported dealing with great difficulty with the death of their loved one. They used words like "pain," "regret," and "powerlessness" while talking about their loss. In the quotations that follow, we get a glimpse of the emotional state they were in when they received the news of the death of a loved one.

> I slept… I slept a lot… I took medication to help me sleep. It helped me a lot in the beginning, in the first few days. Everyone told me it's like that, you cannot change anything, continue your life, you have to be strong… and I understand, but still, it hurts and the pain doesn't decrease easily. (Radica, migrant of Bosnian origin)

> I was listening to my voice messages on the bus. In the mailbox, I heard the voice of my sister, who told me, "Marietta, stay calm, Daddy is with the angels" […] I was on the bus, and I do not know if I screamed or if I said things. I dropped my cellphone. I realized afterwards that my bag was on the floor. And I was like that [in a state of shock]. (Marietta, migrant of Colombian origin)

These emotions, which are intrinsic to the process of mourning in many places around the world, although they may be expressed differently according to each individual's religion or culture, are particularly intense for people who live thousands of kilometers from their families and are unable to be physically present with them. Participating in transnational rituals may ease the grieving process by providing some comfort, but it does not remedy

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20 Loretta Baldassar, Cora Baldock, and Raelene Wilding, *Families Caring Across Borders: Migration, Ageing and Transnational Caregiving.* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

21 Maddrell 2016.

the fact of the geographical distance. Ignoring the physical separation was not possible for the interviewees. As we will see in the following pages, the various emotional difficulties experienced after the death of a loved one are amplified by a sense of failing to fulfill various obligations to the dying person or not being at their funeral. There is also the regret of not having received the same support that would have been given to them if they were in the presence of their family.

Being unable to physically attend rituals

All of the respondents, regardless of their country of origin, viewed their participation in funeral rituals as an unavoidable moral obligation. However, geographical distance and the inability to travel home prevented most of them from performing cultural or religious practices still deemed important to commemorate the deceased. Being unable to attend the funeral of their loved one left them with a sense of distress and dissatisfaction, which added to the already difficult mourning process. Slavica, a Bosnian immigrant, lost her father a few years ago, when she had been living in Quebec for only two years. As he was very old, his death was not unexpected. During a recent trip to Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slavica noticed him becoming more frail. With a certain sense of accomplishment, she shared that all the stages of the Christian funeral rites were followed strictly by her family in Bosnia at the time of death of her father:

> The body must be washed, groomed, shaved, and dressed. They bought new clothes to dress my dad. They bought a coffin. He stayed at home one night, so this was the place for the viewing. We guard the body all night and we pray for the soul of the deceased to rest in peace, etc. (Slavica, migrant of Bosnian origin)

Slavica was quick to add that she felt tremendous sadness at not being able to participate in this event, and she admitted that the geographic distance was a source of great suffering for her: "That complicates the process of mourning! I have not seen his body. So, I am grieving for something I have not seen, and it's very hard to imagine."

Work-related reasons prevented her from visiting her hometown at the time of the funeral. To this day, it is difficult for her to accept the death of her father: "This is a very significant loss! It hurts. For sure, my father was 90 years old when he died, but he's my dad. I love him and it's hard to imagine that he is no longer with us – in this world, I mean."

For Slavica and the other participants, being away means not being able to tangibly comprehend the death of a loved one, to visualize the loss. A similar feeling of dissatisfaction was reported by Narayan, a man of Bhutanese origin who came from Nepalese refugee camps. Narayan wished to attend the funeral of his uncle in India a few years ago, but it was not possible because he did not have a Canadian passport: "It was not possible, but normally if all the relatives are together, this is recommended [according to Hindu tradition]." Similarly, Nariman, the man of Iranian

origin mentioned above, could not be with his father in his dying days, though he had been able to make it to his sick mother's bedside in Iran a few years before. Being a part of the rituals was extremely helpful, and it helped him get through this difficult period. He explained that the words of the eulogist relieved some of his pain:

> We had a panegyrist who was singing and reading religious poems about death during the burial of my mother. I was extraordinarily sad, but I couldn't cry. But when he started his performance, I started crying and felt better. He helped me evacuate and drain my feelings, so after all that I felt more relieved. (Nariman, migrant of Iranian origin)

The testimonies by Slavica, Narayan, and Nariman bring to mind the "therapeutic" role[22] of rituals in the memory of the deceased as part of the mourning process, regardless of what form the ritual practice takes. They work to reassure and soothe the survivors by allowing them to express emotions and feelings that perhaps they would not express elsewhere. According to Jean-Luc Hétu, funerary rituals may facilitate the grieving process.[23] Louis-Vincent Thomas also maintains that such rites have a calming power and provide structure when one is facing an uncertain future.[24] The exhibition of the body, the funeral procession to the cemetery, and the closing of the coffin are examples of moments – found in different parts of the world – that allow survivors to become conscious of the reality of their loss and to express their pain.[25] On the contrary, depending on a person's beliefs and religion, not seeing the body of the deceased, for example, or not taking part in the funeral and burial rites may result in a complex bereavement process that is sometimes insurmountable.[26]

To reduce the pain associated with their absence at the funeral, some interviewees organized their own rituals in their host countries, with the result that Mass and prayers for the dead sometimes took place simultaneously at several places around the world. This was the case related by Shamser, of Bhutanese origin, who came from a refugee camp in Nepal five years ago. Shamser's family is scattered across the United States (where a brother and sister live), Nepal (home to four brothers), and Denmark (where another brother lives). Upon the death of the father in Nepal, many telephone conversations took place between the brothers and the sister in order to plan the funeral. Shamser, his sister, and his brothers in the United States and Europe mutually agreed to organize a religious ceremony that

22 Louis Vincent Thomas, "Le renouveau de la mort," in *Parlons de la mort et du deuil*, edited by Pierre Cornillot and Michel Hanus, 31–75 (Paris: Frison-Roche, 2000).

23 Jean-Luc Hétu, *Psychologie du mourir et du deuil*. (Sherbrooke: Editions du Meridien, 1989).

24 Louis-Vincent Thomas, *Rites de mort, pour la paix des vivants*. (Paris: Fayard, 1985).

25 Hétu 1989.

26 Jean-Hugues Deschaux, (dir.) *Les familles face à la mort* (Paris: L'esprit du temps, 1998.) Hanus, Michel. "Les deuils en famille aujourd'hui," in *Les familles face à la mort. Entre privatisation et resocialisation de la mort*, eds. by Jean-Hugues Déchaux, Frédéric Jésu and Michel Hanus. (Paris: L'Esprit du temps, 1998), 231–248.

respected the traditional rituals surrounding death at the same time that the funeral was held in Nepal. Similarly, being unable to return to Senegal at the time of death of their father, Faisal and his sister organized evening prayer sessions in her home, and they welcomed several people for nearly a week. The last evening was hosted by an imam who recited many Surahs from the Qur'ran. Faisal confessed that this was a great moral and spiritual support for him, given how far he was from his family in the homeland.

Faisal was only able to return to his home country a year after the death of his father. During his stay then, he held a second funeral to perform the proper rituals: a sheep was sacrificed and its meat was distributed in the neighbourhood, and an imam was invited to recite verses from the Qur'an. He said: "I had to reorganize the funeral, because he's my father. It is a responsibility I take to have a clear conscience." Several interviewees also plan to return one day to their home country to visit the tomb of their deceased loved one or to organize a new event in their memory in order to fulfill their duties. Acha, a man from Guinea who recently lost a grandmother he loved very much and with whom he had maintained excellent ties, did not attend her funeral back in Africa because he did not have the financial means to purchase a ticket. He said he hopes to go back one day to do another ceremony for his grandmother: "We will organize it one day. Yes, we will. Yes, I plan to go to Africa. And when I get there I will try to go to my grandmother's grave […] and pray for her."

But for some people, visiting the grave of the deceased person (as is expected of them) does not help alleviate their suffering. Radica left Bosnia and Herzegovina in the late 1990s to try her luck in Quebec. She visited her sister's grave six months after her burial, and it represented a great test of strength for her: "Actually, I did not want to visit her grave, but I was obliged… To us, it is mandatory to visit the grave of your loved ones. I did this for the others, because we have to, not because I wanted to." In her eyes, the grave in no way represented the person she knew, alive and smiling: "I do not associate the grave with her. For me, she is not there… Seeing the tomb does not help my mourning."

The gathering of the family

Participating in funeral rituals is not only a way of demonstrating one's dedication to and love for the deceased, but in a number of countries around the world it is also a moment shared with family to "gather social cohesion created by the disappearance of one of its members."[27] Several authors have emphasized the significance of the family aspect in times of mourning.[28] Michel Hanus suggests that if mourning is a test of strength for the individual, and the loss of a loved one generates a huge void, it is

27 Pierre Cornillo and Michel Hanus, (eds.) *Parlons de la Mort et du Deuil*. (Paris: Frison-Roche, 2000), 21.
28 Jean-Hugues Deschaux, (eds.) L*es familles face à la mort*. Paris: L'esprit du temps, 1998; Jean-Luc Hétu, *Vivre un deuil*. (Liège: Bartholomé, 1997).

"also a trauma that shakes the family as a whole, the family structure, such as the relationships between each of its members. And like mourning, […] going through this experience as a family strengthens the ties."[29] Meanwhile, following the loss of a loved one, the family is a vital source of support to the bereaved. The bereaved usually find comfort and assistance at family gatherings, especially when a meal follows the ceremony. As evidenced by the testimonies of all the interviewees, whatever their religion or country of origin, what is most lacking during these difficult times is mourning with their family by their side. They shared that being surrounded by their loved ones would have offered them the opportunity to express and share their pain, grief, and anger with others, and that their family might have also provided them with reciprocal support and comfort. While such feelings are not specific to migrants, it is particularly intense when there is a death of a loved one far away in their country of origin.

Slavica, the Bosnian woman who expressed her regret at not being able to attend her father's funeral or see his body, said her pain was also aggravated by "being physically separated from her mother and sisters," and she considered that "the pain is more liveable if we attend the funeral, because you spent all phases of mourning with your family." Despite the presence of her friends and their sympathy, and despite repeated transnational exchanges and help received from friends and other family members who had settled in Quebec, she admitted to finding it difficult to be alone at home sometimes: "When I'm alone, I start to think, I start to have dark thoughts." As Slavica's experience demonstrates, participants often feel helpless and deprived of support.

On the contrary, being surrounded by one's family at the time of death of a relative most often brings comfort and makes the ordeal less painful. For example, those few who had the opportunity to attend the funeral of a loved one abroad described a very different experience than the rest. Although Marietta was unable to return home to Columbia to be at her father's bedside or attend his funeral, because of the difficulty of finding a last-minute airline ticket, she was able to be with her family in the days that followed. She said that the gathering of the family facilitated the process of mourning her deceased father, who had died suddenly and unexpectedly. Beatriz, another Colombian migrant, was in her homeland at the time of her mother's death, and she was able to attend the funeral. Her mother had suffered from cancer for several years and her condition had deteriorated rapidly in the weeks preceding her death, which prompted Beatriz to leave quickly for Colombia to be at her bedside. According to Beatriz, who comes from a well-known family in Colombia, approximately a thousand people attended the ceremony in memory of her mother, including three priests, relatives, and friends who came from other countries in South America and around the world: "The whole funeral ceremony was a tribute in her memory. It is sure that it was very moving, and we liked it because they spoke of all of my mother's qualities." Being able to make a final farewell and

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29 Michel Hanus, "Les deuils en famille aujourd'hui" in *Les familles face à la mort. Entre privatisation et resocialisation de la mort*, eds. by Jean-Hugues Déchaux, Frédéric Jésu and Michel Hanus (Paris: L'Esprit du temps, 1998), 237.

experience this difficult time with her family allowed her to receive support that she considers priceless: "sharing with my family and with all the friends comforted me a lot."

The duty of care

The inability to be near a dying family member, to take care of or give them comfort in a particularly critical time, usually increases feelings of guilt, especially in the case of elderly relatives in poor health. Contemporary transnational family studies highlight the fact that most migrants maintain regular contact with members of their family scattered around the world and that geographical distance does not mean an end to the obligations and expectations of care, which vary, of course, from one place to another.[30] All of the forms of care and support shared between families in geographically close proximity – financial, emotional, practical, and personal – are also expected of transnational families. That said, some forms of care can operate transnationally through communications technology, while others require physical proximity and regular visits, entailing personal care and support provided at the end of life.[31] At the time of his mother's death, Salvador felt like he was abandoning his mother. Before leaving for Canada, he knew she had been suffering for several years from a serious illness and that her condition was deteriorating rapidly. Being very close to his mother, when he still lived in Mexico he had the responsibility of driving her to the hospital for her treatments: "It touched me a lot because, in a way, I felt as if I had abandoned her; she knew I was leaving to come here, she accepted it and gave me her blessing." Interviewees had the impression that if they had provided care to the dying, it may have made things a little less difficult and more comfortable, without negating the help provided by other family members.

Failing to live up to family duties before or after the death of a loved one can also generate tensions and conflict within families. Some studies have shown how family rituals may be a particularly significant moment to observe the effects of distance on family relationships. As these occasions often reunite family members who have settled in various parts of the world, conflicts can be expressed more easily.[32] Such reunions can also lead to the contributions of each family member being disputed.[33] That being the case,

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30 Loretta Baldassar, Cora Baldock and Raelene Wilding, *Families Caring Across Borders: Migration, Ageing and Transnational Caregiving.* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Elisabetta, Zontini and Tracey Reynolds, "Ethnicity, Families and Social Capital: Caring Relationships across Italian and Caribbean Transnational Families." *International Review of Sociology*, 17, 2 (2007): 257–277.

31 Laura Merla and Loretta Baldassar, "Les dynamiques de soin transnationales Entre émotions et considérations économiques." *Recherches sociologiques et anthropologiques,* 41, 1 (2010): 83–103.

32 Kary Gardner and Ralph Grillo, "Transnational Households and Rituals: an Overview." *Global Networks*, 2, 3 (2002): 179–90.

33 Karen Fog Olwig, "A Wedding in the Family: Home Making in a Global Network." *Global Networks*, 2, 3 (2002): 205–218.

only one interviewee mentioned a situation of family conflict, and it was in regards to the inheritance.

Only four participants were able to return to their country of origin in the months before the death of their relative. The return trip gave them some consolation and helped them get through the ordeal of losing their loved one. Beatriz is the only person who was able to visit her family member regularly and be present at her funeral. She expressed how seeing her mother and being able to take care of her were sources of great comfort. Radica witnessed her sister's health deteriorating over the years because of cancer. She had the chance to visit her sister on several occasions while she was sick and even a few months before her death. She also assisted with her sister's funeral in her home country, which she said gave her some strength to overcome her grief: "I visited her before her death last year… She was very sick and it was difficult to see her in this state. It helped me to see her alive a little before she died." Nonetheless, much like the other participants, Radica still felt a sense of guilt at the idea of being physically present in only a limited way for her family and her dying sister: "I felt guilty for not having spent more time with her. At first, I was far, and it had been a long time that I lived here and she lived in our country. […] It was difficult for me […] when she died, and I felt very guilty. I wanted to fall asleep and wake up with everything back to normal."

The duty of being present

Feelings of guilt at not being physically present when a relative dies or not being at their funeral are very common in our participants' narratives. Because those interviewed did not share the last moments with the deceased person, they felt that in a certain way they had abandoned them. Although participants were in regular contact with their family members living in other locations, they all bitterly regretted having been unable to make their final goodbyes and being there with them in their last moments. They may have had a chance to communicate one last time with the person via webcam, email, or social networks, but virtual interaction, as gratifying as it can be, is far from being sufficient in this case.

For most of our interviewees, a few years had passed since their last physical encounter with the deceased person. Thus, just the thought of not seeing them one last time was very difficult. Because of her refugee status, it was impossible for Conception to return to her native country of Columbia for the funeral of her brother, who was assassinated there just a few months after she left for Quebec. She expressed how emotionally painful it was for her, particularly because she could not be present to comfort her family: "I wanted to be there to accompany his wife, his children, and our family members that live there and that are going through this situation […]. We are here, and we feel so hopeless and helpless to be going through this at long distance, not being able to be there when it is my brother who just died." Nariman also expressed feelings of having failed in his moral duty of being present. Not seeing his father in Iran before he died and failing to

be at his bedside at the time of his death made the hardship of losing him even more painful, as sadness, regret, and remorse intermingled: "When my father was sick, I spoke to him and I told him that I would come back to see him because I loved him very much. But when I arrived there, it had been two days since he passed away." The failure to keep his promise made the loss of his father more painful than that of his mother, as he had been able to return to Iran in time to share her final moments:

> The death of my father was more painful than that of my mother, because I had told my father I will return, and I could not […]. At least when my mother died, I had spent a few days with her, so I was able to convince myself to feel better. But for my father I had big regrets and I was very sad. (Nariman, migrant of Iranian origin)

Nariman's immigration situation was fixed and he had become a Canadian resident before his mother fell ill. He used his credit card and borrowed money from friends to buy his airline ticket. Before his departure, his sisters, with whom he was in constant contact, kept him informed about the state of their mother's health. When speaking to her on the phone, he also recognized that she was becoming weaker: "So I found that my mother was really sick. She was old and weak. […] When I spoke to my mother and I found that she was not well at all, I decided not to waste any time and get back home to visit her before her death."

Having obtained permission to be absent from work for ten days due to her father's death, Fouzia, originally from Guinea, was also able to leave quickly for her home country in order to be with her family and attend the funeral. There had been no warning signs of the imminent death of her father. Therefore, she had not even considered the possibility of going to visit him for the last time in Guinea. Fouzia had not seen her father for some years. The only regret she had, and one that still causes her intense suffering, is to have not been there with him during his final days: "The obstacle that I found the hardest in mourning the death of my father is that it did not happen in front of me. I would have liked to assist him, to accompany him. Maybe he would have wanted to see me and tell me something." Fouzia's desire to be present at the side of her dying loved one and hear his last words is the wish of many other migrants who are physically separated from their families. They wish to be present to show their affection and love, to thank the dying person, or to close any unresolved conflicts. Indeed, the last words exchanged with the deceased can help to overcome grief, in contrast to not being able to express feelings or resolve lingering conflicts.[34]

The departure of a beloved person forced participants to confront the fact that they were no longer able to fulfil their moral duty of being present, a common result of the process of migration. In the case of Marduk, a man of Iranian origin who lost his father three years after moving to Montreal,

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34 Johanne De Montigny, "Les derniers mots du mourant. Un legs inespéré dans la vie du survivant." *Gérontologie et Société*, 1, 108 (2004): 213–220.

guilt about having abandoned his country and his people made him doubt his decision to emigrate:

> The most important challenge […], and it is something I think about all the time, is that I shouldn't have left my parents alone because they were really dependent on me. This is the major challenge that I have to cope with all the time. I don't know whether I did a correct action in coming here. And even now, I may have alleviated the grief of my father passing away, but what is hard for me is wondering whether I could have done more for him before he passed away. (Marduk, migrant of Iranian origin)

Conclusion

The examples of the death of a relative abroad discussed here allow for a better understanding of the severe limitations of virtual co-presence made possible by the development of mobile telephone and internet communication platforms and their use by transnational families. While some family activities can take place easily at a distance over the phone or by email or text messages, others require traveling great distances to be together physically. In times of death, these new methods of communication cannot compensate for physical separation, despite transnational exchanges and rituals. We know that losing a loved one is already a painful ordeal, but for migrants who live far away, and especially for those who for various reasons cannot attend the funeral, physical separation makes the grieving process even more difficult. Not only does distance increase the hardship of losing a loved one, it makes the acceptance of death much more difficult. The types of emotional distress are numerous and varied: the grief and pain of loss coexist alongside feelings of regret and guilt. Physical co-presence allows for mutual support at the time of death of a loved one in a way that virtual co-presence simply cannot. What is lacking among migrants is the ability to meet with their families and talk with them, and this lack is felt particularly strongly in moments of crisis. Distance also increases feelings of guilt for not fulfilling one's moral duty to be present or take care of the loved one and other family members. Despite the fact that funeral rituals and responsibilities surrounding the death of a family member differ greatly according to one's culture or religion, the impossibility of practicing certain significant rites and ceremonies makes the mourning process more difficult for many migrants. The death of a loved one in the country of origin augments the sense of loss and absence associated with the act of migration. For many grieving migrants, the death of a parent who is abroad is generally seen as a tragedy, a moment they apprehend with great concern. Indeed, it symbolizes all the losses related to migration and reminds them of the impossibility of getting back the time spent away from their homeland. For many, this hardship is also seen as the price they pay for their decision to start a new life elsewhere.

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Communities II

Lourdes Gutiérrez Nájera and Ana D. Alonso Ortiz[1]

Expressing communality: Zapotec death and mourning across transnational frontier

Behind an apartment building somewhere in the Koreatown district of Los Angeles, a crowd of mourners assembled to pay their last respects to Roman Maldonado Cisneros, who passed away after an unforeseen accident. His body, which had been in the morgue for nearly two weeks, was released to the family for several hours before it was finally returned to his hometown of Yalálag in Mexico's southern state of Oaxaca. As a Yalalteco,[2] Roman had participated in hometown celebrations and events during his life-time and was a well-respected man. Thus, before leaving the ceremony, men, women, and children came to offer condolences to his family and say goodbye to this beloved community member. People crowded into the open space behind the apartment building, spilling onto the driveway and the sidewalk. Members of different brass bands, typical of Oaxaca, played melancholy music; his good friends sang his favorite songs in-between reminiscing. The next day, the space was again filled with friends and family as they gathered to bid farewell when his body was taken away, to be sent back to Mexico. A band played funerary marches as his corpse was carried into the street and to a truck that would transport it to the airport. Meanwhile, the crowd watched, many of them holding their phones and cameras in the air.[3] Soon thereafter, friends and family posted these last images on Facebook. One remarked, "This is how you bid farewell to a friend in Los Angeles, CA en route to Yalálag, Roman Maldonado Cisneros. Rest in Peace."[4]

This is how Indigenous people from the mountains of Oaxaca, including Yalálag, pay their respects. When a person dies, they are mourned privately and publicly. In Oaxaca, immediately after death, the body of the deceased is washed and clothed and placed on a table surrounded by flowers, candles, and other objects that will help guide their spirit to its final destination. An

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1. We would like to thank all the Yalaltecos who kindly invited us into their homes to share their experiences. We extend our gratitude to the broader Yalalteco community in Los Angeles, Oaxaca, and cyberspace. This paper could not have been written without their collaboration. The authors would also like to thank Claudia Rueda and the editors of this volume for their insightful comments.
2. This is the name that individuals who claim membership in the natal community use to call themselves, regardless of where they live.
3. This vignette is a reconstructed event based on information from the individuals we interviewed and Facebook posts.
4. C. Yalálag's Facebook page, June 25, 2016. Status translated by author.

intricate blanket of flowers with a symbolic cross is placed on the floor where the body last touched the ground before death. On the first day, following a person's passing, it is customary for family and friends to hold a vigil all night, celebrating the life of the deceased. Mourners are invited to recite the rosary along with the family.[5] Throughout the night, people come in and out, offering condolences to the relatives left behind and accompanying the body as a sign of respect. Food and drink are offered to guests, and somber funerary music accompany the mourners into the night. On the second day, the casket is carried into the town church where a special Mass is conducted for the deceased followed by a procession to the cemetery, led by members of a brass band playing somber tunes. Close behind are the deceased's male friends, on whose shoulders the casket is carried. Last are the family and other members of the community. Once at the gravesite, the body is buried.

In Los Angeles, observing the memorial to Maldonado, we were reminded that hometown practices *han cruzado fronteras* ("have crossed borders").[6] This is significant since Zapotecs constitute the largest group of Mexican Indigenous migrants now living in the United States, primarily in California. They bring distinct languages and cultural traditions, which continue to bind them together as members of particular towns, regions, and ethnic groups. Through their cultural practices and traditions, migrants not only reinvigorate their home-based regional and ethnic identities, they also actively transform already ethnically marked spaces into distinct Zapotec spaces. In Koreatown, for example, their residence in a previously Asian neighborhood physically transformed its landscape. Traditional brass band music now permeates the air. Finally, funerary practices, like those illustrated above, reveal how the physical landscape, such as a parking lot or a street, may be transformed into ethnically and racially (i.e., Zapotec and Indigenous) marked transnational spaces of death, mourning, and communality spanning Mexico and the United States.

In this chapter, we are particularly interested in the transnational dimensions of death and mourning. We approach this topic through an examination of the importation of natal funerary practices by Mexican Indigenous persons in Los Angeles. Our study builds on linguistic anthropology and ethnographic insights on Zapotec experiences with death. Specifically, we analyze Zapotec notions of reciprocity following a death (*wlhue lhaollo*) and "burying oneself" (*llkach kuinllo*) to show how these Indigenous migrants maintain durable ties to their hometowns through these social practices. Yet, despite some continuities, we also highlight ways in which funerary practices are being transformed. Further, we examine the role of social media, via Facebook, to demonstrate how these new forms of engagement create alternative spaces of mourning, transcending national boundaries and generational divides.

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5 The Catholic rosary is a series of prayers and reflections made in honor of the deceased. In this context, Catholic rosaries and prayers are offered over the span of nine days. During this time, mourners offer penitence in the name of the deceased so that they may find peace on their journey after death.

6 This idea came up in casual conversations among Zapotec migrants we interviewed in Los Angeles.

Research setting

The Koreatown district in Los Angeles is home to thousands of Zapotec Indigenous migrants, originally from the Sierra Norte region of Oaxaca, Mexico.[7] Among them are Yalaltecos from the Sierra Norte, who first established themselves in this part of Los Angeles during the 1960s.[8] Today there are several thousand Yalaltecos, comprising several generations, living in the city. In spite of working and residing several thousand miles from their natal homes, Indigenous migrants presently in Los Angeles actively participate in the economic, social, and political lives of their *pueblos*.[9,10] But in this as in other processes, Yalaltecos participate unevenly. In part, our motivation for carrying out this research was to determine the extent to which there are intergenerational differences in the transmission and celebration of funerary rituals among Zapotecs in Los Angeles. Are some migrants more deeply committed to maintaining their links to their natal towns and Indigenous identities through such rituals and practices? Among Yalaltecos living in Los Angeles, we conclude, the answer is not clear.

Methods

This research is based on personal interviews, content analysis of Facebook images and posts, and ethnographic observation. While this chapter focuses primarily on the experiences of Zapotecs living in Los Angeles, the authors have spent time observing and documenting Indigenous traditions and customs, including ritual ceremonies celebrating life and death in both Los Angeles and Oaxaca. In this capacity, we have also taken part in the everyday lives of Yalaltecos, accompanying people into and outside of their homes. These observations have allowed us to assess the transnationalization of funerary rituals and probe more deeply as interviewees responded to our questions. In July 2016, we interviewed ten persons, including both first-generation and second-generation immigrants. Interviews were conducted

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7   Jonathan Fox and Gaspar Rivera-Salgado, eds., *Indigenous Mexican Migrants in the United States* (La Jolla, CA: Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies and Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, University of California at San Diego, 2004).

8   Equipo Pueblo, *Yalálag: Testimonios Indígenas* (Mexico City: Equipo Pueblo, 1988).

9   Among Mexicans, the term 'pueblo' is commonly used to refer to a town (place), nation, citizens, or people. In this paper, the use of 'pueblo' exclusively references the hometown.

10 See M. Bianet Castellanos, "Idealizing Maya Culture: The Politics of Race, Indigeneity, and Immigration Among Maya Restaurant Owners in Southern California," *Dialogo* 18, no. 2 (Fall 2015): 67–78; Fox and Rivera-Salgado, *Indigenous Mexican Migrants in the United States*; Lourdes Gutiérrez Nájera. "*Hayandose:* Zapotec Migrant Expressions of Membership and Belonging," in *Beyond El Barrio: Everyday Life in Latina/o América*, ed. Adrian Burgos, Jr., Frank Guridy, and Gina Perez (New York: New York University Press, 2010), 63–80; Lynn Stephen, *Transborder Lives: Indigenous Oaxacans in Mexico, California, and Oregon* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007).

in numerous languages – including Zapotec, English, and Spanish – according to the subject's preference. Altogether, the interviews allowed us to better gauge the continuity of Zapotec funerary traditions practiced in Los Angeles and how they are being transformed as they cross national boundaries. Although we formally interviewed ten persons, we spoke to at least twenty more about funerary rites.

Our research also builds on the work of recent scholarship that demonstrates the usefulness of engaging social media in ethnographic research.[11] In particular, we drew on Facebook to supplement our interviews and ethnographic observations within a transnational landscape.[12] Specifically, we followed Yalaltecos who are "friends" or persons whom we are "following" on Facebook, and we examined posts that announced individual deaths and burials over a period of six months. We took screenshots of uploaded Facebook posts, photos, and videos commemorating the deaths of community members. As part of this project, we analyzed the images along with sentiments expressed through language and non-verbal cues (like emojis) in the posts. Our findings are presented below.[13]

Reciprocity, "burying oneself," and communality

Migrants living in Los Angeles forge durable ties to their community through the emotional, financial, and social aid that accompanies the death of a *paisano*.[14] Not surprisingly, each interviewee reiterated the importance of providing direct support to the grieving family. This support is offered immediately after learning that someone from the hometown has passed away. The level of commitment may vary, but each person described a compelling sense of responsibility. We suggest that this form of participation is intimately connected to an Indigenous expression of communality or

11 Sally Baker, "Conceptualising the use of Facebook in ethnographic research: As tool, as data and as context," *Ethnography and Education,* 8, no. 2 (2013): 131–145; Nicole Bridges, "Facebook as Netnographic Research Tool," *Global Media Journal,* 10, no. 2 (2016); Steffen Dalsgaard, "The Ethnographic Use of Facebook in Everyday Life," *Anthropological Forum: A Journal of Social Anthropology and Comparative Sociology,* 26, no. 1 (2016), 96–114.

12 David J. Piacenti, Luis B. Rivs, and Josef Garrett, "Facebook Ethnography: The Poststructural Ontology of Transnational (Im)migration Research," *International Journal of Qualitative Methods,* 13, no.1 (February 2014): 224–236, accessed March 1, 2017.

13 A note on the citation of oral and Facebook sources: since it is not uncommon for migrants from Mexico to be living in the United States with undocumented status, and our interviewees also mention status as a barrier to travel, our interviews conducted in Los Angeles only contain first names in order to maintain a safe level of anonymity. The only interviewee cited with a full name is a public figure who was interviewed in Mexico. For similar reasons, the issue of anonymity is also of concern vis-à-vis the Facebook pages of individuals in Los Angeles. Thus, we do not include citations with references or URLs of the authors' pages.

14 *Paisano* is a term used in Mexico to refer to a person from the same country or region.

collective belonging[15] reflected through *gwzon*,[16] a system of reciprocity. Of particular interest is how migrants now living in Los Angeles (re)define borders of communal belonging through these practices.

Among Indigenous scholars in Mexico, Floriberto Díaz Gómez – a Mixe Indigenous thinker from Tlahuitoltepec, Oaxaca – first defined communality as a form of belonging that takes into account holistic elements of Indigenous experience. According to him:

> Communality defines the immanence of the community to the extent that communality defines other key concepts to understand the Indigenous reality, which should be understood not in opposition to but as different from Western society. To understand each of its elements we must take into account certain notions, such as: the communal, the collective, complementary and wholeness… Having said this we can understand the defining elements of communality:
>
> The Earth as mother and territory.
> Consensus in a decision-making assembly.
> Non-remunerated service as an exertion of authority.
> Collective labor as a recreational act.
> Rituals and ceremonies as an expression of a communal gift.[17]

In line with the thought of Díaz Gómez, funerary rites create forums for the expression of communality, specifically through systems of reciprocity that support families as they grieve the loss of a loved one. A successful manifestation of communality is called *bkwach kuinbe*, a Zapotec expression that literally translates into "he buried himself." This complex phrase can only be understood by examining the importance of reciprocity as a fundamental part of communal belonging.

In Zapotec towns, people build strong relations within the family and members of the broader society through active involvement and visibility in social and religious events, such as weddings and patron saint celebrations. Community members are expected to be present and actively participate in social and religious events by helping out, to the best of their ability, in actions such as making tortillas, distributing food, carrying firewood, setting up equipment, or providing a cash donation to help defray costs.

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15 Communality is a complementary aspect of community extending beyond the physical and territorial dimensions to incorporate an Indigenous phenomenological understanding of collective experiences and practice. Communality is an expression that reflects belonging to, or forming part of, a collective that we associate with community. See Juan José Rendón Monzón, *La comunalidad: Modo de vida en los pueblos indios, Tomo 1* (Mexico City: CONACULTA, 2003).

16 A Zapotec concept that indicates ways of helping out that are based on reciprocity or providing mutual aid.

17 Floriberto Día Gómez, "*Comunidad y comunalidad*," in *La comunalidad: Modo de vida en los pueblos indios, Tomo 1*, ed. Juan José Rendón Monzón (Mexico City: CONACULTA, 2003), 96.

In the case of the death of a *paisano*, reciprocity involves *wlhue lhaollo*,[18] an offering of support made to the grieving family or person hosting the funerary rites. As Eloy explained:

> My mom would say, "So long as they see your face. You go and do your part…" There are many people, like me, for example, who like to go and give support by helping out in any way, even if it means passing out drinks. Others just show up and show moral support but you have to be seen by members of the community.[19]

In this system of reciprocity, each participant will ideally receive the same assistance in kind at some point in the future when they have a similar need. It is in this context that we can better understand the meaning of *bkwach kuinbe*. Here, in the sense of burying oneself, *bkwach kuinbe* refers to the moment, upon one's passing, of receiving all the benefits of reciprocity accumulated throughout a person's lifetime. If a person has been generous, then the total aid received on their behalf should cover most, if not the entire, cost of the funeral. This is as true in the hometown as it is in Los Angeles, as was mentioned by our interviewers. In the case of Roman, the man described in the opening vignette, for example, numerous interviewees mentioned the idea of *bkwach kuinbe*, either in Zapotec or Spanish, to make clear his status as a beloved Yalalteco. At the moment of his death, his presence and participation at social functions and events did not go unnoticed. As stated by a young woman we interviewed:

> That's the way it is. People notice who helps out and who does not. That is how it works here… When Roman died, many people came together to lend their support. A lot of people came. They offered emotional and economic support. Many people. Many people came, and they helped a lot.[20]

Indeed, Yalaltecos mentioned that thousands of dollars were raised, enough to cover the costs associated with repatriation and the funeral arrangements incurred in Los Angeles, as well as the burial in Yalálag.

The importance of lending aid cannot be overstated. As another person iterated, as long as the Yalaltecos see you providing support they will reward you in the same way. Otherwise, no one will show up. Interviewees mentioned going to several funerals where very few people attended, because the person who died was not an active participant in social events commemorating the hometown and organized by *paisanos*. Consequently, the cost of the burial process becomes more difficult to handle. As one interviewee explained: "If you don't go, then people don't see you and they will ask, 'Is he not a member of the community?' They will not be swayed to lend their support because they don't know you."[21] The practice of reciprocity in Los Angeles is

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18 A Zapotec expression that indicates showing or providing support.
19 Eloy, interview by Ana D. Alonso Ortiz and Lourdes Gutiérrez Nájera, July 14, 2016.
20 Kenia, interview by Ana D. Alonso Ortiz and Lourdes Gutiérrez Nájera, July 13, 2016.
21 Eloy, interview by Ana D. Alonso Ortiz and Lourdes Gutiérrez Nájera, July 14, 2016.

fundamental not only for defining community but also to meet the costs of funeral arrangements and burials.

While Yalaltecos in Los Angeles maintain durable ties to community through practices of reciprocity and funerary traditions, these are being transformed. People frequently provide mutual support in kind to the family of the deceased. As described by Kenia, "People bring water, they bring bread… They bring everything and when people realize that everyone has already given [and there is still need], they go out and help again."[22] People we spoke with mentioned that *paisanos* participate by providing refreshments, food, disposable plates and cups, chairs, and event tents, even if they cannot attend the rosary or wake. This is particularly noteworthy in terms of shifting traditions. Indeed, the practice among migrants in Los Angeles of providing goods in kind stands in stark contrast to that of the hometown, where it is now customary to give the grieving family a monetary donation. Consequently, and perhaps unexpectedly, Yalaltecos living in Los Angeles continue to maintain a longstanding tradition of reciprocity in kind, even though it is no longer practiced in the hometown. While the hometown is often viewed as a space of tradition and places of destination become associated with change, this example precisely points to how the way in which traditions may be maintained or modified through migration is unpredictable.

In the hometown, active participation by all members of the community is also expected upon the death of a *paisano*. Men and women accompany the family after someone passes, keeping a vigil and offering prayers in solidarity with the family throughout the night. At the time of the funeral, the church bells ring so that all may attend Mass and accompany the body to the burial. This is a time-consuming process that involves every Yalalteco who is able to come. In Los Angeles, however, Yalaltecos are spread out throughout the city, and many of them cannot take time off work to be with the family of the deceased during the night and at the time of the funeral. Accordingly, not all *paisanos* can be present. Consequently, there are other interesting modifications to the funerary process in Los Angeles. For example, migrants eliminate aspects of traditional funerary practices such as "*la levantada de la cruz*," a ritual to help guide the spirit of the deceased to its final resting place, which involves prayers and laying a cross made of flowers in the location where the body touched the ground at death and its spirit returned to Mother Earth. On the ninth day after death, this cross is swept up and the remains are taken to the cemetery, where they are laid to rest on the grave of the deceased.

While in Yalálag this is a necessary part of any funerary practice, in Los Angeles *paisanos* often skip this process due to a lack of time. Alternatively, they may decide to do it on the same day of the burial. Migrants simply cannot afford to take nine days out of their work schedule to accompany the family of the deceased as they carry out other rites associated with death practices such as the washing of the deceased's clothing and daily rosaries. Thus, they

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22 Kenia, interview by Ana D. Alonso Ortiz and Lourdes Gutiérrez Nájera, July 13, 2016.

shorten the process. Another modification involves the physical location of reciting the rosary and holding the wake. While funerary rituals take place in the home of the deceased in the hometown, living in an apartment in Los Angeles is not always conducive to maintaining the tradition. Subsequently, it is not uncommon for someone to offer their home to hold the rosary ceremonies and wake for the dead. In fact, while we were in Los Angeles, we attended a rosary ceremony at the home of a *paisano* who had made their home available so that community members could come together.

Another interesting shift involves the brass bands found in Oaxacan Indigenous towns. In Yalálag, the brass band was originally founded by town members and then integrated into the municipal government structure. Thus, band members often offered their condolences and support by playing funerary music without any remuneration. Today in Oaxaca there are five brass bands competing for business and there is no longer a "municipal" band, so the family of the deceased now pays to have a band play during the wake and also attend the funeral. There are still occasions in which bands may play without compensation, but by and large, these are exceptions to the rule. In contrast, brass bands among Zapotecs in Los Angeles often play at funerals without remuneration. Through these comparisons, one can say that Yalaltecos have transformed their cultural practices, adapting them to the urban context of Los Angeles, while reinserting themselves into a broader transnational collective through funerary rites and practices. Thus, in quite significant ways, they are reaffirming the spirit of Zapotec communality outlined above by Díaz Gómez.

Yet, while migrants in Los Angeles are able to claim collective membership, the bonds of communality are being tested as they begin to question the limits of reciprocal aid. As stated in our interviews, Yalaltecos have been praying rosaries for every deceased person, even if they did not die in Los Angeles, with the ultimate aim of raising money for families who could not afford the funeral. But now migrants living in Los Angeles argue over whether they should continue to offer rosaries when either the family of the deceased is financially solvent or the deceased has not spent a significant amount of time in Los Angeles.

> Rosaries are fundamental for gathering funds… Its [purpose] is practical, to gather funds and help out the family, though today there are a lot of people who criticize the practice of offering a rosary here [in Los Angeles] for those who have died in the pueblo. Some agree that those people who have been here [in L.A.], who have come, who have worked, who have come for some time, should have a rosary given in their name. But they ask why those who have never been in this country should also receive a rosary. The same is true if they are economically solvent. But when the family lacks resources and is poor then they should receive that type of support… But when we are talking about a person who dies here, we all provide support.[23]

23 Claudia, interview by Ana D. Alonso Ortiz and Lourdes Gutiérrez Nájera, July 12, 2016.

This discussion represents a break from the tradition of *gwzon* as practiced in Yalálag. Regardless of economic solvency, *gwzon* is an expression of communality. Thus, current discussions among migrants in Los Angeles appear to reflect a paradoxical relationship to communality. While on the one hand the reproduction of reciprocity in Los Angeles forges transnational bonds of communality, at the same time discussions about eliminating rosary practices and economic aid for those in the hometown create fissures in communality. With this in mind, we must consider the degree to which communality may or may not continue as an organizing principle for future generations.

At present, second- and third-generation immigrant youth in the U.S. are not as active as their parents in communal events and celebrations, but this does not mean that they have lost interest in or no longer identify strongly with their Indigenous communities. Young people with immigrant parents and grandparents are transforming the structure of Indigenous Oaxacan brass bands in Los Angeles. While in the past the composition of these bands was exclusively adult males, today there are bands that have incorporated youth into them. There are also bands comprised exclusively of youth who have grown up listening to this music and who have a strong desire to continue this tradition. In a similar fashion, dance troupes that previously were largely made up of young men and women performing at patron saint and life cycle celebrations have also been incorporating children into their groups. These young participants, who are now second- and third-generation Oaxacan-Americans, will continue to integrate themselves into their Zapotec communities of origin and experience the benefits of *comunalidad* through music.

As we reflected on funerary practices, we noted that even within the immigrant generation there is a sense of ambivalence about whether they will be buried in the U.S. or Oaxaca. While some of our interviewees expressed a wish to be buried in their hometown, where their umbilical cords are buried and their Indigenous identities were forged, others frankly shared their desire to be buried in Los Angeles. This came out in a revealing conversation with Francisco, a second-generation youth, at his parents' home. He recounted his surprise when his parents, who immigrated to L.A. in the 1960s but often return to their hometown, told him that they wanted to be buried in Los Angeles. As he shared, "It was surprising. I always thought they'd want to be buried in Yalálag. But then my mom explained that in Yalálag, they would be lonely because they wouldn't have anyone to visit them and take care of them. I guess we're supposed to go hang out with them at their graves. They have an expectation I wasn't aware of." We found that other persons who had made Los Angeles their home and raised their families here felt similarly. They pointed out that even if they were buried in Los Angeles, it would still be a Zapotec burial because the traditions for burial practices have survived there. The second generation is also likely to be buried in L.A., though one of our interviewees mentioned wanting to be buried in her parents' hometown, where her father was laid to rest. She joked that her husband has already been initiated as a member of her natal home (he is from another Oaxacan town) so that he can have burial rites reserved for him as well. Her views in

terms of burial location appear to be exceptional, but it was clear that she and her husband desired to be acknowledged by community members and have some type of Zapotec burial accompanied by music, food, and loved ones.

Extending virtual spaces of mourning

If the transnational nature of the Yalalteco community is challenging the bonds of communality, then the use of information technologies and social networking sites has allowed for more fluid contact across space and time among transnational migrants. As scholars[24] confirm, "[d]igital media is transforming diasporic cultural contexts"[25] by fostering linkages between natal homes and places of settlement. Additionally, social networking sites like Facebook are easily accessible and they appeal across generations. For migrants and their loved ones separated by great distances, Facebook provides an ideal platform for communicating and maintaining connection. There are individual pages, group pages, community pages, and events pages so that one can easily glean and share information about what is happening across locations. As argued by Rianne Dekker and Godfried Engbersen, social media provide an infrastructure with strategic information that shapes migrant networks.[26] Applied to Zapotec funerary practices, Facebook supports images, videos, and emojis that simulate contact and strengthen communal bonds. Among Yalaltecos, Facebook has gained popularity since it began to be used both in the United States and in Oaxaca. In the hometown of Yalálag, its use became widespread after a massive landslide in October 2010 that left residents without road access or essential resources for survival. In an unexpected turn, Yalaltecos in Mexico began to post messages and circulate photographs of the disaster via Facebook. The online platform allowed news to spread more quickly, which meant that migrants living elsewhere could respond.[27] Today Facebook continues to be

24 Andoni Alonso and Pedro Oiarzabal, *Diasporas in the New Media Age: Identity, Politics, and Community* (Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 2010); Cheryl A. McLean, "A Space Called Home: An Immigrant Adolescent's Digital Literacy Practices," *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy* 54, no.1 (September 2010): 13–22, David J. Piacenti, Luis B. Rivs, and Josef Garrett, "Facebook Ethnography: The Poststructural Ontology of Transnational (Im)migration Research."

25 Cheryl A. McLean, "A Space Called Home: An Immigrant Adolescent's Digital Literacy Practices."

26 Rianne Dekker and Godfried Engbersen, "How social media transform migrant networks and facilitate migration," *Global Networks* 14, no. 4 (2014): 401–418; Laura Hirvi, "Multi-sited Fieldwork Amongst Sikhs in Finland and California: Reaching the Offline via the Online," in *Where is the Field? The Experience of Migration Viewed Through the Prism of Ethnographic Fieldwork*, ed. Laura Hirvi and Hanna Snellman (Helsinki: Finnish Literature Society, 2012), 23–44.

27 Joel Aquino Maldonado, interviewed by Lourdes Gutiérrez Nájera, December 2010.

a critical source of social support.[28] Not only do family members exchange posts and pictures that help them maintain their relationships across the miles, but in a state that is dependent on migrant remittances for local and regional development projects, Facebook also facilitates social support and community transparency.

Regardless of where one is located within the transnational network, Facebook is used to share knowledge. This type of information sharing reinforces the sense of communal spirit described previously. As other scholars have noted, new media technologies facilitate community building in a placeless, deterritorialized environment.[29] In this way, social media sites like Facebook allow individuals to establish a "presence" despite geographic distances.[30] Among the people we interviewed, Facebook is increasingly becoming *the* medium through which to announce and disseminate information important to community formation and maintenance, including the passing of a loved one. These announcements posted on Facebook spread rapidly; thus, the social media platform offers users the latest news. As Claudia recounted:

> More than anything, [Facebook is] used to let people know that this person has died. The person may be in the pueblo or here, in this country... They advise you that someone has died, at what time, and when. They also give you an address if there will be a rosary offered [for the deceased] and let you know when the wake will take place, and when the funeral will take place. If the body is being returned to the pueblo, they will let you know when the wake will take place. So, it's practically to give knowledge, give information of what is happening. Since most of us are connected, it facilitates communication more easily for Yalaltecos spread out throughout the city.[31]

Photographs of the deceased often accompany obituaries or death notices. In some cases, photographs are superimposed with text identifying the person and giving their dates of birth and death. At other times, there may also be emojis superimposed on the photograph. This was the case, for example, when a friend's grandmother, Doña Enriqueta, passed away. We were alerted

28 Aída Quintar, "Redes sociales y comunidades virtuales," in *Los usos de las TICs: Una mirada multidimensional*, ed. Aída Quintar et al. (Buenos Aires: Promete, 2007): 71–85.

29 Heather Bromberg, "Are MUDs Communities? Identity, Belonging and Consciousness in Virtual Worlds," in *Cultures of the Internet: Virtual Spaces, Real Histories, Living Bodies*, ed. Rob Shields (London: Sage Publications, 1996), 143–152; Myria Georgiou, *Diaspora, Identity and the Media: Diasporic Transnationalism and Mediated Spatialities* (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, Inc., 2006); Pedro J. Oiarzabal, "Basque Diaspora Digital Nationalism: Designing 'Banal' Identity," in *Diasporas in the New Media Age: Identity, Politics and Community*, edited by Andoni Alonso and Pedro Oiarzabal (Reno, NV: University of Nevada Press, 2010), 338–349; Lynn Stephen, *Transborder Lives*.

30 David J. Piacenti, Luis B. Rivs, and Josef Garrett, "Facebook Ethnography: The Poststructural Ontology of Transnational (Im)migration Research."

31 Claudia, interview by Ana D. Alonso Ortiz and Lourdes Gutiérrez Nájera, July 12, 2016.

of her passing when her granddaughter posted a single photograph of the deceased framed in the lower corners by two sad emojis with tears running down their faces. While emojis (such as happy faces and sad faces) may be seen as trivializing content, in a context in which not everyone may be fully able to communicate effectively through writing due to language and literacy barriers, they can be powerful tools for conveying emotions. Emojis may also be used to respond quickly through the use of a pictogram with the appropriate sentiment. In the case discussed here, the emojis actually simulated real emotions around a tremendous loss that our friend could not yet verbalize. To use words to express her grandmother's words was still too painful. The emojis could express her deep sadness and even her weeping in lieu of words and without losing meaning. Indeed, her post was easily understood, and people began to post messages expressing their condolences. Some people responded with emojis while others responded in Spanish, posting on her Facebook page. One person living in Los Angeles wrote, "God give you solace and resignation. I send you a big hug," with a picture of an orchid attached. Another individual, living in Texas, posted, "My condolences to the family. These are difficult moments but she has passed to a better life. She was a strong woman. Rest in Peace." Similarly, a friend living in Oaxaca wrote, "I ask God for a speedy resignation for all of you because in these moments there are no words that can console you for this loss." Images of Doña Enriqueta continued to circulate for several days, sharing a multitude of sympathies for the grieving family.

In this fashion, Facebook extends the social fields of grief across national boundaries. For all our interviewees, Facebook provides a way to participate in the lives of those that remain in the hometown, even from afar. When scanning Facebook pages, one will find frequent postings with uploaded videos of important events and celebrations in the hometown and in Los Angeles. This is no less true of funerary practices. Eloy commented:

> A while ago I mentioned video recording. Let me be clear that they are not for mere pleasure or entertainment. They are posted either here or there in the pueblo, depending on where they were recorded. If they were recorded there, it is for us to watch here, and if we recorded here for them to see there. They offer a way to share these moments. They [the people living in Yalálag] understand our situation as migrants and that it is not always easy. For example, if a family member dies in the pueblo I may not be able to accompany them there, or if someone dies here they may not be able to accompany our family members here. This type of posting is simply a way of sharing.[32]

This type of mutual sharing across geographic space, so that community members in the U.S. and Mexico can see what is happening, is evident across postings. In one instance, after the death of an elder in the hometown, we found two side-by-side images (one on top of the other) announcing the man's passing. One was posted in the pueblo, the other in Los Angeles. The

32 Eloy, interview by Ana D. Alonso Ortiz and Lourdes Gutiérrez Nájera, July 14, 2016.

top image shows a funeral procession led by a group of roughly 15 young men and one young woman, members of a brass band, playing funerary marches. Immediately behind them, and plainly visible, is a wooden coffin being carried on the shoulders of several men. Behind them a large crowd is carrying white flowers. In the background stands the town's main church, whence they began this final procession towards the burial spot in Yalálag's cemetery. The caption underneath the image reads, "April 3, 2016, Yalálag, Mexico. Burial of Jose Fernandez Ruiz, 87 years old."[33] Immediately below this, the second image uploaded in Los Angeles is dated April 2, 2016. A rectangular table draped with a blue tablecloth provides the focal point. On top of the table there is a framed photograph of the deceased and a box in the right-hand corner. Behind the table are white drapes with two white doves centered just above the photograph. The message attached to this post says, "We are grateful to all the persons who have come to show their support yesterday and this morning to prepare the rosary for the deceased, Jose Fernandez Ruiz."[34]

Our respondents suggest that this kind of communication has altered the relationships they maintain with friends and relatives from whom they are geographically separated. Facebook posts corroborate this idea. Their interactions are now mediated not only by instantaneous communication through chats and posts, but also through pictures, videos, and other rich content that has become easily accessible. Thus, while Facebook does not erase geographical distances, it eases the burden of separation, providing viewers with simulated experiences, "almost as if you were there," to quote another interviewee.[35] Indeed, we would add that while communality is strengthened through virtual bonds, it is also produced through affective ties mediated by social technologies.[36] In times of personal loss, the messages conveyed are intimate, and their circulation aids in the reproduction of collective identity and a shared sentiment of belonging, despite separation across geographic space. One can only imagine the importance Facebook must play in a sociopolitical context where migrants are unable to mourn in person the passing of loved ones because they lack proper documentation or legal status.[37]

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33 Francisco's Facebook page, April 3, 2016.

34 Lisvella's Facebook page, April 3, 2016.

35 Dekker and Engbersen, "How social media transform migrant networks and facilitate migration."

36 See Lourdes Gutiérrez Nájera, "Reconstructing Zapotec Transnational Identities and Localities in a Virtual Environment," in *Indigenous Peoples in Urban Centers: Tracing Mobility in a Post NAFTA World*, ed. M. Bianet Castellanos and Ivonne Vizcarra Bordi, Proceedings, *Cahiers DIALOG*, Cahier 2 (2012): 9–13.

37 The undocumented status of immigrants in the United States was mentioned by all of our interviewees as a barrier to traveling and visiting family in Mexico.

Conclusions

In this chapter, we have focused on the ways in which the transnational perpetuation of funerary practices, intimately connected to an Indigenous expression of communality, are being reproduced and modified by Zapotec migrants living in Los Angeles to redefine borders of collective belonging. In Los Angeles, migrants continue to mourn and bury their *paisanos* following following traditions, such as reciprocity following a death (*wlhue lhaollo*), they brought with them, though these are modified to accommodate an urban environment and new social context. One innovative way to express grief and mourning is through the use of social media. Indeed, the use of Facebook, a social space that facilitates fluid contact across space and time, has provided a forum for announcing deaths and expressing grief within a transnational context. The use of videos, photographs, and even emojis by community members facilitates emotional responses that are posted online. As we demonstrate, funerary rituals between Los Angeles and Oaxaca are transformed and transnationalized. At times their continued practice reaffirms communal bonds, while at other times those are challenged. The continuity of communal bonds being extended into future generations through funerary practices is yet unclear.

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Chipamong Chowdhury

The spirit of the gift: Burmese Buddhist death rituals in North America

In late February last year, at around 8pm, U Pyinya Zawta, the abbot of the Mettaparami Buddhist Monastery in Buffalo, New York, asked me to go with him to the Center for Hospice and Palliative Care in Cheektowaga. In response to my question why, he dejectedly told me that the wife of one of his devotees was hospitalized and taking her last breath. We needed to perform our Buddhist prayer for her at the hospital. At around 8:30pm, a man came to the monastery and took us to the hospice center. Soon we arrived and her husband and his friends prepared seats for the monks to sit and a ritual mandala or space to chant. The monks put a *cīvara* (monastic robe) and other religious items on the dying woman's chest. Then, the monks chanted a prayer in Pāli, the language of the Theravāda Buddhist sacred scriptures. While the monks were praying, she was holding the *cīvara*. The next morning, at around 8am, we were informed that she died peacefully in the early morning. The monks were invited again for the funerary prayer for the dead at the Center for Hospice and Palliative Care before taking the dead body to the funeral home.

This is one of fifteen death-related events I have observed and participated in, related to the traditional Buddhist practices for the dead, the treatment of dying, and funerary rites in North America in the last seven years. These observations were part of my earlier independent research.[1] In all these observations, I was both an ethnographer as well as a participant. As a monk I was an insider, but as a researcher/ethnographer I was an outsider in these communities. In this chapter, I have made an attempt to integrate both insider and outsider perspectives. In addition to my observation and ethnographic account, and along the lines of autoethnographic theory,[2] I also draw upon my substantial knowledge of Theravāda religiosity. The data described in this chapter is mostly derived from the Mahādhammika Vihāra in Toronto, Canada, and the Mettaparami Monastery in Buffalo, New York, U.S.A.

The word "transnational" covers a wide of range issues, topics, and agendas. Here, I simply see transnational as an idea that transcends the

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1   A portion of this study was presented at the Finnish Anthropology Conference, University of Tampere, May 16–17, 2013.
2   Heewon Chang, *Autoethnography As Method* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2008).

notion of nationality and state and its use to refer to immigrant people, in this case Burmese, living in another country without complete detachment from their country of origin. I also use it to understand how the practices of death are negotiated transnationally by Burmese immigrants in North America. Like other Asian diasporas in the West, most members of the Burmese diaspora also maintain strong cultural, economic, social, and religious links to their home country. As in the country of their origins, they have common religious/spiritual leaders. Although the monks live in a different country, their religious practices remain the same, except for some minor changes.

The above story demonstrates that death does not just represent a concept, social practice, and ideology but also cultural imaginaries of a Burmese Buddhist community in North America. It also suggests that the rituals and rites associated with death and for the dead are central religious components. Interpreting Buddhism and death, George Bond rightly argues that "death has a paradoxical status in Theravāda Buddhism for it stands both at the heart of the human predicament and at the heart of the solution to that predicament."[3] The concepts of life and death are central in Buddhist philosophy and concerns as suggested by Cuevas and Stone.[4] Jan Assmann describes death as the "origins and center of culture," while Marcel Mauss considers death to be the "social fact."[5] Both Mauss's and Assmann's statements carry profound insight and particular relevance to the study of death in transnational Buddhist social history.

Throughout the history of Buddhist civilization in Asia, death is the center of human inquiry, reflection, meditation, practice, and appreciation. The notion of death is central to the philosophy of the Pāli Canon, the texts of the Theravāda.[6] The Pāli texts view death as the disintegration of life. The Pāli discourses state that non-enlightened individuals are subject to repeated death and rebirth, but an enlightened person (an arahant) is described as being beyond death and rebirth. The Buddha and his immediate disciples are said to have attained the state of deathlessness, whereby they destroyed the need to take future rebirth (*punabhava*). The biography of the Buddha describes that, along with other factors of life such as aging and illness, the image of death made Prince Siddhattha leave his palace and embrace the ascetic life in order to find liberation from death. At the age of thirty-five, Prince Siddhattha was liberated from death when he attained Buddhahood and *Nibbāna* (Sanskrit: *nirvāṇa*). For Buddhists, the cause of death is rebirth, which itself is born of ignorance and craving for the continuity of

3   George Bond, "Theravada Buddhism's Meditations on Death and the Symbolism of Initiatory Death," *History of Religions* 19, no.3 (February 1980): 237.
4   Brian Cuevas and Jacqueline Stone, ed., *The Buddhist Dead: Doctrine, Practices and Representations* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 12.
5   Jan Assmann, *Death and Salvation in Ancient Egypt*, trans. D. Lorton (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2005), 1; Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. W.D. Hall (London: Routledge, 1990), 3.
6   Bhikkhu Bodhi, *A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma* (Seattle, WA: PBS Pariyatti Editions, 2000), 210–223, 336.

the existence of life. If there is no birth, there is no death. Employing a wide range of textual, anthropological, ethnographic, liturgical art, and historical sources, scholars of Buddhism have recently begun to study the Buddhist concept of death and ritual practices.[7] These studies on Buddhist death argue that death is fundamentally human and central to all forms of Buddhism, including its moral and political institutions. In the Burmese immigrant religious world, the honoring of the dead and proper funerary practices are as vital in importance as they are in Myanmar itself.[8]

Since death in Buddhism encompasses a broad spectrum of aspects, in this chapter I focus on only three which are particularly important to Theravāda Buddhist communities in North America: namely, 1) pre-death customs, 2) funeral practices, and 3) post-funeral rituals. Special focus is given to the roles of the immigrant monks and monasteries and how they respond to death, negotiating between the living and the dead through ritual enactments and prayers for the dead. In so doing, I want to illustrate how Burmese Buddhism in North America has assimilated to North American society in the light of displacement, adaptation, and integration. As they are directly interrelated, I use the terms "funeral rites," "death rituals," and "mortuary ceremonies" to cover the full spectrum of Burmese Buddhist responses and practices related to death.

The Burmese Buddhist diaspora in North America

Regardless of their different ethnicities, the majority of settled immigrants in North America from Myanmar are Theravāda Buddhists. Theravāda Buddhism is the predominant religion in Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Bangladesh, and Nepal.[9] The word Theravāda is derived

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7   Alan Klima, *The Funeral Casino: Meditation, Massacre, and Exchange With Death in Thailand* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002); Karma Lakse Tsomo, *Into The Jaws of Yama, Lord of Death: Buddhism, Bioethics and Death* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2006); Jacqueline Stone and Mariko Walter, *Death and Afterlife in Japanese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2009); Rita Langer, *Buddhist Rituals of Death and Rebirth: Contemporary Sri Lankan Practice and Its Origins* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007); Margaret Gouin, *Tibetan Rituals of Death* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge 2010); Paul Williams and Patrice Ladwig, eds., *Buddhist Funeral Cultures of Southeast Asia and China* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Erik Davis, *Deathpower: Buddhism's Ritual Imagination in Cambodia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016).

8   Melford E. Spiro, *Buddhism and Society: A Great Tradition and Its Burmese Vicissitudes* (University of California Press), 1981, 248–254.

9   Sukomal Choudhuri, *Contemporary Buddhism in Bangladesh* (Calcutta: Atisha Memorial Pub Society, 1982); Donald Swearer, *The Buddhist World of Southeast Asia* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995); Sarah LeVine and David Gellner, *Rebuilding Buddhism: The Theravada Movement in Twentieth-Century Nepal* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2005); Asanga Tilakaratne, *Theravada Buddhism: The Ways of Elders* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2012).

from the Pāli compound words: *thera* (elders) and *vāda* (doctrine, ways, words, or advice). The followers of Theravāda trace their religious identity to the historical Gotama Buddha himself and his immediate disciples, although the usage of Theravāda still remains highly ambiguous and contentious in modern historical research.[10] Without knowledge of its historical formation and gradual development, Burmese Theravāda is adamantly believed in North America to be the oldest surviving institutionalized Buddhist tradition. For Burmese immigrants, Theravāda is not just an idea or religion, but also an ethno-political identity.

Similar to other Buddhist traditions today, Theravāda is also taking root globally, including in North America, Europe, and Australia, breaking barriers of geographic distinction, nationality, and ethnic background.[11] This global expansion of Theravāda—as well as the migration of Theravāda monks to the West, their resettlement and reconstruction of the new Theravāda Buddhist identity in the West—is what one may call "transnational Theravāda." Accordingly, transnational Theravāda is represented by a group of international Theravāda communities living in the West, collaboratively working together for the preservation of Theravāda principles, values, and practice. Because of the geographical proximity to Asia and Theravāda identity, Burmese Buddhist belief and practice are fundamentally connected to the Buddhist practices of Sri Lanka, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Bangladesh. Hence, the Burmese Theravāda community cooperates with other Theravāda communities. For example, Sri Lankan Theravāda shares many commonalities with Burmese Theravāda, and they support and participate in each other's religious events in enclaves, such as in Toronto.

The majority of the Buddhist population in North America consists of Asian immigrants and political refugees. President Lyndon Johnson's 1965 Immigration Reform Act allowed many religious figures of the world to migrate to the United States for religious freedom, helping the U.S. to arguably become the most socially, culturally, and religiously diverse nation.[12] Following this immigration policy of liberalization, like millions of Laotian,

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10 Peter Skilling, "Theravāda in History," *Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies*, 11 (November 2009): 61–94.

11 Christina Rocha and Michelle Barker, eds., *Buddhism in Australia: Tradition in Change* (New York: Routledge, 2011); Robert Bluck, *British Buddhism: Teachings, Practice and Development* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Joseph Cheah, *Race and Religion in American Buddhism: White Supremacy and Immigrant Adaptation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Janet McLellan, *Many Petals of the Lotus: Five Asian Buddhist Communities in Toronto* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Paul Numrich, *Old Wisdom in the New World: Americanization in Two Immigrant Theravada Buddhist Temples* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1996); Windy Cadge, *Heartwood: The First Generation of Theravada Buddhism in America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); John S. Harding, Victor Sōgen Hori, and Alexander Soucy, eds., *Wild Geese: Buddhism in Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010).

12 Diana Eck, *A New Religious America: How a "Christian Country" Has Become the World's Most Religiously Diverse Nation* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001).

Cambodian, and Vietnamese refugees in the 1970s,[13] thousands of Burmese Buddhist (and also non-Buddhist) refugees were relocated and resettled in the U.S., particularly in the aftermath of the Saffron Revolution in 2007. There they established many religious institutions, social organizations, temples, and meditation centers.[14] According to unofficial surveys, there are more than 100 Burmese temples and meditation centers across the United States. Although the San Francisco Bay Area and counties in the Los Angeles area in California are the two largest Burmese diasporas living outside of Myanmar, sizable Burmese communities are found in many metropolitan areas in New York, Denver, Phoenix, Fort Wayne, Boston, Seattle, Miami, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Houston, and Atlanta. Other smaller groups are located in many major cities and towns across the country, where they have recreated their own social and political institutions in contemporary American religious history. When Burmese refugees resettled in America, along with their culture, tradition, and social norms, they also reestablished cultural organizations, religious institutions, and temple networks through which they rebuilt Burmese Buddhism in America. Many people in the West interested in Buddhism, especially its traditions of meditation, have played roles in rebuilding Burmese Buddhism in North America. Many Western converts to Buddhism and sympathetic Buddhists alike have contributed to the establishment of monasteries, mostly by means of financial assistance. Many self-defined Western Buddhists or people who like the contemplative aspect of Buddhism regularly come to temples for weekly meditation.

The history of Buddhism in Canada is similar to the history of Buddhism in the United States. As in the U.S., most Buddhists in Canada are also Asian immigrants. With the explicit advocacy of the multiculturalism policy and cultural diversity in the 1970s by Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, many immigrants from Buddhists countries arrived in Canada.[15] Along with Tibetan, Japanese, and Chinese Buddhists, many Theravāda immigrants from Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar came to Canada and transplanted the seed of Buddhism. However, a large number of Canadians are already also practicing Buddhism. The academic study of Buddhism in Canada by social scientists and scholars of religion is new and largely dominated by Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan, Cambodian, Laotian, Sri Lankan,

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13 Penny Van-Esterik, *Taking Refuge: Lao Buddhists in North America* (Toronto: York Lanes Press, 1992); Janet McLellan, *Cambodian Refugees in Ontario: Resettlement, Religion, and Identity* (Toronto and London: University of Toronto Press, 2009); Kathryn Poethig, "*Locating the Transnational in Cambodia's Dhammayātrā,*" in *History, Buddhism, and New Religious Movements in Cambodia*, ed. John Marston and Elizabeth Guthrie (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 171–197; Carola A. Mortland. *Cambodian Buddhism in the United States* (Albany: State University of New York, 2017).

14 Cheah, *Race and Religion in American Buddhism*, 80–128.

15 Victor Hori, "How Do We Study Buddhism in Canada," in *Wild Geese: Buddhism in Canada*, ed. John Harding, Victor Sōgen Hori and Alexander Soucy (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 27.

and Vietnamese Buddhism.[16] Despite the news about Burmese refugees in Canadian media and in popular public discourses, the subject of Burmese Buddhism in Canada has unfortunately not begun to draw much scholarly attention. Except for one article, there are no scholarly contributions to the study of the Burmese Buddhist community in Canada.[17] For the history of Burmese Buddhist immigrants and temple history in Toronto, I have relied totally on their oral history and the publications of temples.

In order to fulfill the need for religious/spiritual services for the lay communities, the migration of Theravāda monks to Canada has continuously taken place. This has necessitated establishing places for worship, social gatherings, religious ceremonies, events, and activities. As Burmese immigration has increased across Canada, the number of monasteries has also increased. There are four Burmese monasteries: Mahādhammika Vihāra in Toronto, Ontario; Manawmaya Theravada Buddhist Society in British Columbia; the Buddhist temple in Calgary, Alberta; and the monastery of the Burmese Buddhist Community in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. As in their country of origin, these Burmese monasteries celebrate many religious and cultural events, such as Burmese New Year, water festivals, the *kathina* (offering robe-ceremony to the monks), *Abhidhamma* recitation day, and ordination ceremonies in which laypeople become temporary monks. Like in Myanmar, they celebrate the *waso* festival (the first sermon of the Buddha) in July. During this time, the Burmese monks enter into a three-month rain retreat.

Before analyzing the three customary practices of death among the Burmese Buddhist immigrants, the research sites of Mahādhammika Vihāra in Toronto, Canada, and Mettaparami Monastery in Buffalo, U.S., are introduced to provide context for this study.

Mahādhammika Vihāra in Toronto

For Burmese Buddhist immigrants, monasteries are the main sites for maintaining and enhancing their religion and culture. The temple and its community also help the bereaved family through a variety of death-related services, including chanting, funerary feeding, prayers, the memorial service, sermons, and caregiving. In fact, most post-death rituals are performed at the temple. To meet this need, the Mahādhammika temple was first established in 1989 by a few devoted Burmese Buddhists. The Burma Buddhist Association of Toronto's Mahādhammika Vihāra is one of the oldest and largest Burmese Buddhist networks in Canada. The old monastery was

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16 See also Deba Mitra Bhikkhu, *Dhamma Education: The Transmission and Reconfiguration of the Sri Lankan Buddhist Tradition in Toronto*. Ph.D. diss. (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University, 2010); John Harding, Victor Sōgen Hori and Alexander Soucy, eds., *Flowers on the Rock: Global and Local Buddhisms in Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2014).

17 Bandu Madanayake, "Sri Lankan and Myanmar Buddhism," in *Asian Religions in British Columbia*, eds. Larry DeVries, Don Baker, and Dan Overmyer (Vancouver: The University of British Columbia, 2010), 136.

much smaller and unable to accommodate more people. As the number of Burmese immigrants in Ontario increased, they needed a place for bigger communal gatherings and Buddhist ceremonies and events. In 2004, the temple moved permanently to North York, northwest of Toronto. The main shrine hall of the Mahādhammika temple is decorated with colorful murals painted by a local Burmese artist, depicting the Burmese iconographic imagination of the biographical life of the Buddha. The murals and images of the Buddha provide visitors with a vivid visual experience of Burmese Buddhist religious life and ritual cosmology. As of 2015, three monks reside at the temple: U Kovida, U Nandavamsa, and U Nandasiri. The latter two divide their time between Canada and Taiwan, spending six months in each place. Beside religious services, U Kovida played a critical role after the Saffron Revolutions in 2007, campaigning for democracy in Myanmar. He was also one of the founding members of the International Burmese Monks Organization.

Mettaparami Monastery in Buffalo, New York

To meet the spiritual needs of Burmese refugees in the area, the Mettaparami Monastery was first opened in Utica, New York, in 2008. It moved to Brooklyn in 2010, and then it relocated permanently to Buffalo in 2013. The Venerable U Pyinya Zawta is the founder and spiritual director of the temple. Many Western converts and sympathetic Buddhists helped to establish the monastery. The other two founding monks have left the monkhood. Buffalo is the second largest home of Burmese immigrants in the state of New York, and it has three temples. As a monastic democracy activist and former political prisoner, U Pyinya and the other monks of the All Burma Monks' Alliance (ABMA) also played an important role during the Saffron Revolution in 2007.[18] Upon arriving in the United States in 2008, U Pyinya traveled across North America, giving talks on the political crisis and the need for democracy in Myanmar. The ABMA and the Mettaparami Monastery have helped more than 200 political prisoner monks in Myanmar, and most of them are now free. As transnational religious institutions, the Mettaparami Monastery and Mahādhammika Vihāra have helped – and are still helping – the Burmese religious diaspora to reaffirm and strengthen their Buddhist faith.[19] Thus, Burmese Buddhism is no longer a national religion in Myanmar but a transnational Buddhism. The daily practice of Buddhism has

18 See Susie Poppick, "The Last of the Saffron Monks: A Group of Exiled Burmese Monks as They Research America for a New Sense of Purpose," First Things, January 2011. https://www.firstthings.com/article/2011/01/saffron-monks (Accessed April 15, 2017.)

19 The largest transnational Burmese religious networks in America are the America-Burma Buddhist Association (ABBA) established in New York in 1981, the Burma-America Buddhist Association (BABA) in Maryland in 1981, the Burmese Buddhist Association of Chicago (BBA) in Chicago in 1984, the Theravada Dhamma Society of America (TDSA) in 1996 in Texas, and the Dhammaloka Buddhist Society in Florida (DBS) in 2000.

been vitally important to most of the resettled Burmese in North America, just as in their country of origin. There is no significant difference between Burmese Buddhism in its country of origin and in the West. Except for some minor changes, Burmese immigrants retain exactly the same practices of Burmese Buddhism in North America. There are some inevitable difficulties faced by the monastic members and lay Buddhists. Because of work and transportation problems (due to not having a car), some lay practitioners are unable to visit the temple regularly. The monks, on the other hand, encounter some difficulties in practicing Buddhism, especially maintaining the traditional monastic discipline and practices. In Myanmar, the monks walk around to seek alms for their daily food. In North America, they cannot do this. When laypeople are unable to bring food to the temple, the monks have to cook, which is prohibited by monastic law (*vinaya*).

Some Burmese immigrants have converted to Christianity, as their resettlement was sponsored by Christian organizations in the U.S., yet also remain faithful to Buddhism and continue to participate in major traditional Buddhist ceremonies and religious events held at the temple. One distinctive character of transnational Buddhism in the Burmese religious diaspora is the mutual respect, tolerance, and support found among interreligious marriages. In the case of death, funerary rituals are conducted in both Christian and Buddhist ways. Christian priests and Buddhist monks are summoned to officiate at funerary practices. Similar to other Theravāda immigrant temples in North America,[20] Burmese temples in Toronto and Buffalo are used as the key site for cultural preservation and the continuation and transmission of Burmese Buddhism among Burmese North Americans. Besides spiritual and religious services, temples also provide other services, such as education for children, mediation, and emergency assistance.

Burmese Buddhist death rituals are multifaceted and generally done communally, often lasting several days and nights. These rituals include diverse practices, such as chanting, preaching, offering funerary food to the community, sharing merit making/giving merit for the dead, making coffin prayers, and offering alms to the monks on behalf of the dead. All of these ritual events can be summarized in three categories: 1) pre-death customs, 2) funeral rites, and 3) post-death rituals. In all of these death rituals, the monks are involved and the Pāli language and texts are used as a medium of prayers. The ritual chanting takes place during burial, at the hospital, at home, at the temple, near the coffin, and even at the cremation ground.

Caring for the dying: Pre- and near-death customs

In the Burmese religious diaspora, Buddhist monks (*phongyi*) perform a pastoral role for the lay Buddhist community. In times of difficulty, such as sickness, dying, and death, the monks are sought out by family members to give emotional support to the dying and bereaved persons and to give

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20 Numrich; Cadge; See also Cheah, "Cultural Identity and Burmese American Buddhists," *Peace Review*, 14, no. 4 (2008): 415–419.

guidance for proper funeral services. The monks provide grief counseling, therapeutic preaching, and bereavement therapy. Most importantly, however, they provide a method for how to face death and prepare for peaceful dying, which mainstream hospice and palliative caregivers term a "good death."[21] Like the practice of transnational death in Theravāda culture in the West, preparation for a good death is an essential feature among Burmese immigrant Buddhists. It is a custom that the laypeople must invite the monks to visit the dying or sick person and perform *piyit* (*paritta* in Pāli), or chanting, either at the hospital or at home. The dying person takes refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma (teaching of the Buddha), Saṅgha (monastic community), and the five precepts (*pañcasīla*). The later, which form the foundation of Buddhist ethics, consist of refraining from killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct, and drinking alcohol.[22] This is followed by prayer and blessing for the dying/sick person through ritual *piyit* chanting or the Pāli sutta—the discourse of the Buddha, namely the *Karaṇīyametta Sutta, Mahāmaṅgala Sutta*, *Satipatthāna Sutta, Bojjhaṅga Sutta*, and other smaller blessing verses from the *Paritta Sutta*. The custom of *piyit* chanting is the universal character of the pre-death ritual in the Theravāda society of South and Southeast Asia.[23] After chanting, a monk—usually the senior monk—gives a *Dhamma* (spiritual) talk on how a Buddhist should act and prepare for a good death and rebirth. His talk mainly focuses on the dying person's spiritual wellbeing.

In the spiritual talk, the monk emphasizes that the dying person should remember his/her good *kamma* (Sanskrit: *karma*) and meritorious deeds, such as giving donations to the temple and monks, going on pilgrimages, observing the Buddhist precepts, and leading a virtuous life. At the end of the *Dhamma* talk, the dying person offers a gift or donation to the invited monks. If the sick person is unable to get up or is unconscious, the donation is offered by his or her family. For instance, at the Center for Hospice and Palliative Care in Cheektowaga, which we visited, the husband of the dying person offered the monastic robe (*cīvara*) and a monetary donation to the monks for their services. Unlike the Japanese/Zen Buddhist community in North America, which has developed Buddhist chaplaincy programs and hospice initiatives to deal with death, as well as sick and dying persons,[24] the Burmese immigrant Buddhists have never felt such a need, because the temples and monks generally provide hospice-related services for the lay

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21 John Baugher, "Facing Death: Buddhist and Western Hospice Approaches," *Symbolic Interaction*, 31, 3 (2008): 261.

22 See Hammawala Saddhatissa, *Buddhist Ethics* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1997), 59–78.

23 For details, see Langer, "Chanting as 'Bricolage Technique': A Comparison of South and Southeast Asian Funeral Recitation," in *Buddhist Funeral Cultures of Southeast Asia and China*, ed. Paul Williams and Patrice Ladwig (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2012), 21–58.

24 Jonathan Watts and Yoshiharu Tomatsu, eds., *Buddhist Care for the Dying and Bereaved* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012); see also Adele Smith-Penniman, *Buddhist Resources in Pastoral Care*, Ph.D. diss. (Newton, Mass: Andover Newton Theological School, 2006).

community. This also applies to other Theravāda communities in North America.

For Burmese Buddhists, the moment of consciousness (*citta*), which is nothing but a series of memories (good or bad), is of paramount importance before a person dies, because this final thought-moment determines his or her future rebirth. Monks and family members, as well as close relatives, encourage the dying person to think of all of their good and meritorious deeds, even the smallest one, performed in the past. In Thailand, having a calm, peaceful, and pure mind at the moment of death is crucial for a happy rebirth because it takes away the fear of dying.[25] A similar belief is found in Tibetan Buddhism: "One's last thought exercises a powerful influence on one's subsequent rebirth: dying with a calm mind full of virtuous thoughts will lead to a good rebirth."[26] Listening to Dhamma talks and thinking of the Buddha and Dhamma are considered to be virtuous actions, which helps the dying person to be reborn in a happy destination or a good human rebirth. Theravāda doctrinal texts support this practice of pre-death rituals and the importance of the moment of death.[27] Rita Langer arrived at similar findings in her study of contemporary practices of death in Sri Lanka. Langer writes, "This was considered 'the perfect death' and it was generally agreed that he must have been reborn as a god. The fact that someone died while listening to chanting seems to be a great comfort for family members and friends and is frequently mentioned in a funeral house."[28] Scholars of Buddhism describe the idea of the "positive dying thought."[29] In Toronto, I saw non-stop chanting of the *paritta* for a 90-year-old woman who was resting on her deathbed. For her, as well as other immigrant Buddhists, it was an effective, powerful, and good way of dying.

All ends with fire: Funeral customs and rites

Treatment of the dead by Burmese immigrants involves crematory rites and a funerary ceremony. The funeral rites signify the final veneration for the dead, and they should be done professionally. The management, veneration, and crematory rites of a Buddhist death are articulated in Buddhist literary and archeological sources.[30] Although the mortuary custom is considered

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25 Phaisan Visal, "The Seven Factors of a Peaceful Death: A Theravada Buddhist Approach to Dying," in *Buddhist Care for Dying and Bereaved*, ed. Jonathon Watts and Yoshiharu Tomatsu (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2012), 131–148.

26 Gouin, 13–14.

27 Bodhi, 185–229; Rupert Gethin, "Bhavaṅga and Rebirth According to the Abhidhamma," in *Buddhist Forum, Vol. III, 1991–1993*, ed. T. Skorupski and U. Pagel (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, 1994), 11–35.

28 Langer, *Buddhist Rituals of Death and Rebirth*, 12.

29 Richard Gombrich, "Merit Transference in Sinhalese Buddhism: A Case Study of the Interaction between Doctrine and Practice," *History of Religions*, 11, 2 (1991): 257.

30 Julia Shaw, "Buddhist and Non-Buddhist Mortuary Traditions in Ancient India: Stūpas, Relics, and the Archaeological Landscape," in *Death Rituals, Social Order*

by Burmese Buddhists to be an extremely important ritual event, there is no ancient prescriptive text of ritual manual providing descriptive references for how Burmese immigrants should conduct mortuary rites. Since there is no formal text, both the Toronto and Buffalo Burmese communities rely heavily on memory and the oral history of funeral practices conducted in Myanmar. Due to their involvement in mortuary practices back in the home country, the monks guide the laypeople on how to perform the funeral rites and cremation. They also officiate and lead the funeral services at the crematorium. As the ultimate rite of passage, the funeral rites are highly ritualized and ceremonial but less memorial in character. In fact, I have not encountered any Burmese Buddhist memorial or commemorative service; everything involves ritualization of death. Unlike, the practice of memorial services in the West, in the Burmese immigrant society there is a post-cremation event, usually after or in seven days, when the family members invite the monks and seek to generate merit on behalf of the deceased person.

Depending on economic factors and social status, funerary practices greatly vary among Burmese immigrants. Regardless of economic disparity, however, the monks must be present to perform and navigate the funeral ceremony and disposal of the dead body. The role of the Buddhist monks in funeral practices has a twofold purpose. As Frederick Shih-Chung Chen observed:

> First, the priest conducts the purgatory rite for the deceased. Assisted by the efficacy of the sacred Buddhist scriptures, the priest preforms the funeral ceremony on behalf of the deceased with the aim of making him or her repent of any wrongdoings committed during his or her lifetime. Second, he represents the deceased and related family members in mediation with the Underworld Bureau [31]

In some cases, on the day of cremation, alms food is offered to the monks on behalf of the dead.

When a person dies, his or her family immediately calls the monks to hold a death ritual and contacts the funeral home in order to receive instructions about funerary matters. Then, the dead body is taken to the cemetery. Food, flowers, and candles are offered to the deceased, who is dressed in his or her best clothes. The time between death and cremation

and the Archaeology of Immortality in the Ancient World, ed. Colin Renfrew, Michael J. Boyd and Iain Morley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 382–403; Liz Wilson, "Human Torches of Enlightenment: Autocremation and Spontaneous Combustion as Marks of Sanctity in South Asian Buddhism," in *Living and the Dead: The Social Dimensions of Death in South Asian Religions*, ed. Liz Wilson (Albany. State University of New York Press, 2003), 29–50; Lars Fogelin, "The Place of Veneration in Early South Asian Buddhism," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archeology of Death and Burial*, ed. Sarah Tarlow and Liv Nilsson Stutz (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 227–240.

31 Frederick Shih-Chung Chen, "Buddhist Passports to the Other World: A Study of Modern and Early Medieval Chinese Buddhist Mortuary Documents," in *Buddhist Funeral Cultures of Southeast Asia and China*, ed. Paul Williams and Patrice Ladwig (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 262.

is marked by many religious and social events. In the case of the religious events, the monks are summoned for a pre-funeral rite and merit-making ceremony for the dead. This is done either at the burial place or at home, depending on suitability and communal accessibility. As for the social event, the relatives and friends visit the deceased's home for two to three nights in order to support the bereaved family. Back home in Myanmar, I was told that astrological calculations and one's horoscope generally determine the day of cremation. However, this practice does not apply in North America, as it conflicts with funeral home practices and leads to greater expenditures if the dead body needs to be kept for a longer period. Generally, the dead body is kept for three to four days. Burmese immigrants believe that the spirit of the deceased remains at home, and this can be frightening to people. These beliefs are imported from the home country.[32] Hence, in some cases, the monks are called to recite the *paritta* at home to prevent and to protect the bereaved from the spirit of the deceased.

Generally, all funeral rites commence with honoring the Buddha and taking refuge in the Triple Gem (i.e., Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha), and they end with pouring of water. This is the standard formula for mortuary practice among Theravāda communities in North America. In the middle of the funeral ceremony, the *paṃsukūla cīvara* (the shroud/rag or dust-heap robe), which was placed on the top of the coffin, is offered to the monk. At the time of the Buddha in India, this *paṃsukūla cīvara* used to be the monk's original robe.[34] As Erik Davis describes, today this has become an essential part of the funeral ritual imagination and practice of Buddhists in Southeast Asia.[33] In fact, it is the most important aspect of the ritual in the funerary process and practice that I have observed in Laotian and Thai Buddhist funeral rites in Colorado. In the Sinhalese diaspora, the *paṃsukūla cīvara* is replaced by the *matakavatthu* (a white cloth).[34] Burmese Theravāda immigrants do not use either of these. Instead of the *paṃsukūla*, a simple *cīvara* (robe) is presented to the monks during the funeral services and also during the post-funeral rituals.

Next, the monks hold the coffin and chant the verse of the contemplation of death (*maraṇassati*): *aniccā/dukkha/anattā vata saṃkhārā// uppādavayadhammino// uppajitvā nirujjhanti// tesaṃvūpasamo sukho//* ("Impermanent/suffering/no-self are conditioned things// it is their nature to arise and fall// having arisen they cease// their complete stilling is happiness"), which is followed by this Pāli verse: *sabbe sattā maranti ca// mariṃsu ca marissare// tathevāhaṃ marissāmi// natthi me ettha saṃsayo//* ("In the present every being dies// they will die in future, always died// in the

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32 See Spiro, 249.

33 Erik Davis, *Deathpower*, 138–155; for details, see Davis, "Weaving Life Out of Death: The Craft of the Rag-Robe in Cambodian Ritual Technology," in *Buddhist Funeral Cultures of Southeast Asia and China,* ed. Paul Williams and Patrice Ladwig (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 59–78. See also Mark Rowe "Contemporary Buddhism and Death," in *The Oxford Handbook of Contemporary Buddhism*, ed. Michael Jerryson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 623–625.

34 Langer, *Buddhist Rituals of Death and Rebirth*, 64.

same way then I shall surely die// there is no doubt in me regarding this")[35] The religious ritual of the funerary rite concludes with the pouring of water from a cup as a solemn act. While the family and participants pour water, the monks engage in Burmese vernacular chanting and recite the following Pāli verse: *Yathā vārivahā pūrā paripūrenti sāgaraṃ// evameva ito dinnaṃ petānaṃ upakappati//unname udakaṃ vaṭṭaṃ yathā ninnaṃ pavattati// evameva ito dinnaṃ petā naṃ upakappati//* ("Just as rivers full of water fill the ocean full, even so does what is given here benefit the dead// just as water rained on high ground moves [down] to the low land// even so does what is given here benefit the dead"). At the end, everyone utters *ahmya*, *amhya*, *amhya*, meaning "I share, I share, I share." The chanting of the Pāli verses and the offering of the robe constitute the core feature of the Burmese funeral rite in North America. Burmese Buddhists believe that through a proper religious funeral service, the dead will have a better rebirth.

At the end of the funeral rite at the funeral home, the monks and family take the dead body to the crematory. The funeral procession is very short because the body is cremated at the burial home. Like Hindus in South Asia and the Hindu diaspora in the West, Burmese Buddhists cremate their dead. Save for on a single occasion, I did not see any alternative to the Burmese Buddhist way of cremation. In Toronto, one person was buried because he was a Christian; his wife was a Buddhist. His funeral rite was conducted in accordance with both religious traditions: Christian and Buddhist. A Christian priest and a Buddhist monk performed the funeral rite together.

Merit-making for the dead: post-funeral rites

The Burmese ritual interpretation of death offers a unique understanding of the relationships between the monks, the people, and the religion and ritual entities. More importantly, it also reveals the relationship between the dead and the living. For Burmese immigrants, functionally speaking, the social relationship between the dead and the living does not end with separation. In contrast, it reinforces social bonds and strengthens the communal relationship through ritual expressivity and performance, as we have already noted. The continual presence of the dead among the living has been recognized by social anthropologists. Brian Cuevas and Jacqueline Stone reiterate "the ongoing relationship between the dead and the living, whether mediated by religious specialists or by funerals and memorial rites, in which concern for the well-being of the deceased becomes a powerful motive for moral conduct and merit-making."[36]Additionally, the post-death/ funeral rituals come to play another important role for both the deceased and the surviving family. In the Burmese community in North America, the post-death ritual occurs usually on the seventh day following death and

35 Translations are taken from Langer, *Buddhist Rituals of Death and Rebirth,* 64, and Narada Thera, *The Mirror of the Dhamma: A Manual of Buddhist Chanting and Devotional Texts* (Kandy: BPS, 2008), 15.
36 Cuevas and Stone, *The Buddhist Dead*, 24.

continues to be performed every six months or year. The prime objective of the post-death ritual in the Burmese diaspora is to generate religious merit for the dead and the living members of the deceased's family. Again, the Pāli chanting and the monks' involvement remain an integral part in all these post-funerary rites. Most post-death ritual events are done communally.

Marcel Mauss's idea of the gift[37] and its communal obligations—to give, to receive and, most importantly, to reciprocate—are very helpful for understanding the Burmese desire to make merit and create good kamma. The communal practice of making and sharing merit is the main post-death ritual in South and Southeast Asia.[38] The immigrant Buddhists from South and Southeast Asia have brought this practice to North America and incorporated it in their transnational death rituals.[39] For making and sharing merit with the dead, again Burmese people invite the monks, offer provisions of goods to them, and listen to their spiritual talk and chanting. Whatever merits they acquire by doing this, they share with the dead and other departed relatives. Burmese Buddhists believe that it is through family members giving merit that the deceased person secures a better rebirth. They also believe that even if the departed have been reborn in an unfortunate realm, such as hell or among the hungry ghosts who subsist on the offerings of others, they can be lifted from that unpleasant state of existence through the sharing of merit by family members.

Conclusion

Three aspects of death practice and their related rituals not only represent Burmese Buddhist religious piety but also provide emotional support, liberation, and hope to the bereaved members of the family. They also demonstrate improvisation and revitalization of Burmese Buddhism among the first generation of Burmese Buddhist immigrants in North America. Central to the Burmese Buddhist practice of death rituals and funerals in America and Canada is the belief that life does not terminate with physical death, but it is instead the opening to another life. This points to two essential facts of Burmese religious life: 1) the relationship between the living and the dead, and 2) the value of death and the afterlife. Certainly, the funeral rite in the Burmese diasporic society functions to fulfill the needs of both the

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37 Mauss, 39–42.
38 John Holt, "Assisting the Dead by Venerating the Living: Merit Transfer in the Early Buddhist Tradition," *Numen* 28, no.1 (1981): 1–28; Yukio Hayashi, "The Reciprocal Help and the Sharing of Merit in a Thai-Lao village: An Anthropological Study of Theravada Buddhism in Thailand," *Sociology* 105 (1989): 65–86; Charles Keyes, "Merit-Transference in the Kammic Theory of Popular Theravada Buddhism," in *Karma: Anthropological Inquiry*, ed. Charles Keyes and Valentine Daniel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 261–287; Gombrich, "'Merit Transference' in Sinhalese Buddhism" (1991), 203–219.
39 Jiemin Bao, "Merit-Making Capitalism: Re-territorializing Thai Buddhism in Silicon Valley, California," *Journal of Asian American Studies* 8, no. 2 (2005): 115–142.

dead and the living. While the Buddhist ideas of death, dying, and rebirth remain unchanged, the practices of mortuary, funerary rites, mourning rituals, burial, and commemorative practices have undergone substantial changes in North America. These changes have occurred as the result of the encounter between Burmese immigrants and the funeral industries, medical institutions, hospice care providers, and mortuary economics in North America.

Temples are an important space for children to learn the fundamentals of Burmese Buddhism, culture, heritage, and language. They are not only a space for worship and quiet meditation, but also a place for social and political functions. For the Burmese religious diaspora, Buddhism is not only transnational but transcultural in its sociopolitical scope. For instance, after the Saffron Revolution, the Mahādhammika Vihāra in Toronto and the Mettaparami Monastery in Buffalo have organized many political assemblies. Often the temples also hold weddings and marriage ceremonies. Similar to how Cambodians view their temples in America,[40] Burmese Buddhists regard their temples as a center for moral and spiritual development as well as a place for communal gathering and Burmese cultural events. Thus, these transnational temples serve as loci of symbolic unity and strength for the continuity of Burmese social and cultural integrity in diasporic society. While operating as international Buddhist networks, they also represent the uniqueness of Canadian and U.S. Buddhism, although scholars are still struggling to define what North American Buddhism is.

Through the extensive ritualization of death, funeral practices, and making merit for the departed, they maintain their distinctive Burmese Buddhist identity in North America. The rituals help them to reaffirm their Buddhist faith and reproduce Theravāda cultural values in their diasporic society. Furthermore, these death ritual events are also significantly important for both the Theravāda Buddhist diaspora and the vision of cultural diversity of North America. In terms of the former, they serve to strengthen the role of the Buddhist temple in a non-Buddhist country. However, as the second generation becomes more secular, as elsewhere and among other religious traditions in the West, despite its strong sense of religiousness, preservation, adaptation, and continuity, Burmese Buddhism in the United States and Canada will encounter serious challenges in the future, such as confusion around what is and what is not essential to the religion and its practice.

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40 Carol Mortland, *Cambodian Buddhism in the United States* (Albany: State University of New York 2017), 217.

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Jordi Moreras and Ariadna Solé Arràs

Genealogies of death: Repatriation among Moroccan and Senegalese in Catalonia

Moroccan and Senegalese migration to Catalonia (Spain) started in the nineteen-seventies. It is estimated that the majority of Moroccans and Senegalese who died during this four-decade period were repatriated to their homeland. Yet why have these groups, with a long-standing presence in Catalan society, continued to send their deceased back to their country of origin? This chapter examines "reverse migration" in the form of corpse repatriation as a component of cross-border relations between the migrants' origin and settlement countries. Repatriation is a complex process to manage, and it incurs a high cost, both in economic terms and because community solidarity must be activated. Its analysis requires the development of a transnational perspective that understands the moving of a body as part of an intense circulation of material goods and symbolic universes.

This chapter follows the work of the two authors on the Moroccan and Senegalese communities in Catalonia and how they respond to circumstances connected to death in migration. Jordi Moreras has conducted fieldwork among the Moroccan communities in the framework of a long-standing study on Islam in Catalonia.[1] Ariadna Solé based her doctoral dissertation on what she calls transnational funerary rituals, as reflected in Catalonia and the region of Kolda in Senegal; this research was a multi-sited ethnography conducted both in Catalonia and in Senegal.[2] Together, the authors have analyzed the spaces that Spanish and Catalan town halls have allocated for Muslim burial and how these institutions manage religious diversity in relation to burial spaces and funerary rituals.[3] Research was conducted using

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1 Jordi Moreras, *Musulmanes en Barcelona: espacios y dinamicas comunitarias.* (Barcelona: Cidob Edicions, 1999); Jordi Moreras, *Musulmans a Catalunya. Radiografia d'un islam implantat.* (Barcelona: Institut Europeu de la Mediterrania, 2008); and Jordi Moreras, ed. *Diaspores i rituals. El cicle festiu dels musulmans de Catalunya.* (Barcelona: Generalitat de Catalunya-Inventari del Patrimoni Etnologic de Catalunya, 2017).
2 Ariadna Solé Arràs, *Rituals funeraris islamics transnacionals. La repatriacio de difunts entre Catalunya i Kolda (Senegal).* (Barcelona: Universitat de Barcelona, 2015).
3 Moreras and Solé Arràs 2014.

ethnological, qualitative methods that include documentation (on Catalan and local laws, Islamic *fatwa*s, etc.) and semi-structured interviews.[4]

According to the latest demographic census (2017), 206,779 Moroccans and 20,273 Senegalese live in Catalonia, which has a total population of 7.5 million.[5] For Moroccans, Catalonia and the city of Barcelona began as pathways to other parts of Europe (France, Belgium, and the Netherlands). However, over the years, Catalonia itself became a destination for Moroccan workers. Family reunification started two decades later, and today Moroccans are the main foreign group in Catalonia (and in Spain). Since the early 2000s, Spain, and particularly Catalonia, has become a popular destination for Senegalese migrants, many of them coming from the region of Kolda in southern Senegal. The vast majority of migrants from Kolda arrived in Catalonia in the first decade of the 21st century and mostly through "irregular" entry.[6] Both Moroccans and Senegalese are primarily Muslims, and this raises the question of how cultural and religious diversity has been incorporated into funeral services and burial places in Catalan society.

The aim of this chapter is to explain by means of a threefold analysis the shared preference of Moroccans and Senegalese for returning the deceased to their respective countries of origin. We first analyze the costly and bureaucratically complex procedures that repatriation entails; secondly, the principle of symbolic reappropriation that is implicit in this practice; and, lastly, the mechanisms of community solidarity activated among these groups at times of death. We understand the repatriation of the dead as a transnational ritual that includes three types of processes: genealogical reconstruction, symbolic reappropriation, and community reciprocity (or solidarity).

Our hypothesis is that repatriation is not an evasive response to the difficulties of being buried in Europe in accordance with Islamic requirements, but rather that it is the expression of a desire for genealogical reconstruction and an occasion for identity expression and "community building." Death becomes the last chance for a migrant to be reconciled with their family history, even if it means going against Islamic doctrine. This requires the development of a ritualization of repatriation of deceased migrants. Repatriation has to be considered as part of the funerary ritual itself and a mechanism for reinforcing migrant communities, which are based both on religious identity and common origin.

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4   This project of analyzing the social and cultural implications of the repatriation of deceased migrants is shared with our colleague Sol Tarrés (Huelva University, Spain) in the framework of the international project "Morts en contexte migratoire (MEMCI)" (2017–2020), coordinated by Professor Lilyane Rachédi (UQAM) and financed by ANR-FRSCQ (Québec-Canada) and CNRS (France).

5   Furthermore, 60,620 people of Moroccan origin and 2,629 people of Senegalese origin who have acquired Spanish citizenship in the last decade must be added to these figures. See Statistics National Institute, www.ine.es, accessed May 10, 2017.

6   We prefer to use the term "irregular migrants" rather than "illegal migrants," since entering Spain without a proper permit is considered an administrative offense and not a criminal offense.

Genealogical death: Between group loyalty and religious observance

In his classic essay on the stranger, Alfred Schutz wrote that "graves and reminiscences can neither be conquered nor transferred."[7] He was referring to the individual nature of everything a person feels outside their country, which necessarily shapes their identity: the fact of living far from their most intimate references, periodically recalling them in the company of other displaced compatriots, and cherishing the consolation of recreating them in order to be able to pass them on to new generations. For society, the foreigner is an unknown person – a "man without history," in Schutz's words – because his footprint is still very recent. Not having shared the history of this society, the foreigner can only be evaluated by their current actions. The foreigner's desire to reclaim their original community references is, on occasion, seen as a breach of the tacit and permanent commitment to their integration as an individual and as part of a group. Without their memory being recognized, and given the weight of present obligations, foreigners may find that life paths are the only capital granted to them to assert their uniqueness.

We think that for a foreigner, death is a way to connect oneself, perhaps for the last time, with a memory of their past, with a genealogy that involves the individual and those close to them, whether they are in the host society or the place they once left behind. Depending on the way the person has lived before, after having emigrated, death can pose a significant dilemma.

Death does not often figure into the plans a person makes before emigrating.[8] Abdelmalek Sayad highlighted the fact that death reverses some of the suppositions involved in the emigration-immigration duality. For Sayad, the death of the immigrant is a death that causes discomfort for all involved, as it is unclassifiable and asks questions of everyone on the dual condition of the immigrant person "here" and the emigrant from "there."[9] Approaching the issue of dying "away from home," a colloquial expression that acquires an ambiguous meaning when a person has immigrated to another country, means going deeper into the knowledge of migration processes, especially the kinds of relationships maintained with the society of origin and constructed in the host society. Paradoxically, death serves to insist – for the last time in someone's life – on the links made by the "emigrant/immigrant" (in Sayad's words) in one or the other direction. The same is true of the level of responsibility assumed by the immediate social

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7   Schutz, Alfred "The Stranger: An Essay of Social Psychology," Conference at the New School for Social Research (1945).

8   The tragedy of those who have perished attempting to cross the Mediterranean through the Strait of Gibraltar or via other maritime routes should not be buried in collective European amnesia. The photographer Sebastián Conejo's work on the unnamed gravestones in the cemetery in Tarifa are a challenge to the memory of these people, see, http://www.diariosur.es/v/20111129/campo-gibraltar/desafio-memoria-20111129.html, accessed August 30, 2018.

9   Sayad Abdelmalek, "Preface," in *L'emigre et la mort*, ed. Yassine Chaib (Marsella: CIDIM / Edisud, 2000), 9.

network (family, friends and acquaintances, and the reference community in general) upon the death of one of its members. Death is thus an important occasion for identity expression for both individuals and groups.

It is well known that death has a dimension that is more social than intimate, and its biological component is transcended by the cultural meanings that endow it with social purpose.[10] Perhaps death in the migratory context includes those significant components to a greater degree than in the case of those buried in the same town where they were born. What is different is the degree of social responsibility that seems to be established within communities of foreigners in relation to the loss of one of their members.

First, it is understood among both Moroccan and Senegalese families that the relatives of the deceased are responsible for providing care and fulfilling ritual obligations. In the migratory context, with family being absent or only reconstructed on a nuclear model – that is, without relations based on the extended family – other members of the migrant community often end up taking on the responsibility for the care of the deceased. In such a way, the structures of solidarity that are activated have an undeniable component of reciprocity, as it is understood that the support offered will be returned in the future. The fact that this solidarity is conditioned by a scarcity of resources due to the (more or less precarious) wage-worker condition of the majority of the members of migrant communities gives greater significance to the expression of common efforts to attend to the death of one of its members.

In this context, it is important to bear in mind that the first initiatives developed by the Moroccan and Senegalese communities in Catalonia to address the death of their members were not oriented toward Muslim burial solutions, but to facilitating the body's transfer to the country of origin. This is still the case. Requests for Muslim cemeteries form part of their claims, but the fact is that repatriation remains the first option considered. That this option is maintained, even when both groups have been demographically settled for decades, suggests that the allegiance aspect of the act of repatriation of the dead remains very strong.[11]

Second, and as a consequence of the above, relatives and friends must decide what should be done when the deceased has not expressed their last wishes. By understanding that the issue of repatriating the body becomes a community responsibility and that it is the default option chosen, in spite of involving significant expenses and the transgression of religious rules, we may also understand the extent to which the death of a group member represents the strength of the community's solidarity structures.

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10 Antonius Robben, *Death, Mourning and Burial: A Cross-Cultural Reader* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2005).

11 In other work, we have proposed that the increase of demands by Muslims in the early 2000s to obtain a place in the cemeteries to bury their deceased is the result of a general claim of recognition of Muslim religious rights in Spain. See, Sol Tarres and Jordi Moreras, "Topografia de la otra muerte. Los cementerios musulmanes en Espana (siglos XX–XXI)," in *Religio in labyrintho*, ed. Jose J. Caerols (Madrid: Sociedad Espanola de Ciencias de las Religiones-Escolar y Mayo Editores, 2013).

Third, in line with this principle of community responsibility, it is understood that the handling of the deceased (the elements of Islamic thanatopraxy, from the farewell ceremony to the processing and accompanying of the body to its final destination) should remain in the hands of the members of the group, especially the closest relatives. Funeral homes usually provide Muslim communities with access to their facilities so that they may perform the ritual cleansing of the body, and it is members of the family or the community that perform the ritual. There are also unavoidable administrative procedures related to the transport of the body. When it comes to financing repatriation, cooperative initiatives set up by the communities themselves are usually preferred to insurances or bank loans.

Fourth, it is to be expected that a person who has lived in accordance with the precepts formulated by Islamic doctrine and membership in a Muslim community will also want their death to be in keeping with these. In fact, cleansing the body of the deceased and holding communal prayer, which are the two fundamental principles of the Islamic funeral ritual, are performed for most of the deceased, whether the person is buried where they died or repatriated to their country of origin. There is intense doctrinal debate on the issue of whether to follow the Islamic stricture that a Muslim be buried where they die (see "no soul perceives what it will earn tomorrow, and no soul perceives in what land it will die," in Quran 31:34) or to guarantee that their burial is carried out correctly in a Muslim country (or, by default, in a non-Muslim one, in accordance with clear requirements). The overwhelming prevalence of repatriation requires further examination, because it is rarely viewed as a transgression, despite contradicting doctrinal principles.

According to Atmane Aggoun, repatriation is a way of respecting the genealogical order by being buried alongside one's family graves in the place of origin.[12] The ideological sentiment expressed in this choice to be transported to the place of birth has more components of national and cultural affiliation than religious devotion. Death becomes the last occasion to be connected with one's family history and homeland. In the decisions that lead to repatriation, the attraction of a never-forgotten land seems to prevail over loyalty to religious instructions. According to Chaïb, the body is a "genealogical support, a proof of identity," and death is a chance to perform a process of "genealogical repair" and "reappropriation of the individual life path."[13] It is a desire that is often fed by the fear of dying a long way from the family unit and worrying that in the future one may be forgotten in its memory.

Finally, however, death may also be presented as proof of the deceased having established roots in the society in which they arrived some time before. This society may take comfort in the fact that the last desire expressed by the deceased – to be buried in the country to which they emigrated – is the perfect culmination of a process of integration begun in life. This produces

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12 Atmane Aggoun, *Les musulmans face a la mort en France.* (Paris: Espace ethique, 2006), 77.

13 Yassine Chaïb, *L'emigre et la mort.* (Marsella: CIDIM / Edisud, 2000), 23.

an idealized recreation of a process that is interpreted in a linear, cumulative way and which depends, in the end, on the will of the person involved. It is well known that social integration processes are much more complex. Nevertheless, making the decision to be buried on different soil than where one was born provides a dual proof: the testimony of the deceased to belong to the adopted society, by means of their last wish, and the conditions the society has provided for immigrants to feel part of it, whether in life or death.

The death of migrants presents host societies with the challenge of adjusting services, legislation, and structures to meet this new reality. In a paradoxical way, death reminds societies of migrants' presence through their absence, and it becomes a test of these societies' capacities to provide response mechanisms and generate a sufficiently strong feeling of belonging in all those who settled there. Behind the idea that closely connects burial with integration (as opposed to repatriation) is the question of immigrants' loyalty to the society that welcomed them. The same is true when we speak of repatriation: the genealogical reclamation of family references is proof of the continued existence of strong loyalty to the society in which they were born and one day left. In both senses, the decision the individual makes may be read as a slight against one or the other type of belonging. That is why the community normally plays an important role in the decision-making process, especially in the case of the death of a person without close family members, and the social pressure that positions repatriation as the most appropriate option, as evidenced in the Moroccan and Senegalese communities analyzed here. As explained by a leader of a religious Senegalese association: "Often it's [members] of the family of the deceased […] who are the legitimate people to collect money [for repatriation] but, actually, we see people that do not have family here. There are organizations like ours […] that play the first role [… and] we fix an amount that each person must give […] or you see people of good will who give large sums directly […] They do it anonymously because when you do something good you must do it only before God, selflessly."[14]

Thus, many different factors tilt the balance of a decision that, we insist again, is not always taken by the deceased person but by their relatives and acquaintances. Until now, this balance has continued mainly because repatriation is favored as a way of keeping genealogical links alive. According to the data provided by Funecat, a funeral services company that performs the repatriation of emigrants to their countries of origin, over 90% of the deceased of Moroccan and Senegalese origin are sent back to their home country.[15] Ultimately, it seems that genealogical connections are more significant to the migrant community than remaining faithful to the proscriptions of religious dogma.

14 Lleida (Catalonia), April 2008.
15 Funecat is a funerary company that has specialized in repatriation since 1993. The majority of foreign groups use their services. See www.funecat.com. Interview, April 15, 2015.

Repatriation as a community responsibility

Although repatriation is the preferred option of the members of both these two communities in Catalonia, it has not always been the case. Attempts to reconstruct through documents the settlement of these groups show that the absence of minimally consolidated community structures obliged them to handle deaths in the 1970s and 1980s without the guarantee of burials according to Islamic principles. Analysis of the death records in the Moroccan consulate in Barcelona revealed that the habitual practice was to bury the Moroccan dead in charity graves in municipal cemeteries.[16] From the 1990s onwards, this type of burial practically disappeared – although not totally – due to the intervention of the Moroccan communities themselves, who favored the repatriation of the body or managed to secure burial in one of the existing cemeteries.[17] The first repatriation initiatives we found were linked to the increasing tendency to contract repatriation insurance offered by banks in the countries of origin as a way of guaranteeing that emigrants' foreign currency would return to their country.[18] Various consular delegations also recommended these family insurance companies' services. However, there were still people without any insurance coverage, for whom the costs of sending the corpse to its country of origin were covered by solidarity collections. More recently, mutual initiatives have arisen in communities, so that the repatriation of the deceased can be guaranteed in a cooperative manner. Therefore, the increasingly prevalent response of Moroccan and Senegalese groups where repatriation is the preferred option is indicative of the progressive consolidation of their communities' organizational structures.

Repatriation is a bureaucratic process in which various actors intervene: the deceased person, their family members and next of kin, family members in the place of origin, members of their community, companies and associations, consular delegations, funeral companies, and the public administrations of the two countries between which the body's transport is made. Its analysis involves considering the interactions generated between them. In this section, we will principally analyze the ways in which Moroccan and Senegalese communities have themselves organized the repatriation of their deceased.

First of all, repatriating a corpse is a complex process that usually takes

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16 Jordi Moreras, "Morir lejos de casa", in *Atlas de la inmigración marroquí en España*, eds. Bernabé López García and Mohamed Berriane (Madrid, Ministerio de Trabajo y Asuntos Sociales y Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2004).

17 The Muslim plot in Collserola started to function in 1997. In principle, this was meant to serve the Muslim community living in Catalonia at that time. But the cemetery was sponsored mainly by members of the Arab community in Barcelona, without the participation of representatives of the Moroccan and Senegalese communities. Also, a Muslim mortuary was opened in 2007 in the cemetery of Montjuïc in Barcelona, so that Muslim communities could have a space where Islamic thanatopraxy could be carried out on their deceased, see Moreras and Arraràs.

18 Moreras, "Morir lejos de casa".

between 10 and 15 days, though with delays it can take up to a month. The international transport of dead bodies is regulated by the multilateral Agreement on the Transfer of Corpses (1973). First, the law requires that any corpse that will not be buried within forty-eight hours following death must be embalmed; in practice, this means that every repatriated corpse is embalmed. International regulations also require that corpses be transported inside hermetically sealed coffins. Funeral companies in Catalonia have adapted to take care of this process.

In accordance with diplomatic law, consulates take responsibility for the bureaucratic procedures arising from the repatriation of their nationals in the case of their death. Despite the fact that a so-called funeral passport is granted by the health authorities of the country in which the death occurs, the consular delegations provide the documentation required to identify the deceased and determine their region of origin. Depending on each consulate's organizational capacity, it is possible to find a service that specifically attends to the death of its citizens. Historically, the Moroccan consulate in Barcelona has developed a support program in the case of deaths, establishing a death register and defining a protocol for action. The Senegalese consulate in Barcelona also facilitates the administrative processes that correspond with transport to the country of origin, without taking on the expenses of repatriation.

Repatriation is very expensive. Repatriating a body to Morocco or Senegal costs between €5,000 and €8,000. These costs can be covered by repatriation insurance but also through community solidarity. Various banks and companies engaged in sending currency offer their clients products aimed at covering the possibility of repatriation in the case of the death of a family member. Among Moroccans in Catalonia, the most significant is Banque Populaire, by means of its insurance company Maroc Assistance, which offers various products, including savings programs, the handling of remittances, and repatriation. They have been supported by consulates and migrant associations such as the Amical de Trabajadores y Comerciantes Marroquíes (Amical of Moroccan Workers and Traders). Others are Wafa Bank, BNCE (Banque Nationale de Commerce Extérieur), and Attijariwafa Bank, which offer extensive coverage of the deceased as one of their main financial products aimed at Moroccan communities living in Europe. Some Senegalese insurance companies also provide this service in Catalonia, such as the Compagnie Senegalaise d'Assurance et Reassurance (CSAR).[19]

Alongside these business initiatives, other community activities have emerged to offer an alternative handling of repatriation that eschews any economic profit and is directed by mutual interest. Nevertheless, in the case of the Moroccan community, some of these projects have fallen into disrepute due to poor management and lack of economic transparency. We

19 It is interesting to note the fact that Catalan financial institutions in the late 1990s incorporated repatriation insurance in financial services specifically aimed at foreign customers. In the case of Muslim communities, this type of product has not been very successful, since it is considered to incur interest (*riba*), which is contrary to Islamic doctrine.

المؤسسة الاسلامية للرعاية اللطر كونيس

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صندوق نقل جثمان المتوفين الى بلاد الإسلام

لكي تمر اللحظات الصعبة بشكل أسهل

تقدم المؤسسة الإسلامية للرعاية لمنخرطيها المقيمين باسبانيا خدمة نقل الجثمان الى بلد الأصل
في حال الوفات لأي سبب كان. من أجل الإستفادة من هذا العمل الخيري يجب الإنخراط في المؤسسة. تكلفة الإنخراط
مبلغها 40 يورو سنويا لكل عائلة؛ فمن بين الخدمات التي تؤديها المؤسسة تغطية النفقات الناجمة عن نقل جثمان المتوفي
الى بلده الأصلي من مكان الوفاة إلى مكان الدفن وذلك مظمون سواء كانت ناجمة عن مرض أو أي حادث كان,وهذه هي
الميزة الرئيسية لهذا الإنخراط

مجال تغطية النقل يسري مفعوله في حال الوفاة العادية أو حادثة سير من إسبانيا إلى :

المغرب   الجزائر   تونس   ليبيا   مصر   و   سينغال

بعض الشروط المهمة :

1 : المنخرط الأعزب لابد خل معه أفراد عائلته.
2 : المنخرط المتزوج بد خل معه زوجته و أبنائه الغير المتزوجين.

فعالية الإنخراط : تبدأ فعالية الإنخراط من الشهر الموالي لشهر الإنخراط و ينتهي في الشهر
الموالي لنهايته ، مثال : ـ إذا تم تسجيل المنخرط في شهر مارس ،فبداية الفعالية تبدأ في أبريل
ـ إذا كانت فعاليةالإنخراط تنتهي في فبراير ,فتعتمد الفعالية إلى شهر مارس

مهم: في حالة وفات المنخرط (في هذه الحالة الأب المتزوج) في بلده فالمؤسسة تؤدي لزروجته 1000 يورو

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VENDRELL 1 - VENDRELL 2 – VILANOVA – FIGUERES – GUADALAJARA

- MOLLERUSA – ZARAGOZA – TERRASSA -

للمزيد من المعلومات الإتصا ل بالهوائف التالية ، أو بالمساجد المسجلة أعلاه .

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أسس هذا الصندوق في أو كتوبر 1997   بطوريدمبر

Image 005: Pastoral Islamic Community of Tarragona, 2010. Photo by Jordi Moreras.

will compare two specific initiatives to assess how they legitimate themselves as alternatives in the business of handling repatriation. The first case (Image 005) was proposed midway through the first decade of the 2000s by a series of local Muslim communities – mainly Moroccan – in order to carry out repatriation that would adhere to Islamic requirements as much as possible. The fact that the different communities that participated in this initiative share the same doctrinal line – Salafism – allows the orientation of this proposal to be understood: it sought to set itself apart from the economic interests of repatriation and the delegation of the care for the body of the deceased into non-Muslim hands.

Image 006: Islamic and Cultural Centre of Catalonia, 2016. Photo by Jordi Moreras.

The second case is a much more recent initiative proposed in 2014 by an Islamic cultural center in Barcelona in order to make it possible to include burial and the handling of repatriation in their activities and services. The information poster reproduced (Image 006) combines a series of elements that contradict each other somewhat. On one side is quoted a fragment of the Quran that recalls the unpredictable nature of death and how nobody knows where they will die, but it also features an image of a passenger plane. The other side includes an image of a coffin, the use of which is obligatory

in Spanish legislation but not permitted in Islamic burial practice, which requires that the deceased be interred in direct contact with the earth.

In accordance with the regulation of funeral and repatriation services in Spain, both initiatives have had to depend on recognized companies. This means, they do not intend to become Islamic funerary companies or insurers, but merely promoters of a model of repatriation directed exclusively towards their community.[20]

Despite these initiatives and the relatively widespread subscription to repatriation insurance among Moroccan families established in Catalonia, community collections are still organized, as some people continue to die without insurance policies, and there is a desire to send money to families in Morocco. News of the death of a member of the community activates collective mechanisms of solidarity. A death is announced by family and friends, and the mosque is often responsible for organizing the collection of voluntary contributions, as well as taking care of ritual procedures for the body's purification at local funeral homes. In these circumstances, it may be observed how the death of one member can actively involve the local community, which acts on the basis of a principle of reciprocity that guarantees that similar situations will also be taken care of in the future.

Some Senegalese also individually purchase this kind of insurance (usually with local banks), but, unlike Moroccans, they tend to prefer community solidarity instead of individual insurance. This community solidarity mainly takes two forms: solidarity savings and spontaneous money collections. Senegalese people tend to organize themselves in different kinds of associations that play a key role in community building but also in constructing transnational networks. These associations contribute to corpse repatriation. *Dahiras* are religious associations where followers of the same spiritual leader gather to pray. Members of Mouridiyya and Tijaniyya, the two most important Islamic orders in Senegal, organize themselves in *dahiras* both in Senegal and abroad. One also finds associations where members come from the same village or region. Some of these function exclusively as a means of gathering savings in order to pay for repatriation. *Tontines* (*nadd* in Wolof, *tege* in Pulaar) are another kind of association, which collects savings and gives credit without interest on the basis of mutual trust.[21] Finally, there are other associations—more visible in Catalan society—that engage in cultural events, language classes, and other activities to help the Senegalese adapt to Catalan society. Some of these also participate in co-development

20 The reasons why Spain has still not created Islamic funeral service companies like other European countries are related to the particular characteristics of the sector, which in recent decades has witnessed a strong trend towards the monopolization of the management of cemeteries and funeral services by large companies, thereby leading to the closing of traditional funeral parlors.

21 Similar organizations exist in different countries and are known internationally as ROSCAs (*Rotating Savings and Credit Associations*). In the African context, they are groups of people sharing different links (profession, neighborhood, etc.) that gather to regularly invest a constant sum of money on the basis of mutual trust (e.g., €50 every month). Following an established order, a different member of the group in turn receives the total gathered amount.

projects in Senegal. There is a federation of these Senegalese associations called *Coordinadora d'Associacions Senegaleses de Catalunya* (CASC).

As noted above, some Senegalese associations provide help by maintaining solidarity savings to aid sick members and to assist with corpse repatriations. Members contribute a small amount (five, ten, or twenty euros) every month to the common savings of these associations.[22] In some cases, these funds are also used for the associations' other expenses, like festivals or cultural activities. When the deceased is a member of an association and has regularly paid its fees, an allotment of money from the common funds is dedicated to their repatriation. Occasionally, some funds are dedicated to repatriating the corpses of compatriots who were not members of the association. In any event, because these funds are usually insufficient to cover the total cost of the repatriation of a body to Senegal, collections have to be organized as well.

Everyone is invited to participate in the collection of funds for repatriation: neighbors, family, friends—whether Senegalese or not—and members of the Senegalese diaspora from all over Spain and Europe. These collections are important community events and mobilize a great number of people. In fact, it is not necessary for those who contribute to have known the deceased personally. Though it is not their function, *dahiras* usually contribute to the repatriation of their own members, as well. Collections are usually organized voluntarily by someone who knew the deceased and has prestige among the community, such as the leader of an association or a religious leader. The amount gathered, therefore, depends mainly on the social capital of the deceased, their status within the migrant community and participation in religious or community events.

Among both Moroccans and Senegalese, the community solidarity that flourishes when money is collected to transport the body of the deceased is based on a form of reciprocity: the donor knows that this will be repeated when they die.[23]

When interviewed, public servants, authorities, and funeral home managers usually see this kind of solidarity, especially spontaneous collections, as evidence of a lack of foresight and disorganization among Moroccan and Senegalese groups. It is not appreciated that it is instead proof of the internal solidarity of these groups, as well as a way of observing the vitality of community bonds. Today, despite the fact that most Moroccans do have insurance that covers most of the expenses of repatriation, the community continues to collect a sum of money to send to the family in Morocco. What is most significant is that the forms of insurance are essentially individual and personal, while community solidarity connects the deceased with the group.

Thus, the community response to organizing repatriation can be understood as what Françoise Lestage calls "reappropriation."[24] Participating

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22 Similar practices are reported by other authors. See for example, Agathe Petit, "Des funerailles de l'entre-deux. Rituels funeraires des migrants Manjak en France," *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions 131* (2005).

23 Aggoun, 95.

24 Lestage, Francoise, "Le dernier voyage des migrants mexic*ains. Ethnographie du retour des defunts." Caravelle 91 (2008).*

is a way of showing oneself to be a member of the community, but also a way of claiming the deceased as a member of the community and symbolically "reappropriating" them. We would argue that the mobilization to organize repatriation has to be seen as a ritual in itself or as part of the funerary ritual.

Repatriation as the last ritual

Systematic repatriation produces what Ruba Salih calls a "transnational ritual," which takes place in a transnational division of ritual space.[25] The transnational funerary rituals between Catalonia and Senegal or Morocco are an example of a ritual transforming itself, and one that we can truly call "transnational" because it takes place partly in Catalonia and partly in the country of origin. As said before, the aspects of the Muslim funerary ritual that are always performed in Catalonia, regardless of whether the body is repatriated or not, are the ritual ablution of the body and a funeral prayer that usually follows the cleansing. Moroccan and Senegalese groups commonly organize gatherings for performing invocations (*du'a*) and reading the Quran. What is more, in the local mosques during Friday midday prayers, the names of the dead are normally read aloud, especially when they are people who acquired importance in the group, in this way making an appeal for solidarity between the community and the deceased and their relatives.

The decision of whether to be buried in Catalonia or in the country of origin can create some doctrinal conflicts around the difficulties of performing a proper Muslim burial in Catalonia. Outside of religious debates, however, the decision made regarding the place of burial can be seen as a way to link oneself to a reference group and to a reference space. This reference group and space is, on one hand, the country, family, or town of origin and, on the other, the migrant community that mobilizes to organize and pay for the repatriation.

Repatriation also allows for the performance of a proper funerary ritual in the country of origin. As argued by those who support a transnational perspective on migration, phenomena linked to migrant groups also take place in the country of origin. The demands made by the family in the country of origin for the body to be repatriated have to be taken into account when analyzing repatriation. Death in a distant place can hinder bereavement and the realization of the funerary ritual.[26] Thus, repatriation of the corpse is a socially sanctioned way of ending the transitory state that migration causes, facilitating bereavement, while the funerary ritual offers a symbolic return that was not possible when the migrant was alive. Using

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25 Ruba Salih, "Reformulating Tradition and Modernity: Moroccan Migrant Women and the Transnational Division of Ritual Space," *Global Networks* 2, no. 3 (2002).

26 Katy Garnder, "Death, Burial and Bereavement among Bengali Muslims in Tower Hamlets, East London." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 24, no. 3 (1998), and "Death of a migrant: transnational death ritual and gender among British Sylhetis," *Global Networks* 2, no. 3 (2002).

Lestage's words, families need to symbolically "reappropriate" the deceased.[27] Due to the economic and administrative reasons that make it difficult for Senegalese to travel to Europe, this usually requires the return of the body. By returning the body of the deceased and allowing their funerary ritual to take place, the absent person enters the family and society again.[28] The reception of the body of the related person means beginning to close the mourning process, which starts with the announcement of the death of the loved one and lasts until they can be buried. In the case of Moroccans and Senegalese in Catalonia, there results a situation that is very common in other contexts: double funerals. One funeral takes place in the country of emigration (involving a ritual bath and prayer) and the other surrounds the burial of the corpse once the deceased has been repatriated to their place of origin (prayer, burial).

Additionally, seeing the deceased allows any doubts about the identity of the dead person to be removed. For this purpose, repatriated bodies normally travel in a casket that has a window through which the dead person's face can be seen. This is especially important for families in the countries of origin, for whom losing a family member to emigration may be almost the same as their disappearing forever. The loss of all practical contact with the person and their remains can only be compensated by their return, the sight of their body, and positive confirmation of their identity.

In Morocco, the arrival of the body of a person who has died abroad is seen as the culmination of the final return of that person, who at some point decided to migrate to another country and who, perhaps, occasionally returned to visit their relatives for a few weeks per year. In the cemeteries of many rural villages in northern Morocco (where the majority of Moroccans living in Catalonia come from), the graves of the returned now have a prominent place. In Senegal, funerals are large events requiring great effort and huge amounts of money. Feeding and hosting family members and other participants are the biggest expenses for the bereaved family. For the duration of the funeral, the family of the deceased has to prepare food for all the attendees. Guests may stay for several days or even weeks. This is especially true in the case of repatriation, when it may take a long time for the body to arrive.

Ruba Salih points out how transnational rituals are used to distribute symbolic and economic resources between the country of settlement and the country of origin, with each being "simultaneously crucial in the cultural and political economy of migrants' lives."[29] The repatriation of the corpse and the performance of the funerary ritual thus allow the relatives to acquire a degree of symbolic capital or, in any case, not to lose it by suffering the shame of not fulfilling their obligations to the deceased and their family. In Senegal, this makes it possible to acquire honor or prestige for the relatives and the migrant community. Gift exchange (*sadaka*) during funerals has

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27 Lestage.
28 Abdelmalek Sayad, *La double absence. Des illusions de l'emigre aux soufrances de l'inmigre* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1999).
29 Salih, 222.

great importance as a means of maintaining family bonds, and the return of a dead body has to be seen as one of these exchanges.

In principle, according to Islam, the body has to be buried quickly. Only men may dig the grave and accompany the body to the cemetery. The body is placed on its right side, facing in the direction of Mecca. Bodies are usually buried directly in the ground, covered only with a shroud, but corpses that come from abroad tend to be buried in the coffin they were transported in, as these are sealed and very hard to open.

The presence of graves of the emigrated in the places of origin can also be understood as one of the manifestations of this "reproduction." Friday mornings are the preferred time to visit the cemetery and pray for the deceased. In Morocco, it is common for migrants returning for summer holidays to visit the graves of family members and other acquaintances who died after emigration and were then repatriated. These visits encourage conversations that strengthen the conviction—and public announcement to family members and acquaintances—of a desire to also be repatriated after death.[30]

For all these reasons, the community organization of repatriation can be seen as a ritual in itself or as part of the funerary ritual. It is a ritual that is debated from the viewpoint of Islamic doctrine, yet nonetheless it also has great power for community building. No doubt, Islam is important when seeking to understand these rituals; however, it is not the key element that explains the preference for repatriation. While Islam provides these funeral rites with elements that shape them and elements that link them with sacredness, and it can help build a shared identity, the way in which rituals are performed is not a mere translation into action of the doctrine based on Islamic texts.

Repatriation is a means of accomplishing what are understood as obligations to the deceased as well as to relatives at home. Repatriation can, therefore, revitalize and strengthen links with the country of origin. In turn, it allows these ties to be used as references for community building through ritual. If, in accordance with classical theories about funerary rituals, they contribute to constructing and reconstructing groups that have lost members, a transnational ritual helps build a "transnational community." Rituals that take place both in the country of settlement and the country of origin reveal the emergence of transnational identities and new scenarios of belonging. At the same time, they help to build bonds within the migrant community based on religious identity and common origin.

In this sense, Karen Fog Olwig's reflections are especially useful. The author's research on Caribbean migrants in the United Kingdom highlights how individual and family networks become part of self-perceived communities through the performance of funerary rituals. Ritual in this context generates a sense of community, providing "a context for reflecting on the meaning of belonging associated with both experiences and relationships that are connected with a place of origin." She defines the

30 Interview with the father of a Moroccan family, Barcelona, May 25, 2015.

funerary ritual as a "context of community construction."[31] This definition may also be applied to this research, as the mobilization to move a corpse generates a self-perceived sense of community, a community built though ritual practice, which is created around the performance of this mobilization when "reappropriating" the deceased.

Conclusions

The case of Muslims in Western countries is paradigmatic of migrant groups that tend to repatriate their deceased. However, among migrant groups there are numerous ethnographic examples of the preference for repatriation that cannot be explained using religious arguments. We suggest, then, that we should focus our interest on the construction of new transnational funerary rituals and what they mean for migrant communities and the ties with their homeland. In other words, having spaces for Islamic burial in Europe will not end repatriation.[32]

Outside of religious debate, then, we can see decisions made in regard to the place of burial as a way to link oneself and be linked to a reference group and to a reference space. This reference group and space is, on one hand, the country, family, or town of origin and, on the other hand, the migrant community mobilized to organize and pay for the repatriation. We find Lestage's (2008) notion of "reappropriation" especially pertinent. This reappropriation takes place both in the country of origin and in Catalonia. Taking control of the repatriation of a body is a way of reinforcing community among migrant groups, which in itself could be considered part of a ritual in constant flux.

This reappropriation usually entails the presence of the body in the country of origin, but forms of "compensation" may also be found. An interesting example is offered by Agathe Petit, who explains how Manjack migrants in France have a tradition of sending a suitcase containing the clothes and personal belongings of the deceased back to the country of origin.[33] We also documented a similar practice in the region of Kolda in the south of Senegal, called "bringing the calabash" (*artigool hoorde*), since a dried calabash was the traditional way of transporting personal belongings when traveling. Performing a funerary ritual in the country of origin is a means of "reappropriating" one member of society.

Different authors have also interpreted repatriation in terms of "genealogical repair" or "return to origins." According to Atmane Aggoun, Yacine Chaïb, and Khadiyatoulah Fall, the feeling of identity expressed by the decision to be moved to the place of birth has more national and cultural dimensions than religious ones, even when the decision is validated

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31 Karen Fog Olwig, "A Proper Funeral : Contextualizing Community among Caribbean Migrants," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute 15* (2009).

32 See Moreras and Solé Arraràs.

33 Petit 2005. "Des funérailles de l'entre-deux: Rituels funéraires des migrants Manjak en France," in *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions* 131: 87–99.

religiously.[34] In the foreword of *L'emigré et la mort*,[35] which deals with the death of migrants, Abdelmalek Sayad provides some key ideas for the interpretation of the importance of solidarity and the reinforcement of community ties that every death generates. He states that solidarity around a death is "a matter of belief, a matter of faith, not of religious faith, but of faith and of belief in the affiliation to a country even when one has left or deserted it; it is the primacy of the group on each of its members individually; in short, in the religion of the group, or better, in the group as a religion."[36] Sayad insists on the principle that repatriating a body is a means of reconciling the process of emigration, immigration, and return, thereby restoring the ties with the family left in the country of origin.

This also means that repatriation is a process that cannot be understood by observing it only in the country of settlement, but one that has to be studied in a transnational context. The double dimension of the emigrant-immigrant reality makes it necessary to study the phenomenon in its transnational dimension as a multi-sited ethnographical study with two distinct yet interconnected contexts, in the country of origin and in the country of settlement.

In conclusion, repatriation is the expression of a desire for genealogical reconstruction and an occasion for identity expression and "community building." Death becomes the last chance for reconciliation with one's family history, even though it means going against Islamic doctrine. This entails the development of a process of ritualization for the repatriation of deceased migrants, creating a transnational ritual. Migrant communities assume the responsibility for repatriation, activating several forms of solidarity. Repatriation has to be considered as part of the funerary ritual itself and a mechanism for strengthening migrant communities that is based on both religious identity and common origin.

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34 Aggoun; Chaïb; Khadiyatoulah Fall and Mamadou Ndongo Dime, *La mort musulmane en contexte d'immigration et d'islam minoritaire* (Quebec: Presses de l'Universite Laval, 2011).

35 Chaïb.

36 Sayad, "Preface," 12 [our translation].

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Commemoration III

Katarzyna Herd

Our foreign hero: A Croatian goalkeeper and his Swedish death

Image 007: To the right there is a banner with the name Ivan Turina, Stockholm, 2015. Photo by the author.

This chapter's aim is to analyze how the unexpected death of a goalkeeper originally from Croatia became relevant for supporters of Allmänna Idrottsklubben (AIK), a Swedish football club. I argue that this particular event drew the attention of club supporters and influenced them, due to the larger context in which AIK was rooted.

The unexpected death of one Croatian player from this Stockholm club, which happened in 2013, resulted in different rituals as well as a flood of merchandise featuring the late goalkeeper. Fans even visit the player's grave in Croatia. His tragic passing highlighted flexibility in national categories and let Swedish football supporters establish emotional connections that appear to simultaneously be both transnational and local, but omit the

national level. By looking at rituals, material culture, and narratives around Ivan Turina's death, I shall investigate how symbols and meanings are created and tailored to fit a specific socially constructed space. In turn, this sheds light on how transnational elements of the rituals and cult of death gain meaning in specific contexts.

In professional sports, extensive research has been done on the impact that economics has on activities, and sports have been studied in relation to a range of phenomena, including their historical development, hooligan behavior, and female supporters' participation,[1] but football can be neglected within broader cultural perspectives. Tara Brabazon comments on the issue:

> Sport is not an isolated social and political phenomenon: it is part of popular culture. While popular culture is too often dismissed as trash, study reveals the relativity of aesthetic values, the implications of technological change, the political conflicts of daily life. (…) While the racism, sexism and homophobia of sport are excessive and harmful, they also hold a teaching function, delivering lessons in how and why symbols gain power and applicability through time.[2]

In other words, the "popular" element in popular culture, especially in football, makes it prone to change and offers endless possibilities for fans to engage and put their own mark on it.[3] Because of their involvement and the creativity that they can express, fans do become active co-creators of their experience rather than passive, non-reflexive consumers.[4] Thus, looking at supporters within this environment could be regarded as a snapshot analysis of voluntary collective engagement. The event of the goalkeeper's death worked as a catalyst that revealed strategies for collective identity in a modern, urban Swedish society.

Methodologically, this chapter is based on fieldwork that took place between 2012 and 2017. The data was collected for a PhD thesis on performing and producing history in football.[5] The event forming the core of this chapter is most closely connected to AIK, but voices of supporters from other clubs are used, too. The ethnography presented here consists of three semi-structured interviews, a focus group with three participants,

1   See, for example, David Kennedy and Peter Kennedy, "Towards a Marxist political economy of football supporters," *Capital and Class* 34, no. 2 (2010): 181–198; David Kennedy and Peter Kennedy, "Football supporters and the commercialization of football: Comparative responses across Europe," *Soccer & Society* 13, no. 3 (2012): 327–340; Svenja-Maria Mintert and Gertrud Pfister, "The FREE project and the feminization of football: The role of women in the European fan community," *Soccer & Society* 16, nos. 2–3 (2015): 405–421; Jacco van Uden, "Transforming a football club into a 'total experience' entertainment company: Implications for management," *Managing Leisure* 10, no. 3 (2005): 184–198.
2   Tara Brabazon, *Playing on the Periphery: Sport, Identity and Memory* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 2.
3   See Katarzyna Herd, "Constructing football through magic – an ethnographic account of football supporters," *Soccer and Society* 18, no. 7 (2017): 1045–1057.
4   Herd, "Constructing football through magic"; Brabazon, 33.
5   The project focuses on four clubs: AIK, Djurgården's IF, Malmö FF, and Helsingborgs IF.

observations, and internet ethnography, known as netnography.[6] The netnography presented here includes articles from the Swedish newspaper *Aftonbladet*, as well as posts and pictures from AIK's official Facebook page and one Facebook conversation with an AIK supporter.[7] The event of a sudden death within a sport context is rather unusual and only a handful of cases exist in Sweden.[8] Because of its rare occurrence, there is no "norm'" as to how such a tragedy should be handled. It does not always end with the deceased gaining an iconic status.

Football's foreign legions

One of the characteristics of modern football is the relative ease with which players can change clubs. Especially in the top leagues, teams have many foreign players who are regularly bought, sold, and exchanged within a globalized football market. After the famous Bosman case, which influenced the freedom of movement of players changing clubs when their contracts expire, players can leave on free transfers.[9] This is a far cry from the "old days" when teams consisted of "local boys," lads from the neighborhood.

Richer and bigger clubs prompt a certain "muscle drain," which tends to prompt players to seek better paid positions abroad. This process has some characteristics of a modern "slave market," with men bought and sold as valuable commodities, and with prices attached to people. There are voices calling for more "regional" teams with homegrown players rather than talented migrants. There has been a considerable amount of research into the commodification and commercialization of football, and the growing number of foreign players is often listed as one element that detaches clubs from their surroundings and their local fans.[10] Supporters are often nostalgic about the past. Nevertheless, they take a pragmatic stand on the situation, and they accept that one needs foreigners to have a successful team. Foreign players have become a part of modern football.

6   Charlotte Aull Davies, *Reflexive Ethnography: A Guide to Researching Selves and Others* (London and Ney York: Routledge, 2008), 151–170.

7   For ethical considerations about ethnography, online one can consult the Association of Internet Researchers at http://aoir.org/.

8   In 2014, Pontus Segerström, a player from the club IF Brommapojkarna, died from cancer. During the team's match in Malmö, there was only one away fan in the stadium. He commemorated the deceased by placing a football shirt with Segerström's name on it accompanied by two candles and a rose (reported here, for example: https://www.aftonbladet.se/sportbladet/fotboll/sverige/superettan/brommapojkarna/article19764604.ab).

9   The case concerns Jean-Marc Bosman, who in 1995 won a court case to be able to move from a Belgian club to a French one without any fee. The case had an impact on the transfer laws within the European football market. See also http://www.bbc.com/sport/football/35097223.

10 See, for example, Richard Giulianotti, "Sport Spectators and the Social Consequences of Commodification: Critical Perspectives from Scottish Football," *Journal of Sport and Social Issues* 29, no. 386 (November 2005): 386–410.

Swedish football became increasingly professionalized in the early 1990s, changing the relationship between clubs, footballers, and fans. Although many players are not local, they manage to build connections and relationships with fans. They are featured in chants and on banners, T-shirts, and flags.[11] Still, the majority of interviewed supporters did not have a favorite player. "They will only disappoint you," said one informant, Björn, in an interview.[12] Fans might have a "seasonal idol," one that is currently in the squad and somehow stands out, but they resist becoming attached to anybody in particular. During a focus group discussion, Alex, Tom, and Robin commented:

Interviewer:	Do you have a favorite player?
Robin:	I don't like having any favorite players, because it is so easy to get disappointed.
Tom:	No…
Alex:	There are, of course, many good players…
Robin:	When they stop playing, then you can like them or have a favorite one.
Alex:	I think… I had… I can narrate this thing, eh, Lindström anecdote? (He looks at the others.) Lindström was my favorite player when I was like 15. I was in gymnasium. Mattias Lindström, he is from Helsingborg and liked the same music as I did. And he was like my total favorite. And then he played a couple of seasons and went away as "Bosman." And I had never been so disappointed. Since then I have never had a favorite player.
Robin:	You can like players because they are good for the team, make a good team. Then you can like them as a person, but not like the favorite player.[13]

It was taken for granted by my informants that one appreciates players as long as they belong to a certain team. Not surprisingly, then, many people refer to footballers as "tools" for achieving victories and trophies, for forging connections, and for helping the club, but in the latter case, only up to the point of departure. In the quote above, Robin points to an interesting dimension: "When they stop playing, then you can like them." In other words, once the player's career is over, he can be admired without any fear that he would do something stupid. In line with this, Sean J. Gammon has pointed out that retired sport stars can fall from grace because of events in their private lives, but an aura of sporting achievements still attracts attention.[14]

11 See Katarzyna Herd, *Dream Factory: Magic and Myth-making in Football*, M. A. Thesis. (Lund: University of Lund, 2013). https://lup.lub.lu.se/student-papers/search/publication/3954704.

12 Interview with Björn, Malmö, September 2012.

13 Focus group interview with Alex, Tom, and Robin, Malmö, February 16, 2015.

14 Sean J. Gammon, "Heroes as heritage: The commoditization of sporting achievement," *Journal of Heritage Tourism* 9, no. 3 (2014): 246–256.

Death is by no means a prerequisite for a player to be meaningful for a club. There is a plethora of rites and creative involvement that fans engage in, and this chapter presents only a narrow view of processes in this field. Yet, a tragic event lends itself to creating rituals.[15] Death does not guarantee long-lasting commemorations. The combination of such components as timeframe, place, and context has to be right, but there is a possibility to forge immortal links with a club.[16] After suffering heart failure, Ivan Turina entered the ranks of AIK's myths.

Narrating the foreign hero

Ivan Turina was born in Zagreb, Croatia in 1980. He died on the 2nd of May, 2013, in Solna, a suburb of Stockholm, Sweden. Throughout his career, he played in various clubs in Croatia. His international career included playing for clubs in Greece, Poland, and Sweden. At age 32, after having been diagnosed with heart failure, he was found dead in his home. His tragic fate was widely reported in the press. He was described as a great player and a person who won the hearts of AIK supporters with his brilliant saves and friendly attitude.[17] In a Facebook conversation, one supporter remarked that fans could relate to Turina, who had always been friendly and liked the modern style of football culture, including flares.[18] Numerous AIK supporters were able to say how and where they learned about his tragic death. For example, Kristian said:

> I was actually working a late shift so I did not hear about it right away. It was a friend… a Hammarby supporter actually, that called me and told me then… and actually it was a Hammarby fan who first came with flowers to pay respect. So it was not only us, it was… everybody.[19]

The Swedish capital is divided between the football strongholds of AIK, Hammarby IF, and Djurgårdens IF. The constant rivalry between them is marked across the city. However, the star's death brought football fans together. Turina was not caught up in the cultural boundaries of Swedish football. Consequently, his death evoked emotions even amongst football

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15 See, for example, Robert Hertz, *Death and The Right Hand* (Aberdeen: The University of Aberdeen Press, 1960); Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1960).

16 There have been several instances of players dying suddenly. For example, David Longhurst died in 1990 while playing for York City. A stand was named after him and in 2010 there was an anniversary commemoration. See www.yorkpress.co.uk/news/4882932.Fans_pay_tribute_to_tragic_York_City_footballer_David_Longhurst/.

17 Anders Johansson, Robert Laul, Stefan Holm and Fredrik Falk, "AIK-målvakten Ivan Turina har avlidit," *Aftonbladet,* May 2, 2013. Available at: URL http://www.aftonbladet.se/sportbladet/fotboll/sverige/allsvenskan/aik/article16704035.ab.

18 Oskar, Facebook message to author, June 26, 2017.

19 Kristian, phone interview, April 28, 2016.

supporters who normally did not empathize with AIK. The tragedy of his death caused a shockwave that passed through the broader network of football supporters and affected actors entangled within complex relationships. As Kristian recalled, it was a supporter of another club who came first to pay him respect. Turina was also commemorated by all of the football clubs in Sweden. I witnessed this during a match in Malmö. Turina's number on the football shirt was 27, and when the 27th minute of the match came, footballers stopped playing and spectators started clapping.[20] Football fans and clubs can be adversaries, but mutual respect exists.

People are often able to recollect their whereabouts at a specific moment in time in the occurrence of tragic, traumatic events. In psychology, such recollections are called "flashbulb memories."[21] Many remember, for example, where they were or what they were doing when the World Trade Center was attacked in 2001 in New York. Although Turina's death had less meaning in terms of the global population, it was a real trauma for the football world in Stockholm, still manifesting moments of commemoration during matches.[22] Since the goalkeeper did not have deep roots in Sweden, and he spent only three years there his links to the country were predominantly in, through, and with football.[23]

Many reflected on how and when they learned about Ivan's death while connecting to the collective memory of the club. Thus, this sudden death grew into a sort of traumatic event that became an important part of AIK's mythology. Narratives told around the late keeper grew in number. When asked about Ivan's death, Maria could recall a brief meeting she had with him:

> I met him before he died. I met him on Monday. He was injured and was walking down the stairs… and then we heard that he died. During that match, I had to comfort people and they comforted me. When Turina died… Oh, he was there with us. We were losing and then we won in the end. So during the first half I cried for sorrow, and during the second half I cried for joy.[24]

The match she referred to was the first match played after Turina passed away. The team was losing but then won in the end, and Maria attributed the victory to Turina's spirit that was present at the arena. The goalkeeper was

20 Field notes, 2013.
21 More details about the phenomenon are to be found, for example, on the web page of the American Psychological Association: http://www.apa.org/monitor/2011/09/memories.aspx.
22 Field notes, 2017.
23 Margery Hourihan, commenting on the narrative structure of the hero's quest, suggested that there is a pattern allowing the audience to identify a hero figure, with harshness and difficulties being aspects of it. She remarked further that the "notions of male physical strength, force, potency and skill constructed by sport are translated into social concepts of masculine authority and power" and that those elements lend themselves to hero stories. See Margery Hourihan, *Deconstructing the Hero: Literary Theory and Children's Literature* (Routledge, London, and New York, 1997), 15.
24 Maria, interview, Stockholm, March 5, 2015.

gone, but his story continued. He became part of the textuality of the club. The presupposition here is that all cultural phenomena can be treated as text.[25] The story of Turina's death was appropriated through individual narratives, such as Maria's and Kristian's. His status as a player was *decontextualized* from being "another foreign player," *textualized* to be used effectively (in the sense of "he died for us"), and used then in a *recontextualized manner* in the following matches and seasons as a meaningful and important figure for the club and AIK's identity.[26]

Turina's foreign background reflects an accepted, yet lamented characteristic of modern football. Players constitute a very mobile workforce. As mentioned above, fans are aware of the low commitment level in the "foreign legions" of football. This does not stop them from quickly forging tense emotional connections with players, no matter where they come from.[27] Individual commitment does not depend on the place of origin of the fans themselves. One does not have to be born in Stockholm to be a true AIK supporter. The same logic can be applied to players. As my informant remarked, Turina seemed to embrace the spirit of AIK, of being very confident and ready for a challenge. He added that Turina understood and appreciated his supporters' efforts.[28] Instead of building a discourse around the origin of a player, connections are established based on each player's commitment to the team, as well as the role they play in the club and the degree to which they demonstrate attitudes and a willingness to enter such relationships. Fans relate to players who, in their own words, show "some heart," have respect for the club and supporters, and give that "little extra."[29] When asked about their preferred player in current squads, fans often point to players who are not the biggest star but who work patiently in the background, and who show some personality and try to connect with the club, even for a short period of time. In this way, heroes are chosen. Such a structure seems to free people, at least to some extent, from focusing on categories like nationality or ethnicity. It is related more to building something together, like the club's identity and history.

The anthropologist Arnold van Gennep commented that strangers are regarded in many societies as possessing strange, magical powers.[30] In this context, Turina's transnational character can be seen as a strength rather than hindrance. It allowed him to enter the realm of AIK's mythology. To create a myth, one cannot have a complete image closed in upon itself.[31] Rather, it is an interplay of form and meaning that endures and keeps myths alive. A myth works on impoverished, "evaporated" meaning that "empties itself," leaving the form open to the possibility of being further filled and

25 See, for example, Clifford Geertz, "Deep play: notes on the Balinese cockfight," in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 412–453.
26 Alf Arvidsson, *Folklorens Former* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1999), 173.
27 See Herd, *Dream Factory*.
28 Oskar, Facebook message to author, June 26, 2017.
29 Erik, interview, Malmö, February 10, 2015.
30 Van Gennep, 26.
31 Roland Barthes, *Mythologies* (London: Random House, 1972), 127.

interpreted with new significance.[32] Turina's death provided a form that could be easily understood and moved further to produce new levels of meaning: a dead hero is a recognizable pattern. Furthermore, Turina was relatively removed from the Swedish context and the geographical/cultural background of the nation. This, in turn, provided his status as a player and person with a degree of ambiguity and lack of fixed meaning. It let AIK supporters claim ownership of Turina and the memories they had about him.

The narratives that were woven around the event entangled Turina in a series of emotional connections to the club. Narratives are described by David Herman as sources for "folk psychology," being an attempt to understand the world and what is happening in it.[33] Because of the sudden and final character of Turina's death, fans made sense of it by treating the goalkeeper as a sort of "connector" between them and their club. Narratives transformed the body into a path for the ever-present current of emotions between people and the elusive institution of a football club. It should also be mentioned that this tragic death happened just a year after AIK's beloved Råsunda stadium was closed and dismantled. The club had to move to a large, new arena called Friends Arena,[34] which many fans criticize for being too generic, not good for football, and not belonging to AIK. Furthermore, this sudden change of location contributed to the growing importance of the dead goalkeeper. As the stadium was void of memories or glories, its emptiness was eagerly filled with Turina, the departed hero, who lent himself to the process of building connections between the new space and the club.

Stories about great dead figures are swiftly woven into the making of a specific social group or nation. In this way, a person is converted into a mystical being via their death, which marks the domain of heroes.[35] Such a narrative leads the main character, Ivan Turina, into the realms of immortality, which is achieved through the help of those who compose the stories. As Aleida Assmann points out:

> Physical death could be overcome by immortalizing the name and deeds of the individual, and in such a culture the poet was held to possess a special gift (or magic power) of long-distance communication, thanks to which he could address even the unborn generations of the future.[36]

This short quote marks a very special ability that poets have, namely, to immortalize a dead person. As Assmann puts it, the "poet's function was that of a gatekeeper to eternal glory." But the emphasis on the protagonist of the narrative is only one side of the coin, and already in Renaissance writing

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32 Barthes, 117–118.

33 David Herman, *Basic Elements of Narrative* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 20.

34 Torbjörn Andersson, *Spela fotboll bondjävlar, del 2. Svensk klubbkultur och lokal identitet från 1950 till 2000-talets början* (Stockholm/Höör: Östlings Bokförlag Symposion, 2016), 382–390.

35 Arvidsson, 38.

36 Aleida Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 29.

Image 008: Turina's grave in Croatia decorated with supporters' scarves with colors representing AIK. Picture retrieved from AIK's Facebook photo album called 'Ivans gravplats'. Pictures were uploaded online in 2016.

the poets became equally celebrated for their ability to guide a dead person to eternity. In other words, composing these kinds of narratives celebrated not only the hero, but also the writer.[37] This point translates also to Turina and the fans, the composers of his fame. Although supporters and the club continue to pay homage to their dead goalkeeper, they glorify themselves as well in their striking persistence and ability to compose narratives around his death. To grant immortality, one has to have special powers. Being able do it brings fame and recognition to fans and AIK as well.

Rituals for football immortals

Any kind of fandom invites various forms of engagement and participation, and new opportunities to create artistic expressions are welcomed.[38] Many of my interviewees claim that people come to watch the supporters and not the game on the pitch.[39] Banners, chants, and various routines create a specific atmosphere at stadiums. The framing of a game has become very important, and many supporter organizations work actively to regularly create new

37 Ibid., 37.
38 Jakob Löfgren, "For the company, the fun, I forgot that bit…the excuse to dress up – Discworld-fandom i Wincanton som intertextuell lek," Budkavlen (2012), 26–44.
39 Jonatan, interview, Malmö, March 21, 2013.

songs and displays. They also need new themes. Drawing from Henry Glassie's work, one can say that tradition sustains the process of deriving the future from the past.[40] It creates an image of the club and its supporters; it also helps to establish stability when many drastic changes have happened. Turina's death was an opportunity to create a ritual which would last and become a tradition that is future-oriented, consolidating fans for seasons to come. Rituals can be very diverse, as folklorists Sims and Stephens point out:

> Rituals, then, require a set of beliefs and values that group members accept and want to have reinforced. The ritual works to teach their importance by emphasizing – even acting out – their values or beliefs. Like tradition in general, most rituals are simultaneously static and dynamic, with core features that are typically repeated and recognizable but with room for great variation, depending on the group.[41]

Condolences to AIK and Turina's family came from all across Sweden. Additionally, during the subsequent fixtures in the Swedish football season, matches were interrupted in the 27th minute, as Turina's number was 27. The routine was then adopted so that during every match, at home and away, AIK supporters would stop their usual chants and pay their respect to the late goalkeeper: fans raise their hands, shout Ivan Turina's name, and clap rhythmically. This lasts for about a minute. If AIK plays at its home arena, Ivan's picture is on display and the dates of his birth and death are shown in digital numbers around the stadium. This commemoration has become a routine part of how fans support their club, and it is integrated into the repertoire of chants and songs used by AIK. But as life goes on and Ivan's death moves further back in time, some are concerned with the preservation of this emotional display. One supporter, Kristian, said:

> And the chant that we have, we… well, it is so that you always think "the next match and the next match," but we try to keep this one, to keep the feeling, and I know that people try so that it is really sung and stuff, done properly.[42]

The routine has to be performed "properly," as Kristian stated. Everyone in the standing section is supposed to raise their hands and shout the goalkeeper's name. When fans stand together, they are aware of the powerful image they can create. Thousands of hands raised up, thousands shouting "Ivaaaaan Turina," provide a strong and respectable display. Still, Kristian pointed to the past-present-future pattern that exists here. Although historical elements and narratives appear all the time, the focus is on the upcoming matches, possible victories, and titles to come. Keeping something like Ivan's chant alive can be tricky. New songs, new players, and upheavals come at a fast, steady pace. Kristian elaborated further by explaining that

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40 See Henry Glassie, "Tradition," *The Journal of American Folklore* 108, no. 430 (1995): 395–412.

41 Martha Sims and Martine Stephens, *Living Folklore: An Introduction to the Study of People and Their Traditions* (Utah: Utah State University Press, 2011), 99.

42 Kristian, phone interview, April 28, 2016.

there was an awareness of this process amongst supporters, and because of this, some fans are particularly interested in doing it well and doing it right. He indicated that, in his opinion, as many people as possible should join in, concentrate for sixty seconds on the dead goalie, and perform the routine. This ritual is highly visual, and as with any kind of ritualizing behavior there is usually consciousness about the aesthetics of the performance.[43] It is a loud statement of remembrance and the commitment to honor a dead player, but it also bears lineages of significance to the club.

One could also say that while performing the ritual, fans perform emotions. It is an emotional setting when several thousand people commemorate a player, and it stirs and creates a specific atmosphere.[44] In this context, emotions are employed to function in the ritual. Expressions of grief and sadness after a death has occurred are acceptable displays of emotions. Furthermore, emotions undergo historical change in terms of the way they can be performed.[45] While the chanting can be deemed an exaggerated form of behavior, it is nevertheless viewed as a beautiful and admirable way to remember Ivan Turina because the function of the ritual goes beyond Turina as a person. It becomes a statement of commitment to AIK and the supporters' ability to forge a connection with the club.

Materializing a cult of the dead

Another level of commitment emerged when some of the supporters traveled to Croatia in 2015, 2016, and 2017 to visit Turina's grave on the anniversary of this death. In 2016, the grave was decorated with flowers and AIK memorabilia, like football scarves, and then photographed. Photos were then posted online on AIK's Facebook page.[46] A picture uploaded by a fan in 2017 lacked AIK-related decorations, but it was uploaded on the anniversary of Ivan's death. An interviewed supporter commented that about eight to twelve people travel especially for the anniversary, whereas others combine it with other purposes, like vacation.[47] This could be related to the ancient custom of caring for the dead.[48]

Such behavior could be described as a pilgrimage. Alex Norman, a scholar writing about tourism and religion, provides a definition of pilgrimage that stresses the individual importance and the experience of a visiting traveler, rather than a connection to an official religious cult.[49] Thus, visiting places related to celebrities can be classified as a pilgrimage. In the case of Turina's grave, the visitors are few. His status for Swedish pilgrims is relevant because

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43 Arvidsson, 155.

44 Monique Scheer, "Are emotions a kind of practice (and is that what makes them have a history)? A Bourdieuian approach to understanding emotions," *History and Theory* 51, no. 2 (2012): 209, 193–220.

45 Ibid., 195.

46 The picture was retrieved in 2016 from AIK's Facebook page.

47 Oskar, Facebook message to author, June 26, 2017.

48 Aleida Assmann, 23–24.

49 Norman 2011, 321.

Image 009 During the 27th minute the big screens at Friends Arena, AIK's home grounds, showed the image of the dead goalkeeper with the text 'In memory of Ivan Turina 1980–2013'. Picture by the author on May 29, 2017.

of his final club, not his achievements per se. In that sense, he has a certain position as long as he is connected to AIK. The celebrity status is negotiated through a socially constructed context. In March 2018, an Italian player died suddenly after a short illness. He was a captain in a club called Fiorentina, having moved there in 2016 from another Italian club. His funeral was attended in mass by fans who chanted, flew banners, and threw scarves at his coffin.[50]

Victor Turner referred to a pilgrimage as a liminal space, the sacred that is the center, compared to the profane periphery of everyday, secular life.[51] This, of course, presupposes Turner's point, borrowed from van Gennep, about liminality.[52] The journey to Turina's grave is specific, and it does resemble more "religious" pilgrimages, which Turner described.[53] First, there is a celebration of a migrant worker, who became important through his tragic passing. Second, it happens within a group of supporters. The pilgrimage gains meaning within the framework of the club.

Caring for the dead is not limited here to the family circle, but relative strangers take it up. One could note that in order for it to work, the ritual had to be shared through a media platform that connects AIK fans. It cannot

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50 See http://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-43338134/fiorentina-fans-sing-at-davide-astori-s-funeral.

51 Turner 1973.

52 Caroline Bynum Walker provided a constructive critique of liminality, showing that in some contexts it works only when one accepts a specific, privileged, and male point of view. See Bynum Walker, "Women's Stories, Women's Symbols: A Critique of Victor Turner's Theory of Liminality," in *Readings in Ritual Studies*, ed. Roland L. Grimes (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996 (1984)), 71–86.

53 Victor Turner, "The Center out There: Pilgrim's Goal," *History of Religions* 12, no. 3 (1973): 191–230.

stand in isolation, as it has to enter the domain of AIK, the last context of relevance for Turina as a professional football player. Turina's memory is fragile and dependent on upcoming events, situations, and even the new heroes who are going to appear. Thus, sharing photos is a reminder and a message that some of the fans take care of remembering. It creates an image of the club as caring for its players, even the dead ones, but it also transforms the dead person. In this case, it connects him strongly to the Swedish context through the performance of emotions constructed through help of the materiality of the grave and the black and yellow scarves.[54]

Sharing pictures online allows for an intertextual reading of the symbols embedded in the visit.[55] A grave that is placed in Croatia has been decorated in 2016 in the colors of a Stockholm team, representing some specific supporter organizations. The scarf featuring Turina has a text in Swedish: "Always missed, never forgotten." Photographing this display allows others to do the reading and add meanings to it. Stockholm, AIK, the selected organizations, and a football player from Croatia are woven together to produce meanings relevant for a certain group in the Swedish population.[56]

Maurice Halbwachs stated: "We can understand each memory as it occurs in individual thought only if we locate each within the thought of the corresponding group."[57] The deceased goalkeeper transcended national borders and transformed national divisions into connections in the context of football. Fans are used to displaying flags of players' origins; for example, AIK has Finnish flags with texts about its Finnish players.[58] After Turina's death, fans came with Croatian flags. However, making a yearly pilgrimage calls for an almost inordinate commitment, considering the length and importance of Turina's stay in the club. Furthermore, given the multitude of players who come and go, one cannot remember everyone who has ever played in an AIK shirt. It also contributes to the building and maintaining of AIK's collective memory. Walter Burkert notes about traditions found among ancient cultures:

> The burial, almost as important as the battle itself, was far more lasting in its consequences, for it left an enduring "monument." It almost seems as though the aim of war is to gather dead warriors, just as the Aztecs waged war in order to take prisoners to use as sacrificial victims.[59]

Burkert pointed out that the actual killing might not be the most important thing. It is the commemoration, the ability to transform a person of flesh

54 Scheer, 194.

55 Michael Worton and Judith Still, *Intertextuality: Theories and Practices* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), 1–44.

56 Ibid., 17.

57 Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 53.

58 Field notes 2016.

59 Walter Burkert, "The Function and Transformation of Ritual Killing," *Readings in Ritual Studies*, ed. Roland L. Grimes (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1996 (1983)), 67.

into a symbol for the entire group, which is of significance in this case for the club.

Since AIK supporters persist in commemorating their late goalkeeper, they create memories for the entire group. Turina persists because he has been applied and used on various occasions. This might be an example of a rather violent creation of a collective memory. The word "violent" here means quick and abrupt, disregarding the time needed for memories to consolidate. The historian Jan Assmann acknowledged Halbwachs's statement that individuals compose memories that are transmitted socially and are relevant to a group.[60] However, Assmann was also critical of Halbwachs's approach because it offered few insights as to the evolutionary character of memories.[61] Together with Aleida Assmann, Jan Assmann differentiated between communicative and cultural memory. The first is "based exclusively on everyday communications,"[62] while the second is:

> characterized by its distance from the everyday. Distance from the everyday (transcendence) marks its temporal horizon. Cultural memory has its fixed point; its horizon does not change with the passing of time. These fixed points are fateful events of the past, whose memory is maintained through cultural formation (texts, rites, monuments) and institutional communication (recitation, practice, observance).[63]

Using Assmann's terminology, one could say that the commemoration of Turina seems to be floating between communicative and cultural memory. Communicative memory, according to Jan Assmann, is handed down from generation to generation and can last about eighty years. Then it moves on to cultural memory, which has a less personal connection and is more of a cultural construct. Although Turina died only a few years ago, his death happened in a specific context in which new supporters appear every year; thus, it needed to be ingrained in the narratives, myths, and routines of AIK supporters. Because of the flood of events, symbols, and references, there is a tough selection process as to what should be kept and what should be left aside. A foreigner, one player among hundreds who had been with the club for only three years, became an icon because of his unfortunate fate. "Dwelling in the past," as performed in the football context, has to have a purpose. Keeping Turina meaningful to AIK is not as easy a task as it might seem.

One of the scarves displayed on the grave features Turina himself. Scarves, shirts, banners, flags, and even tattoos commemorating him appeared after his death. The merchandise catered to the emotional connection that was suddenly established, but it also gave fans a context and permission to perform and produce this relationship. The memorabilia included objects with invested symbolic power. Sought out and cherished, the objects in turn

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60 Jan Assmann, "Collective Memory and Cultural Identity," *Kultur und Gedächtnis*, 9, 19 (1988), 127.
61 Ibid., 127–128.
62 Ibid., 126.
63 Ibid., 128–129.

evoke emotions and memories, strengthening the group through individual performance.[64] Thus, the objects are happening as well; they gain their power when they are being used, like, for example, on Turina's grave. The pilgrimage, documented in the form of digital blueprints or photographs, transforms the grave into a monument, since a grave "gives support to the private memories of the family, but a monument reaches out to a far wider community – a polis, or even a nation."[65] This transformation is possible because of the cult of death narrative created by supporters.

Turina has also appeared on two magnificent tifos – a big, elaborate canvas usually displayed at the beginning of a match. Supporters refer with pride to the large pictures depicting Turina.[66] They made history of their own and showed the creativity and strength of the AIK tifo group. Such artifacts are emotionally loaded, but also ephemeral. They are used just once and then they are discarded. Still, they can develop a life of their own with the help of their digital footprint and sharing on social media. Maria said in the interview that "they worked very hard and quick" to get a tifo done for the next home match, and it took them five days to complete it.[67] In a context of constant change, one has to act fast. With the intensity of the experience, the explosion of rituals and narratives manifests grief, but it also marks a pragmatic approach in using Turina after his death. Furthermore, fans were able to "work" with the situation, as they are familiar with the pattern of a fallen hero coded in the society.[68]

The described process reflects van Gennep's thoughts on how funerals become rites of passage. He noticed that the focus is not on separation, but rather on transition, as the dead has to be transported to the other world and his status has to be changed. That requires special magical techniques in order to make sure that it happens properly.[69] The transition involves the group in mourning, while the length of the rites, their style, and the withdrawal from the mourning period are dependent on the participants' connection to the dead.[70] AIK fans used many techniques to ensure that Ivan Turina would be transformed from just an ordinary player into one of the important ones for the club's identity.[71]

64 Susan M. Stabile, "Biography of a box: Material culture and palimpsest memory," in *Memory and History: Understanding Memory as Source and Subject (Routledge Guides to Using Historical Sources)*, ed. Joan Tumblety (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2013), 196.
65 Aleida Assmann, 33.
66 Field notes 2016.
67 Interview with Maria, Stockholm, March 3, 2015.
68 Hourihan, 46.
69 Van Gennep, 146–165.
70 Ibid., 147.
71 The mourning had not yet ceased as of 2019, which indicates the cultural importance of the goalkeeper.

Swedish death: Flexibility of rigid cultural markers

To sum up, Turina's death served as a driver for forging a deeper connection between AIK, its fans, and its players. It is rare for the combination of all the factors that would allow a group to create a hero overnight to come together and fall into place, as they did in the case of Turina. As sad and regretful as his death was, the event entered the domain of AIK mythology with the potential of providing Turina with immortality. By reproducing a hero's image, he became a canvas for developing new connections and emotions.[72]

This event and its commemoration demonstrate that although sport may be viewed as trivial,[73] it does generate grand symbolic meanings and it works as a catalyst to form emotional connections. In a sense, AIK supporters performed a creative and powerful cult of the dead.[74] Although there are other instances of players being commemorated by fans, they often come from the same ethnic background, (e.g. Italy). It is of interest that some of the social markers, like Turina's nationality, were neutralized, while others – namely, his connection to the club – were lifted up as the most meaningful. The narratives around Turina's death were then designed to be read in a specific way. In other words, the instructions of how to treat and interpret the goalkeeper were inserted into texts, songs, and photos.[75]

The connection that Turina had with AIK and the impact he had on the club was not obvious prior to his death or even immediately after it, nor could it be taken for granted. His story had to be constructed and performed in a specific way to fit the purposes of a modern football club like AIK.[76] However, the intense rituals that did rapidly develop, as well as the care that was taken to preserve his fragile memory (which could have evaporated the week following his death), all managed to work together to make Turina into a living tradition. As they glorified and celebrated Turina, fans and also the club celebrated themselves, their commitments and structures, and their abilities to transform a mortal person into an immortal hero. An event denoting the past—namely, a sudden death—served as a marker pushing the club forward and thus, in Henry Glassie's words, created a tradition.[77]

72 Hourihan, 39.
73 Brabazon, 35.
74 Halbwachs, 85; van Gennep, 26; Burkert.
75 Dorothy Smith. "K Is Mentally Ill," *Sociology* 12, 1 (1978).
76 See, Hayden White, *Metahistory the Historical Imagination in Nineteenth –Century Europe* (Baltimore and London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1973).
77 Glassie, 395.

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Cordula Weisskoeppel

Coping with the consequences of terror: The transnational visual narratives of Coptic Orthodox martyrdom

Legends about Christian saints who were martyrs are central to identity construction among Coptic Orthodox Christians in Egypt and their worldwide diaspora, which has spread mainly to North America, Australia, and Europe. These narratives of holy martyrs represent a model of the conviction that one's belief in Jesus Christ is worth being persecuted or even killed for. When I started ethnographic research on religious education among Coptic communities in Switzerland in 2008, I interpreted these popular stories about Coptic saints too quickly as a rhetoric of their diasporic imagination of homeland traditions.[1] During a stay in Egypt in 2010–2011, however, my perspective changed profoundly when I witnessed the consequences of a bomb attack at al-Qiddissin Church in Alexandria, killing 23 Copts and seriously injuring 80 more. In the wake of this crisis, I observed that sacred icons, as well as popular icon pictures of Coptic saints and ancient martyrs, were incorporated into the complex visual and synaesthetic narratives that play a central role in contemporary mourning practices, not only on the local and regional levels but on a transnational level as well.

When analyzing this case in detail, I found that, specific Coptic martyr cults in the Middle East and North Africa (known as the MENA region) are embedded in the widespread practice of declaring death or murder as martyrdom for one's community, either for national or ethno-religious identification. In particular, the revolutionary events since 2011 have revived and popularized the discourse on *national* martyrdom. Against this national and regional background, I ask whether it is still appropriate to characterize the narratives about Coptic Orthodox martyrs as a *culturally specific* coping strategy that supports collective remembering of the lost persons, as well as the continuity of identity constructions in the dual culture of Muslim and Christian belonging, particularly in Egypt.

However, it is important to stress that these practices of mourning and remembering about victims are not limited to Coptic Orthodox communities in the countries of origin; they have also been followed

1   William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return" in *Diaspora* 1, 1 (1991): 83–99.

closely in the transnational networks of Coptic Orthodox Egyptians living abroad. The sociocultural spaces of Coptic websites, social media such as Facebook, and other forums of digital communication were intensively used to communicate about the terror attack in Alexandria in early 2011 and the following upheavals during the revolution, in which Coptic people organized special demonstrations in order to articulate formal and informal mechanisms of discrimination being waged against them in Egyptian society. In particular, the internet, which functions as a transnational social field,[2] was activated by different groups of national diasporas (e.g., from Coptic churches in Canada, the U.S., or Australia) to express their grief and compassion for the victims in Egypt, and to demonstrate their solidarity with the Coptic Orthodox Christians and their authorities, presenting a unified group in need of international support in order to protect their rights as a religious minority, especially in predominantly Muslim societies. Within these transnational discourses and debates, references to ancient Coptic saints – most often to ancient Coptic martyrs – play a significant role. An important part of my path of anthropological understanding of these references to ancient martyrs was seeing them as an essential link in the contemporary sociocultural strategies of Coptic Christians globally coping with challenges and the consequences of violent attacks against them. Although the central part of this chapter focuses on historically transferred and contemporary narratives on Coptic martyrdom in Egypt, it is necessary to start with general remarks on death and dying in Christian Orthodox diasporas, especially as these are centered in relation to transnational life in destinations of immigration in the West.

Concepts of dying in the immigration context

The mourning and funeral practices of Coptic communities settled in Switzerland and Germany were not the primary topic of my original research.[3] As Orthodox Christians in these immigration contexts made extensive use of Catholic and Protestant churches for their services and social gatherings, I expected that they would also use Christian cemeteries or other public burial places. During various conversations and study of the related literature, I had not come across special denominational needs or ritual obligations for the final rite of passage. Nor did people talk publicly about ordinary dying and what to do with corpses, such as whether they should be

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2   Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick-Schiller, "Conceptualizing Simultaneity: A Transnational Social Field Perspective on Society," in *International Migration Review* 38, no. 3 (2004): 1002–1039.

3   Thanks to funding from the Jacobs Foundation in Zurich, I spent three months in Switzerland as a member of the "Youth, religion, and migration" fellowship; see *Jugend, Migration, Religion*, ed. Brigit Allenbach, Urmila Goel, Merle Hummrich, and Cordula Weisskoeppel (Baden Baden: Nomos, 2011). This enabled me to start multi-sited research on practices of religious education in the transnational social space of Orthodox Christians living in Europe.

transported to their respective regions of origin in Egypt.[4] Alistair Hunter's recent research on this topic among different Orthodox Christian groups in Western immigration countries confirms that there are a number of attitudes on how to deal with the dead;[5] a more pluralistic approach is apparent, and no strict religious or spiritual rules seem to exist. From the perspective of individuals, socio-emotional, spiritual, or practical reasons are articulated in support of preference for a burial location either in the country of origin or the country of one's primary residence.[6] According to Hunter, there was also a widespread attitude of indifference among his informants, attributed to Christianity's belief that the human soul is transient at the moment of death: wherever the central process of transcendence occurs, the soul is believed to leave the material body and become one with God. The question of where this transformation is symbolically located and remembered varies according to different local habits and theological beliefs. However, some Orthodox Christians may articulate the wish to be buried at special or sacred places, like family tombs, where their ancestors' remains are present, or monasteries close to the tombs of important saints.[7] During my contact with mainly adolescent Copts in Switzerland during 2008 and 2009, I was informed about the popularity of Coptic saints who still have a far-reaching influence on the transnational communities, such as Saint Mena, a Coptic martyr who lived during the Roman Empire. It was strongly acknowledged that Copts from Europe and the U.S. combined their trips to Egypt with pilgrimages to this saint's grave near Alexandria for the purpose of contemplation and prayer. These vivid stories about transnational pilgrimages to sacred sites of Coptic martyrs, along with other narratives about the country of origin, made me curious. I therefore decided to travel to the country of origin, and specifically to Alexandria on Egypt's Mediterranean coast, as this city and region were historically highly important for the genesis of the Coptic Orthodox Church. Once there, I received deeply worrying news about events leading to contemporary incidents of "martyrdom."

4   As soon as I talked to Muslim Egyptian people in Germany during another piece of research on Egyptian clubs (Cordula Weisskoeppel, *Study and Mapping of the Egyptian Diaspora in Germany*, ed. Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (Eschborn: GIZ 2015)), I realized that questions regarding where to bury the remains of family members were of special concern, especially in terms of how to finance and organize a transnational transfer.

5   Alistair Hunter, "Staking a Claim to Land, Faith and Family. Burial Location Preferences of Middle Eastern Christian Migrants," *Intercultural Studies* 32, 7 (2016): 179–194.

6   Hunter, 183.

7   Ibid., 186.

Ethnography in the aftermath of terror[8]

During my fieldwork in Coptic Orthodox communities in Alexandria, suspected Islamist extremists set off a bomb at an important and large church on New Year's Eve 2011. The bomb exploded in front of al-Qiddissin (in English: The Church of Saint Mark and Saint Peter) in the suburb of Sidi Bishr. Twenty-three Copts died in the explosion. They had just left the midnight prayer and were standing in front of the church. More than 80 other people were seriously injured. Around 1,000 people who had attended the midnight prayer in the church were witness to the attack and its tragic consequences. For this reason, I speak of a collective trauma.[9] Not only did those who were directly involved have to cope with the traumatic experience of being the target of a strategically planned terror attack, but all the family members and friends of the victims and injured persons, as well as many members of different Coptic communities in Alexandria (and from other Christian congregations), did as well. While I was not present at the church during the attack, I was, of course, deeply shocked when I became aware of what had happened during the night. In the days that followed, I tried to stay in close contact with my mostly young informants from another Coptic church in Alexandria. It became clear that I had to change my research focus away from religious education and toward the question of how Coptic people expressed their feelings after this terror attack and what kind of mourning practices were observed.

Initially, I was irritated by the fact that many Copts with whom I talked were *not* really concerned by the reports in the local and international media on the contested question of which organization or group could be identified as responsible for the terror attack. For many of my informants, it seemed quite clear that there were radical Islamic (i.e., also political) forces in Egypt who commit strategically planned violence against Christians, especially against Orthodox Copts.[10] Copts have been the target of discriminatory acts and violent attacks for centuries. Especially since Egyptian nation-building during the 20th century was highly influenced by Islamic forces, the increased influence of radical movements like Salafism and Wahhabism, originating in Saudi Arabia, have become a reality. For many Copts, the

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9   Wulf Kansteiner, "Menschheitstrauma, Holocausttrauma, kulturelles Trauma: Eine kritische Genealogie der philosophischen, psychologischen und kultur-wissenschaftlichen Traumaforschung seit 1945," in *Handbuch der Kulturwissen-schaften*, ed. Friedrich Jaeger and Jörn Rüsen (Stuttgart, Weimar: J. B. Metzler, 2004), 109–139.

10 Especially the recent series of terror attacks carried out inside Coptic Orthodox churches (in Cairo in December 2016 and in Tanta in March 2017) supports this widespread belief that there is a strategically organized campaign of violence against the Coptic population in Egypt.

question of what kind of terrorist network was responsible was, therefore, of secondary concern. Their primary focus centered much more on their identification as victims; in both formal and informal discourses, spread by Coptic institutions as well as the international media, there was no hesitation to characterize the twenty-three murdered victims as "martyrs" of the Christian faith. The fact that these persons were murdered in front of their own church during midnight prayer was sufficient for them to be called religious martyrs. From my perspective as a foreign, non-Coptic observer, I hesitated to label them as (active) martyrs, because they went there as unsuspecting believers. This first important insight was confirmed by my continued ethnographic documentation of public mourning during the aftermath of the bomb attack. During this crisis, after having experienced severe acts of violence against some of their members and the symbolic body of their church, the majority of Copts immediately referred to their historically established narrative of martyrdom, which is represented especially by images. Diverse representations of ancient martyrs, such as the popular Saint George, have been spread via icons throughout the Christian world since the 13th century.[11] However, the glorification of martyrs to sainthood has a much longer tradition.

Contemporary reference to ancient martyrs

Since the early spread of Christianity in Egypt during the 2nd and 3rd centuries CE under the leadership of the apostle Mark, Copts were accustomed to defending their faith against secular rulers from the Roman or Greek Empires, as well as against other Christian theological streams. A number of them were so devoted to the newly established religion that they were willing to die for their faith. Several sources report that under the Roman emperor Diocletian in the 3rd century, more than 800,000 Christians died as martyrs.[12] Even today, popular Orthodox icons relate the hagiographies of famous martyrs, like the story about St. Mena. He became a very popular saint in northern Egypt in the late 3rd century after his martyrdom by Emperor Diocletian, who persecuted all soldiers who openly proclaimed Christian convictions.[13] Legend has it that the corpse of Mena was found in the desert of Marriut (the region between Alexandria and Borg El Arab) by two camels taking a rest. During this incident, holy "sources"[14]

11 Robin Cormack, *Icons* (London: The British Museum Press, 2009), 74.

12 Fouad N. Ibrahim, *Das wunderbare Wirken des koptischen Papstes Kyrillos VI (1902–1971)* (Fürth: Flacius Verlag 1990), 11; Saphinaz-Amal Naguib, "The Era of Martyrs: Texts and Contexts of Religious Memory," in *Between Desert and City: The Coptic Orthodox Church Today,* ed. Nelly van Doorn-Harder and Kari Vogt (Oslo: Novus Forlag, 1997), 124.

13 Naguib, 124; Yacoub Malaty Tadros, *Introduction to the Coptic Orthodox Church* (Alexandria: St. Girgis, own publication, 2010), 26–28.

14 One version of the legend is that it might be a water source, which made this place a sacred center which then became the focus of a "regional cult" (Pnina Werbner, "Langar: Pilgrimage, Sacred Exchange and Perpetual Sacrifice in a Sufi

were also discovered at this place. From an art historian's perspective, the image of St. Mena represents the prototype of a "portrait icon,"[15] which shows the martyr as a human character stylized with symbols that communicate the main features of his story, namely, his transformation from a martyr into a holy being who made healing potentially accessible. Since the early beginnings of iconographic artifacts, they have served as representations of the living, as well as of a corpse that has transcended to a sacred condition.

Although the visual plays an important role in remembering the material condition of human beings, one should be aware that other sensual practices fuse into this process of reconstruction and imagination. Mieke Bal speaks of the "synaesthetics of visuality,"[16] which "involves bodily sensations that cannot be reduced to perception through the eye." Following the Orthodox Christian tradition of contemplation in front of icons, it is quite obvious that these religious pictures are combined with practices of narration as a kind of oral or written history and with practices of ritual performance, whereby icons are used as mediators toward their saints and as a means of communication with God (or the metaphysical). Referring to the synaesthetic or multi-sensual approach[17] shared by many authors following the "iconic turn,"[18] I documented ethnographically how these icon pictures were embedded in a wider landscape of symbolic and ritual practices of mourning among

Saint's Lodge," in *Embodying Charisma: Modernity, Locality and the Performance of Emotion in Sufi Cults*, ed. Pnina Werbner and Helene Basu (London: Routledge, 1998), 95–116; it gained further popularity during the 5th and 6th centuries due to a special oil produced for healing purposes. This oil was spread throughout the Mediterranean Sea by so-called "St. Mena bottles," which were decorated with the typical icon depicting the martyr always accompanied by two camels: See Martina Bagnoli, Holger A. Klein, Griffith C. Mann, and James Robinson, *Treasures of Heaven: Saints, Relics and Devotion in Medieval Europe*, ed. The British Museum (London: The British Museum Press, 2011), 43; Gawdat Gabra and Marianne Eaton-Krauss, *The Illustrated Guide to the Coptic Museum and Churches of Old Cairo*, ed. Supreme Council of Antiquities (Cairo, New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2007), 221; Yacoub Malaty Tadros, 27.

15 Cormack, 63.
16 Mieke Bal, "Visual Analysis," in *The Sage Handbook of Cultural Analysis*, ed. Tony Bennett and John Frow (Los Angeles, London, New Delhi and Singapore: Sage, 2008), 171.
17 David Howes and Constance Classen, *Ways of Sensing: Understanding the Senses in Society* (New York: Routledge, 2014).
18 Doris Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns: Neuorientierungen in den Kulturwissen-schaften* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 2007); Hans Belting, *Faces: Eine Geschichte des Gesichts* (München: C. H. Beck, 2013); Peter Bräunlein, "Bildakte: Religionswissenschaft im Dialog mit einer neuen Bildwissenschaft," in *Religion im kulturellen Diskurs: Religion in Cultural Discourse*, ed. Brigitte Luchesi and Kocku Von Stuckrad (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2004), 195–234; W. J. T. Mitchell, "Der Pictorial Turn," in *Privileg Blick: Kritik Der Visuellen Kultur*, ed. Christian Kravanga (Berlin: Edition ID-Archiv, 1997), 15–40; David Morgan, *The Sacred Gaze: Religious Visual Culture in Theory and Practice* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2005); Terence Wright, *Visual Impact: Culture and the Meaning of Images* (Oxford: Berg, 2008).
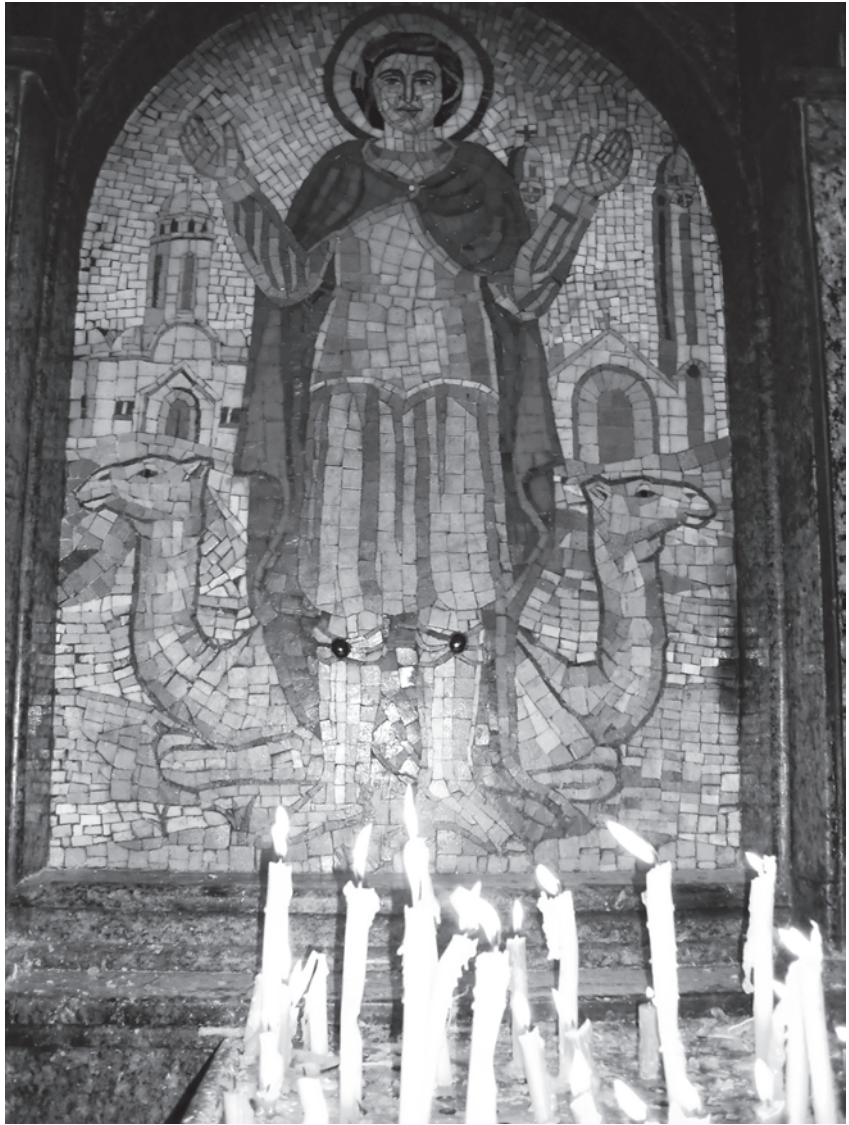
Image 010: St. Mena altar at St. Mena monastery, Borg el Arab, December 2010. Photo by the author.

contemporary Copts. The concept of *deathscape*[19] may be applied here, which includes the spatial localization of the dead and interaction between the living and dying in sites of mourning and commemoration.[20] From my reading, this concept focuses primarily on "death" as a spatial phenomenon, though as a boundary marker it is still flexible. However, I would like to emphasize much more the *practices*, the synaesthetic activities and performances of the

19 E. K. Teather, "The Case of the Disorderly Graves: Contemporary Deathscapes in Guangzhou," *Social and Cultural Geography* 2, no. 2 (2001): 185–202.
20 Hunter, 180.

living in their strategies to cope with loss and their emotional struggle to make sense of the violent and sudden death of others. Therefore, I follow Terence Wright, who postulates on a more abstract level that religious pictures, including the practices of their production and presentation, operate within "systems" of representation that "can introduce and exploit novel means of communicating through pictures."[21] I would describe this system of representation as a kind of concatenation of visual and discursive practices performed at different public locations of mourning. While these geographical sites were used mainly by local Copts in Alexandria and in northern Egypt, the practices of visualization had a particular potential to reach audiences on the transregional and transnational level. Through the internet they were able to evoke worldwide compassion for those Coptic communities in Egypt who had become targets of violent terror, particularly among the diaspora.

Visual narratives: The transformation from Bloody Victims to Holy Martyrs

After I contacted my informants via smartphone and social media, they provided me with links to Coptic websites where I could find more detailed information about the church bombing. On the website of al-Qiddissin Church, photographs of wounded survivors and the disfigured bodies of the dead had been posted. I was shocked by the direct representation of violence through these images.[22] They documented the bloody aftermath of the bomb attack and showed the grievous injuries, including bodies burned beyond recognition. One could also see how the survivors attended to the injured, accompanying them into ambulances or covering the bodies of the dead with linen or sheets of newspaper. Some photos showed the devastation of the church and entrance area. Well-known local priests were shown praying at the hospital beds of the injured, including both adults and children. I realized that many Coptic people who were not present at this midnight prayer – and, of course, also followers from the worldwide Coptic diaspora – would have done the same as me, looking at these horrible pictures on the internet and afterwards trying to come to terms with them, attempting to grasp the extreme violence of the attack.

After a few days, some of my Coptic informants directed my attention to the personal sites of deceased persons on social media and on the al-Qiddissin website. Family members had created visual life stories of those who had died. The different stages of their biographies were presented in the form of photographs showing moments of joy and celebration, "informal shots of everyday settings."[23] In most cases, a recent portrait of the dead

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21 Wright, 10.

22 See Carolyn M. Ramzy, "To Die Is Gain: Singing a Heavenly Citizenship among Egypt's Coptic Christians," *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 80, no. 5 (2015): 641.

23 Daniel J. Gilman, "The Martyr Pop Moment: Depoliticizing Martyrdom," *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 80, no. 5 (2015): 698.

person had been altered to show the individual wearing a white religious robe and a crown on his or her head.[24] The grievously wounded victims, the evidence of which had been captured in photographs taken immediately after the attack, had been visually transformed into purified bodies and glorified persons who were now ready for the "passage into 'Otherness,'" as Elizabeth Hallam and Jenny Hockey have formulated. This "passage," they write, "engages memorial making that might, on the one hand, seek to represent the corpse as a perfected and stable body that refers back to the person in life, and on the other, attempts to portray the disappearance of the body in decompositions."[25] Even before the Coptic Orthodox Church in Cairo officially declared that those killed in the bombing should be classified as martyrs, the online visual narratives appeared to be part of a process of rehabilitation and transformation, paving the way for the dead to be glorified as Christian martyrs. Meanwhile, one could find a multimedia collage of almost all of the victims, portrayed in this purified style, on the official website of the al-Qiddissin Church. They were shown as a group, all dressed in the white robes usually worn by deacons during religious services, being guided by Jesus to "paradise" in an Eden-like setting. The collage was set in a lush green and flourishing landscape, including wild animals (e.g., a lion), flowers, trees, children, and adults.[26] At this stage of the "passage to Otherness," the dead were not wearing crowns; only Jesus had a crown as a sign of his holiness. Just one week after the attack, during the Coptic Christmas, this complex collage was reproduced as a large poster and placed in the entrance hall of al-Qiddissin Church, the very location of the bomb attack. There was a heavy presence of police and soldiers, and many people went there to mourn and memorialize. Expressing their grief in front of this poster, they then documented it by using their smartphone cameras. In this way, via social media, they were able to spread the image throughout their personal networks in Egypt, as well as among the transnational diaspora.

David Morgan underlines this complex, synaesthetic view when dealing with visual representations: "Images shape religious meaning by working in tandem with other artifacts, documents, and forms of representation, such as texts, buildings, clothing, food, and all manner of ritual."[27] To this list can be added contemporary digital technologies of visualization (and of sound production),[28] which enabled members of Coptic communities to create, design, and interact with these images at the localized deathscape, as well as on a transregional and transnational level, through online reproduction and proliferation. "Turning victimhood into martyrdom requires much

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24 See also photograph in André Aciman, "After Egypt's Revolution, Christians Are Living in Fear," *The New York Times*, November 20, 2011, 6–7.

25 Elizabeth Hallam and Jenny Hockey, *Death, Memory and Material Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2001), 133.

26 See Ramzy, 652, 660.

27 Morgan, 52.

28 Charles Hirschkind, *The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons and Islamic Counterpublics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); see Ramzy, 649–670.
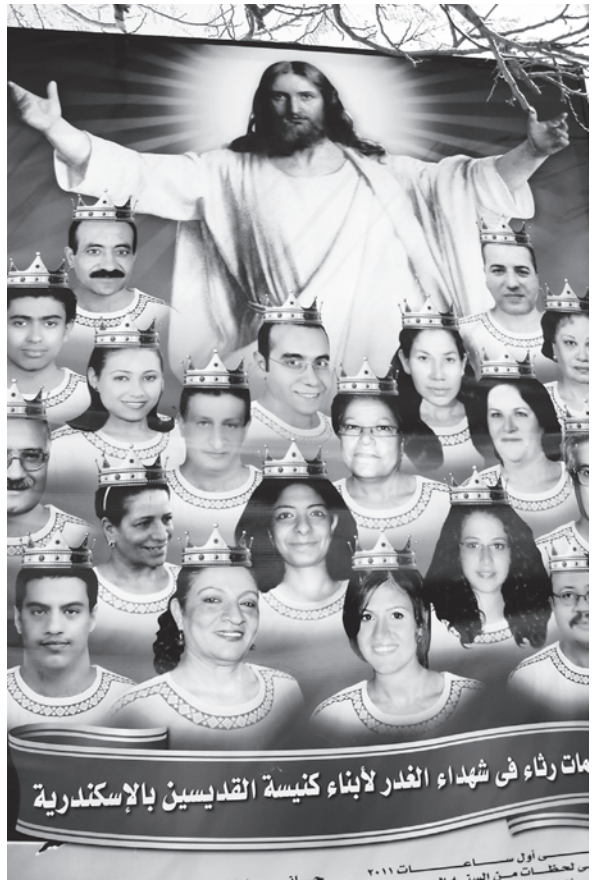
Image 011: Public Poster of the El Quedessin Victims a St. Mena Monastery, March 2011. Photo by the author.

Coptic and Muslim populations in the megacity of Alexandria. However, for external observers[34] as well as for domestic experts, it seemed very clear that the burial of the dead at St. Mena Monastery was a highly symbolic decision to incorporate the victims of al-Qiddissin into the Coptic Orthodox landscape of ritual remembrance for martyrs of past centuries. Building a collective tomb for the 23 victims of the terror attack at this site was the best opportunity to demonstrate continuity between ancient and contemporary forms of Christian martyrdom. The site, furthermore, connects Copts worldwide, through pilgrimage and the reverence of martyrs.

The legend of Saint Mena represents one of the oldest stories about a Coptic martyr in northern Egypt, yet even today Coptic people, including migrants from different countries of residence, turn to him for prayer and healing purposes. Some of his relics are stored in shrines within the monastery, and on special occasions throughout the year these shrines are visited by pilgrims for ritual purposes. It is important to note here that St. Mena Monastery was

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34 Ramzy, 657; Angie Heo, "The Bodily Threat of Miracles: Security, Sacramentality, and the Egyptian Politics of Public Order," *American Ethnologist* 40, no. 1 (2013): 149–164.

*Image 012: Corpothetic
Practices at Tombs,
St. Mena Monastery,
March 2011. Photo by
the author.*

founded and built by the Coptic Pope Kyrollos VI at the end of the 1950s.[35]
In a way, the worship of holy saints and priests has been encouraged and
sanctified at St. Mena Monastery, and it is interesting that the performative
acts at their tombs and reliquary shrines were quite similar to the practices
at the newly built tomb of the victims of al-Qiddissin.[36] One could observe

35 See Ibrahim; see also Nelly van Doorn-Harder, "Kyrillos VI (1902–1971): Planner,
Patriarch and Saint," in *Between Desert and City: The Coptic Orthodox Church
Today*, ed. Nelly van Doorn-Harder and Kari Vogt (Oslo: Nocus Forlag, 1997),
231–243. As a young monk, Pope Kyrollos VI developed an intense rapport with
the spirit of St. Mena, thus acquiring his healing power, and was also able to
perform miracles. Consequently, he became very popular among the poor and
rural population, even among Muslims. Since his death in 1971, the monastery
has prospered and grown. His personal tomb is found in one of the cathedrals,
and local as well as translocal followers make pilgrimages there, especially on the
anniversary of his death, March 9.

36 Being already sensitive to the complexity of aesthetics at such ritual sites, during
two ethnographic visits to the monastery I took a number of photographs with
my smartphone in order to add visual data to my written diary; see Marcus Banks
and David Zeitlyn, *Visual Methods in Social Research* (London, Thousand Oaks,
New Delhi: Sage, 2015); Sarah Pink, *Doing Sensory Ethnography* (Los Angeles,

how believers searched for direct physical contact with the remains of the late Pope Kyrollos VI, symbolized by the tomb in which his relics are said to be located. People surrounded the whole tomb, leaning on it, touching it with their hands, kneeling down, or having a rest between the wall and the tomb. People prayed silently or left written messages or intercessions on top. The surface of the tomb is decorated with a mimetic painting of the pope, dominated by a detailed portrait of his face. In addition, a number of black-and-white photographs on the walls surrounding the tomb show the pope at events with other religious or political authorities. People also touched these pictures to connect with his spirit, which is believed to act as a medium to God. Young deacons explained to me that this performative practice is done in order to stay in close contact with the spirit of the dead, thereby enhancing one's relationship with God.

As an observant participant, I was impressed by the way in which different body techniques and sensual practices – like touching, feeling, seeing, and articulating – became one during individual contemplation at the shrines. It was an excellent example of the "synaesthetic character"[37] of the ritual inclusion of icon pictures of saints and other holy men; the visual representations of the (dead) person were embedded in the different ways the living approached the dead. This inspired me to consider a double procedure of incorporation. On one hand, the living person tries to get as close to the dead as they can, and on the other hand, the space of the whole shrine encompasses the living, as the visitor has to expose themselves to the dead. Pinney,[38] and later Coleman, speaks of a "corpothetic character" of ritual techniques: "how believers may not merely contemplate, but also bodily engage and elide the self with images."[39] These observations of body techniques to approach the dead – or, more precisely, their remains – were clearly confirmed when I analyzed the two-hour video documentation[40] of the funeral ceremonies at St. Mena Monastery for the victims of al-Qiddissin: each of the 23 coffins was brought into the inner space of the cathedral, where a large crowd of Copts had gathered. In this final stage of the "passage to Otherness," the living were in close contact with the dead. The many participants, as well as the priests of the funeral ceremony, represented the metaphorical body of the Coptic community, which included the corpses inside the coffins. Before transporting the coffins into the collective tomb, people could carry and touch them a final time. The synaesthetic-performative practices at tombs of ancient Coptic saints and

California: Sage, 2009). Although it is not possible to include these pictures here, my analysis is based on this visual documentation.

37 Bal, 171.

38 Christopher Pinney, "Piercing the Skin of the Idol," in *Beyond Aesthetics: Art and the Technology of Enchantment,* ed. Christopher Pinney and Nicholas Thomas (Oxford, Berg: 2001), 157–179.

39 Simon Coleman, "Constructing the Globe. A Charismatic Sublime?," in *Traveling Spirits: Migrants, Markets and Mobilities*, ed. Gertrud Hüwelmeier and Kristin Krause (London, New York: Routledge, 2010), 188.

40 The first time I watched this video was on January 7, 2011, when my Arabic teacher invited me to her family's home to celebrate Coptic Christmas.

former popes or priests seemed very similar, therefore, when compared with the ritual gestures in the funeral ceremony and mourning practices at the newly established mass tomb. In both cases, the central task for living persons seemed to be to demonstrate close bodily contact with the dead martyrs, who were symbolically represented by the materiality of the coffins *and* by different modern techniques of visualization.[41] Copts in the diaspora were able to participate through virtual presence and observation. Offering these pictures, digital photos and collages, or video documentaries on the internet was only one step in the ongoing process of transformation.

The Copts depicted the stage of being victimized by means of detailed photo documentation of the disfigurement of the dead immediately after the attack. These horrible pictures were quickly replaced by the photo collage showing the victims as holy, purified martyrs.[42] I have learned that this sudden creation of digital "icon portraits" was motivated by a dominant cultural "script"[43] that assisted Coptic people in coping with their individual and collective traumas after the bomb attack (and after other historical experiences of violence). The suffering of the dead, which was so visible, but also the unspoken and unseen suffering of the survivors and all those who were involved, was channeled into this symbolic concept of religious salvation; they were suffering in the name of God, as exemplified in the stories of Jesus Christ and other martyrs in the past. The core promise of Christianity is that believers will reach salvation after this suffering. Therefore, contemplation before ancient and contemporary martyrs is not only a practice of remembrance of the dead person and their final salvation, but also a *mimetic* performance in order to *feel* closeness to the process of spiritual transformation on a subjective level. The still-living person tries to assimilate the condition of the dead as far as possible.

41 See Peter Brown, *The Cult of Saints: Its Rise and Function in Latin Christianity* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1981).

42 It should be noted that there was nearly no public documentation of the suffering and grieving of the family members and friends who had survived, and there was little visual documentation about the lengthy and complicated treatment of the severely injured persons in hospitals; see Monika Maier-Albang, "Ausruhen in Frieden: Die beim Anschlag in Alexandria verletzten Kopten werden in Münchner Kliniken behandelt," *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, February 2, 2011, 35.

43 Peter J. Bräunlein, *Passion: Rituale des Schmerzes im europäischen und philippinischen Christentum* (München: Fink, 2010), 497. Bräunlein worked on public cults of self-victimization and self-crucifying among Catholics in the Philippines; he interprets these practices as an extreme act of subjective mimesis in order to experience authentic "Passion," as represented by Jesus Christ. This kind of mimesis is acted out by the individual's body, by ritual corpothetics, and by glorifying others who suffered and were tortured until they died. These latter provide the model or the culturally and religiously legitimized script. This path of interpretation inspired me to look at Coptic mourning practices in the context of martyrdom from the theoretical perspective of mimesis: see Michael T. Taussig, *Mimesis and Alterity – a Particular History of the Senses* (London, New York: Routledge, 1991).

Final contextualization: Coptic martyrdom in the era of post-revolutionary transformation in Egypt and beyond

Traveling back and forth between Germany and Egypt in mid-January and March 2011, just when the scale of public protests against the Mubarak regime had dramatically increased, my attention was drawn in different directions. I realized that the primarily religious coping strategy of dealing with the consequences of contemporary terror by referring to ancient narratives of Coptic martyrdom was also embedded in nationwide practices and discourses to transform local victims into national martyrs. After the continued demonstrations in February 2011 and the subsequent fall of President Mubarak, I noticed a number of murals and graffiti in the city of Alexandria referring to common goals fought for in the revolution and reminding passers-by of their "local heroes." One spoke of "martyrs for the nation." Even an English-language newspaper published pictures and the names of young people who had died during the protests and demonstrations.[44] The further post-revolutionary dynamics also produced a large number of victims:[45] primarily political activists, often male, aged between 25 and 35 and educated. At this stage of their biographies, death was totally unexpected, and it was mainly their social environment, families, close friends, or teachers and spiritual masters who had to cope with the sudden loss. It seems plausible to speak of sociocultural "technologies of immortality"[46] which are applied by the living in order to construct something good out of something horrible and unbearable. Especially in the context of a revolution, people make sense of loss through concepts of heroism: those young people died for their political goals, to change the political system and to fight for more liberty, democracy, and equality within Egyptian society. These ideals are highly valuable for those who are still alive and have to bear the reality of what happened.

In connection with my ethnographic analysis of collective mourning for the martyrs of al-Qiddissin, it became a crucial insight that the concept of martyrdom in Egypt, and in the wider region of MENA, is not limited to religious motives (either in Christianity or in Islam), but can be enacted in *different* sociocultural settings. Taking part in political demonstrations, as well as attending a Christian mass, was in many cases *not* a conscious decision to die.[47] It was much more an expression of social belonging and cultural-political identity in a national (i.e., pluralistic) society. Dying or being killed

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44 Very quickly, scientific attention as well was focused on this phenomenon of "national martyrdom." See the online article by Armbrust in 2013 and articles by Ghannam, Ramzy, and Gilman published electronically in a special issue of *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology* 80, no. 5 (2015), ed. A. Mittermaier.

45 It is difficult to find precise figures, as there are no statistics or definition of when the revolutionary events ended.

46 Ghannam, 635f.

47 As it would be conceptualized in the more radical concept of self-victimization (e.g., the Tunisian case of Mohammed Bouazizi; see Johnny West, *Karama! Journeys through the Arab Spring* (London: Heron Books, 2011), 20; see also Talal Asad, *On Suicide Bombing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007).

in these different contexts could be evaluated by certain reference systems *afterwards*, either in terms of religious conviction or nationalistic-patriotic identification, or by a *combination* of both.[48] As Mittermeier et al. have also confirmed,[49] diverse technologies of visualization (digital photos and videography, poster production, graffiti, and paintings) were very attractive for the living, especially in combination with genres of popular culture on TV (e.g., music videos), on the radio,[50] or on the internet (e.g., YouTube and other social media) in order to create cultures of remembrance and accessible space for the afterlife of the dead. The digital-visual narratives of Coptic martyrs I analyzed among Coptic mourners are, therefore, *part* of popular cultures[51] in Egypt and beyond- practices by visual and digital technologies which connect Copts in diaspora with the Egyptian middle class. These technologies enable people to further articulate, represent, and contextualize their perceptions of suddenly dying and (avoidable) loss. The research of Daniel Gilman and Walter Armbrust demonstrates that this process of reevaluation of those who were killed is contested by different audiences: the question of who exactly can be defined as a "martyr" is dependent on clerical or secular authorities, but also on social control and public rumor.[52] Moreover, Gilman analyzed convincingly "how quickly a revolutionary moment can be reabsorbed into state hegemony"[53] or transformed in a process of de-politicization by the dominant class or political elites. On the other hand, Ramzy's analysis of Coptic protests during the post-revolutionary process provides further insight into the dynamics of *politicization* of religious martyrdom. Although official statements by Pope Shenouda III advised his communities to stay calm and politically distant,[54] a number of Copts took part in the Tahrir demonstrations or at the Corniche in Alexandria, fighting for more democratic principles which would enable the Christian minorities to participate on a more appropriate level in the political and administrative institutions of Egyptian society.[55] In spite of this strong sense of solidarity on a national-patriotic level among Christians and Muslims, it did not take long

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48 See Ramzy, 657.

49 Mittermeier et al. 2015.

50 As Ramzy demonstrates, there are also numerous soundscapes at work: the special music and lyric production of Coptic prayers and songs (*taratil* in Arabic) which refer to ancient martyrs and saints. These are not only activated by oral recitation (e.g., in front of the tombs) but also broadcast on Coptic radio, found on music tapes, and used as mobile ringtones; see also Hirschkind. My analysis is therefore also a contribution to the complex field of Media Anthropology; see, e.g., Cora Bender and Martin Zillinger, *Handbuch der Medienethnographie* (Berlin: Reimer, 2015).

51 Johannes Fabian, *Moments of Freedom: Anthropology and Popular Culture* (Charlottesville, London: University Press of Virginia, 1998); Samuel Schielke, "Second Thoughts about the Anthropology of Islam and How to Make Sense of Grand Schemes in Everyday Life," *ZMO Working Papers*, no. 2 (2010): 1–16.

52 See in Armbrust, for example, the case of the revolutionary Sally Zahran.

53 Gilman, 694.

54 Therefore, Ramzy speaks of a clear role model for *political* disengagement and, on the contrary, for *spiritual* engagement. See Ramzy, 659.

55 See Guirguis.

before violent clashes occurred between Coptic and Muslim neighborhoods, especially in Cairo and in Upper Egypt.[56] Beyond the level of national patriotism, the social micropolitics of cultural identities—that is, religious and ethnic differentiation—regained the attention of the public arena. The dualistic character of religious pluralism in Egypt, marked by centuries of coexistence of Christian minorities and the Muslim majority,[57] became a site of public renegotiation.[58] It became obvious, therefore, that declaring the dead bodies of different ethnic and religious groups as "martyrs" had become part of the political game between dominant and marginalized groups within Egyptian nationhood formation.[59]

Simultaneously, one has to recognize that a number of different kinds of persecution and terror attacks against Coptic Orthodox and other Christian groups[60] were conducted not only in Egypt, but in the whole MENA region since the revolutionary events in 2011. The recent bomb attacks against Coptic Orthodox churches and their followers in Cairo (2016), as well as in Tanta and Alexandria on Palm Sunday in April 2017, represent the same type of terroristic logic as the al-Qiddissin case, which I have analyzed in this chapter in detail. But as far as I am able to follow up these different events of public violence, it is still to be determined if the political message is only directed at local-regional conflicts and national politics. After the whole world witnessed the horrible killings by Islamic State/Daesh fighters of 21 Coptic Egyptian laborers in Libya in February 2015,[61] which was documented

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56 Cordula Weisskoeppel, "Transformation religiöser Kultur? Koptisch-Orthodoxe Christen im Kontext revolutionären Umbruchs," in *Transformationen des Kulturellen*, ed. Andreas Hepp and Andreas Lehmann-Wermser (Wiesbaden: Verlag Sozialwissenschaften, 2013), 57–76.

57 Lila Abu-Lughod, *Dramas of Nationhood: The Politics of Television in Egypt* (Chicago, London: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Henrik L. Hansen, *Christian-Muslim Relations in Egypt: Politics, Society and Interfaith Encounters* (London, New York: L. B. Tauris, 2015).

58 Ramzy, 657f. Especially the Maspero protests in July 2011 in front of the state-run television broadcasting building (where other mass-media production also took place), during which more than 28 Coptic members died and 200 were left injured after confrontations with the army, contributed to a new articulation of their self-consciousness as Coptic citizens, as "…the 'true inhabitors' of the land […] claiming Egypt as part of a larger sacral and Christian topography."

59 This message was communicated strongly by another public mourning march, which was organized by Copts after the Maspero "massacre" at which Pharaonic symbols were used to demonstrate the link between Coptic traditions and Ancient Egypt; see photo in *The New York Times*: Aciman.

60 The following websites offer a great deal of up-to-date information: www.kathtube. com; www.koptischwordpress.com; www.opendoors.press; accessed August 24, 2016.

61 The killings have become known as the case of the "21 Libyan Martyrs." The video interview with Bishop Bovnotious, who stayed in close contact with the families of the victims, can be watched on YouTube, "Interview with Hg Bishop Bovnotious, Bishop of Samalout, El-Menya, Egypt," February 21, 2015, https://www.youtube. com/watch?v=wKymdfot0mQ.

in highly graphic video footage posted on the internet,[62] it is legitimate to ask whether the discourse on contemporary Christian martyrdom has reached a new level. It is not only spread among the transnational social space of the Coptic diaspora, but it is developing as a central ingredient of international and global discourses of "war against terror" and the counterforces these discourses and practices have evoked.

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62 Google.de. *Pictures of 21 Libyan Martyrs*, search on August 24th, 2016: www.google.de/search?q=koptische+M%C3%A4rtyrer+in+Libyen&biw=1440&bih=8 62&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjbyJuVidrOAhVDW SwKHaogB4oQsAQITw&dpr=1.

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Oula Seitsonen

Transnationally forgotten and re-remembered: Second World War Soviet mass graves at Mäntyvaara, eastern Finnish Lapland

On a fundamental level, war memorials always symbolize the extreme aggression of humans against other humans and their deaths at the hands of others. However, there is a range of multilevel meanings and interpretations that can be attached to war memorials. There are also various reasons why certain sites, such as battlefields or mass graves, are chosen to be commemorated or ignored. Furthermore, how these decisions are made fluctuates over time. The factors dictating and directing these choices and actions range from familial and communal memories, to shifting perspectives on nationalism and world politics, to a changing valuation of diverse types of material and immaterial memories and cultural heritage.[1] War memorials can be seen, for instance, as "visual representations of modernity" tied to the development of nation-states[2] or a "dark heritage" related to difficult and controversial pasts.[3] In the case of military graves and installations left in the territories of other countries, memorials can also be viewed as an "orphan heritage," whose ownership and origin are separated from their spatiality and whose value can be questioned by the local – potentially antagonistic or apathetic – population.[4]

In this chapter, I present a case of orphaned and recently rediscovered transnational war heritage: the Russian re-remembering and marking of the (officially) long-forgotten mass graves of Soviet soldiers from the Second World War (WWII) Mäntyvaara battlefield in Kemijärvi, Finnish Lapland (Image 013, Top). Kemijärvi is situated along Finland's eastern border and

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1   Alexander Etkind, *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013); Jon Price, "Orphan Heritage: Issues in Managing the Heritage of the Great War in Northern France and Belgium," *Journal of Conflict Archaeology*, 1 (2005); Andrew M. Shanken, "Research on Memorials and Monuments," *Anales del Instituto de Investigaciones Estéticas* 84 (2004).

2   Siobhan Kattago, "War Memorials and the Politics of Memory: The Soviet War Memorial in Tallinn," *Constellations* 16, no. 1 (2009): 149.

3   Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto, "Reminder of the Dark Heritage of Humankind – Experiences of Finnish Cemetery Tourists of Visiting the Norvajärvi German Cemetery," *Thanatos* 5: no. 1 (2016): 23.

4   Price, 181.

up through the border checkpoint at the neighboring Salla municipality, it is the northernmost contact zone between the European Union and Russia, formerly the Soviet Union (USSR). Border changes in the aftermath of WWII had a huge impact on the area. For instance, a large portion of the Salla municipality was ceded to the Soviet Union, and through the Cold War years the Finno-Soviet border was a more or less closed part of the Iron Curtain. The border opened with the collapse of the USSR, which resulted in cross-border traffic and tourism. The local Finns started visiting their families' old villages left on the Russian side of the border, and Russian tourists flocked to Finland on shopping and leisure trips. Simultaneously, some also started visiting the WWII battlefields and their ancestors' graves. Russians have been a significant target group for the local tourism industry, a vital source of livelihood in this border region.[5] However, with the onset of the economic recession, the number of Russian tourists has dwindled since 2008, although there are recent signs of recovery.[6] The ambiguous nature of this border zone became evident most recently in the winter of 2015–2016 when an unprecedented stream of multinational refugees flowed through the border municipalities from Russia in search of asylum in the European Union.[7]

The ignoring, re-remembering, and marking of the WWII mass graves illustrate well the ongoing reevaluations and negotiations of the "fault lines in the East European memory landscape"[8] and changing attitudes toward the heritage of WWII – or the "Great Patriotic War," as it is characteristically known in Russia – in a Russian context, and also locally in Finland and more widely in Europe. In this chapter, first I briefly describe the historical context of the Battle of Mäntyvaara and the Soviet mass graves. Then, I outline the post-war Soviet and Russian attitudes toward the WWII mass graves situated in what is currently Finnish territory, the prolonged period of denial and eventual re-remembering of them after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and the establishment of a Russian, state-sanctioned monument at Mäntyvaara. Finally, I discuss the various issues intertwined with and leading to the establishment of this memorial, such as the interest of the Russian state in emphasizing and promoting the historical continuities with modern-day Russia, as well as the local responses to these transnational processes.

We carried out archaeological documentation of the Mäntyvaara battlefield and the mass graves in the summer of 2016 as part of the wider

5   Jarkko Saarinen, "The Regional Economics of Tourism: A Case Study of the Economic Impacts of Tourism in Salla, Eastern Lapland," *Nordia Geographical Publications* 30, no. 4 (2001).

6   Jorma Korhonen, "Sallalainen yrittäjä: venäläismatkailu Lappiin on hieman piristymässä," *Yle Uutiset*, December 9, 2016, http://yle.fi/uutiset/3-9342575.

7   See Oula Seitsonen, Vesa-Pekka Herva, and Mika Kunnari, "Abandoned Refugee Vehicles 'in the Middle of Nowhere': Reflections on the Global Refugee Crisis from the Northern Margins of Europe," *Journal of Contemporary Archaeology* 3, no. 2 (2017).

8   Kattago, 149.

project "Lapland's Dark Heritage."[9] Our project approached the material remains of WWII in the northern half of Finland in a transdisciplinary manner, combining methodologies of archaeology, anthropology, ethnography, and cultural heritage studies to map, for instance, the various ways in which people perceive and engage with this legacy of the recent past. At Mäntyvaara, aside from conducting an archaeological survey and mapping, we also interviewed several informants, including the staff of the Salla War and Reconstruction Museum, the local search group for the fallen soldiers left on battlefields, and local war history enthusiasts. We arranged formal, recorded interviews with our informants at the museum, but most of the information pertinent to the Battle of Mäntyvaara and the graves came up during informal discussions when guided around the battlefield by Mr. Alpo Siivola from the neighboring Joutsijärvi village.

The battle of Mäntyvaara

Early in WWII, the Soviet Union invaded Finland on November 30, 1939. The Battle of Mäntyvaara on December 20, 1939, is one of the iconic fights of the commemorated Winter War of 1939–1940.[10] Mäntyvaara fittingly exemplifies the mythologized legends of the Winter War as celebrated in Finland and also internationally: poorly equipped and heavily outnumbered Finnish ski troops fighting as underdogs against the colossal might of the Soviet Army, surviving in severe weather conditions in the gloomy, snow-shrouded winter wilderness, and, against all odds, prevailing (Image 013, Bottom).[11]

Mäntyvaara Hill is a forested hillock on the northern side of the road to Rovaniemi, the capital of Lapland, not far from Finland's current eastern border (about 150km from the pre-WWII border). Local Finnish soldiers, the so-called "Salla Battalion" (numbering about 1,500 men on November 30, 1939), as well as additional troops trickling into the Salla and Kemijärvi municipalities throughout early December, had retreated constantly fighting from the border after November 30 and were chased by an overwhelming number of Soviet troops (ca. 20,000 men).[12] After strenuous weeks of fighting, on December 19, 1939, Salla Battalion was relieved from frontline responsibility and stationed in the farmhouses south of Mäntyvaara.

9   Researchers of Lapland's Dark Heritage project from the Universities of Helsinki, Oulu, and Lapland, including, beside the current author, Vesa-Pekka Herva, Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto, Mika Kunnari, Wesa Perttola, and Suzie Thomas, as well as international colleagues Iain Banks (University of Glasgow), Gabriel Moshenska (University College London), and Jaisson Teixeira Lino (Universidade Federal da Fronteira Sul).

10 Pentti Airio, *Sallan suunnan taistelut 1939–1940* (Helsinki: Maanpuolustuskorkea-koulun Sotahistorian laitos, 2009).

11 See, e.g., Tiina Kinnunen and Markku Jokisipilä, "Shifting Images of 'Our' Wars: Finnish Memory Culture of World War II," in *Finland in World War II: History, Memory, Interpretations*, ed. Tiina Kinnunen and Ville Kivimäki (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012).

12 Airio.
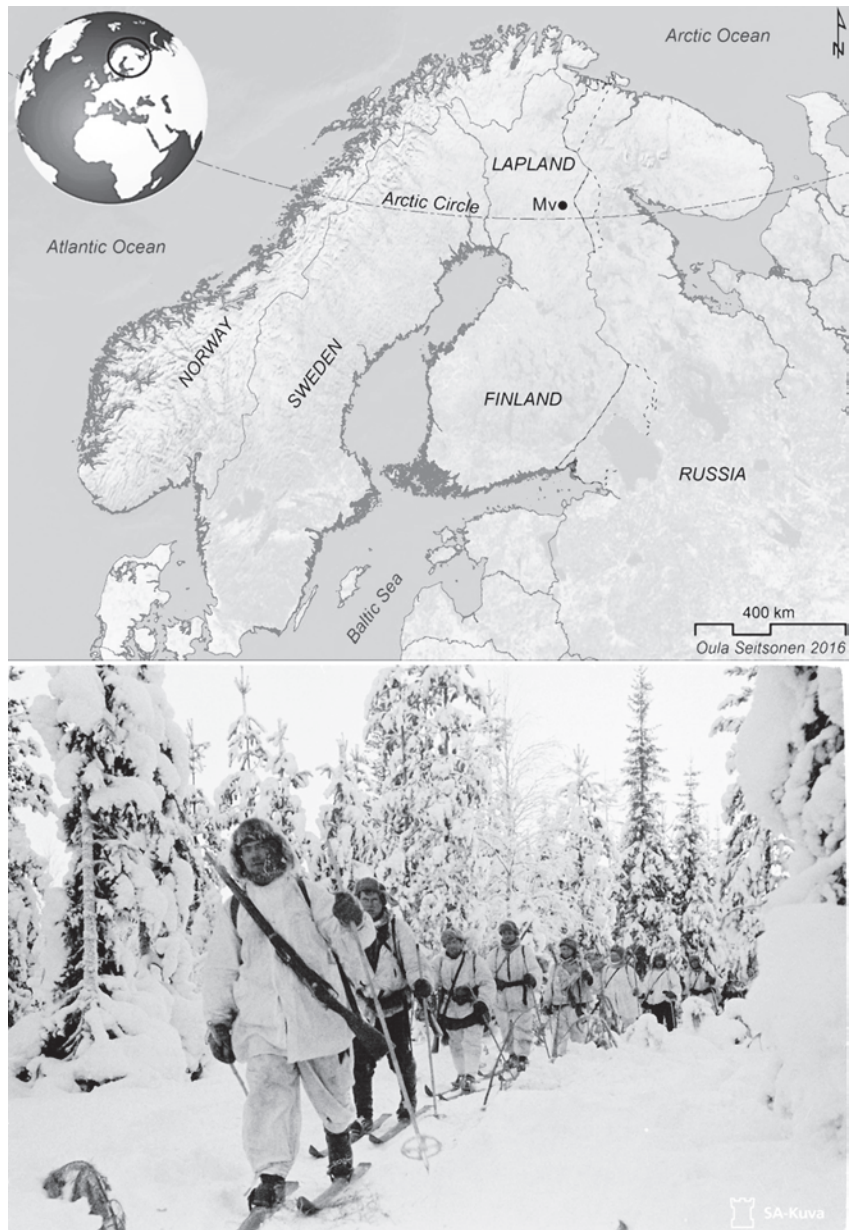
Image 013: Top: Location of Mäntyvaara (Mv) in eastern Finnish Lapland; dashed line shows the pre-WWII border. Illustration by O. Seitsonen. Bottom: Original caption: "Ski patrol at Märkäjärvi [Salla]." SA-Image 4706/ 6.2.1940.

Unbeknownst to them, however, at the same time a heavily armed Soviet battalion was seeking to occupy Mäntyvaara Hill, after completing a roughly 10-kilometer-long flanking movement through the wilderness only hundreds of meters north of the Finns. The ground was covered by about 15 centimeters of snow and temperatures were around -20 degrees Celsius.

In the early afternoon of the next day, on December 20, 1939, the resting Finnish soldiers were surprised by a Soviet attack.[13] The Soviets' objective was to make a major breakthrough to celebrate Joseph Stalin's birthday on December 21.[14] The ensuing chaotic, close-range melee lasted several hours in the deepening darkness (at that time of year in that region, sunset is at 1pm). As a result of a successful flanking action by a small group, the fight eventually turned into a Finnish victory, despite those soldiers' severe lack of equipment. By midnight, the hilltop was under Finnish control, while the defeated Soviet troops escaped under the cover of darkness through the wilderness. The Finns also captured large numbers of critically needed weaponry, such as rifles, machine-guns, and mortars.[15] The Battle of Mäntyvaara effectively stopped the Soviet advance toward Rovaniemi, and it has been described as a textbook example of the small-unit tactics of the Winter War.[16]

The battle's death toll was over 400 Soviet and 17 Finnish soldiers, on top of which 29 Finns were wounded and a few dozen Soviet prisoners taken. The next day, a local Finnish work company started burying the Soviet dead in four large mass graves on the battlefield. This work was directed by the older brother of our informant, Mr. Alpo Siivola. His brother had later called it "an appropriate birthday present for Comrade Stalin."[17] The Soviet soldiers who had perished during their escape through the wilderness were buried the next summer when the melting snow revealed their bodies, but the locations of those gravesites are unknown.

Post-war years

For several decades, the mass graves of Soviet soldiers at Mäntyvaara—and also elsewhere on the Winter War battlefields in Finland—were forgotten and denied by their own country and its successor, the Russian Federation.[18] At Mäntyvaara, these gravesites were known and their locations maintained throughout the decades by the local Finnish villagers, many of whom (or at least their relatives) had taken part in the battle.[19] We were privileged to be directed around the battlefield by two locals who were children during the

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13 *War diary of Erillinen pataljoona 17 1939–1940 (SPK 534)*, date 20/12 "14.20 Yllätti vihollinen 2. komp:n miltei majapaikkaansa…" ("14.20 Enemy surprised 2nd company almost at their accommodations…").

14 Airio, 28.

15 Ibid, 28.

16 Ibid., 28.

17 Interview with local war history enthusiast, August 8, 2016 (translations from Finnish by the author).

18 Elsewhere also, fallen Soviet soldiers were buried in mass graves on battlefields and at other places. On the contrary, whenever possible, the Finnish dead were taken back to their homes to be buried in the "cemeteries of heroes" typically found in each village. This was also the case at Mäntyvaara.

19 Interview, August 8, 2016.

Winter War: Alpo Siivola (mentioned above) and another, whose father led the decisive Finnish flanking action on the hill on December 20, 1939.[20]

A Finnish war memorial bearing the text "The Lord helped here" was erected in 1960 to memorialize the battle. Next to it stands a smaller memorial stone commemorating two dead Swedish WWII volunteers. In the later part of WWII, there was also a German-run[21] prisoner-of-war (POW) camp at Mäntyvaara, and the dead POWs were buried in a mass grave on the other side of the hill. This gravesite was officially marked by the Finns after the war, since as part of the peace treaty, the USSR demanded that Finland establish and maintain Soviet POW gravesites with memorials. Now in Lapland, the POW graves are kept up by the volunteers of the Finnish-Russian Society (previously the Finnish-Soviet Society), who annually receive a small amount of funding from the state.[22] However, the Finnish-Russian Society has never taken interest in the mass graves of the soldiers who fell in the Battle of Mäntyvaara.[23] Instead, their memory was informally maintained over the decades by our informant and his family, who lived in the vicinity and practiced forestry on the hill. Alpo Siivola's brother, who had directed the burying of Soviet dead in the first place, often recounted the proceedings of the battle and its aftermath while working at the site. The brother had also marked the four main mass graves with wooden posts, so as not to forget where they were, and he remembered and told how many bodies were placed in each one of them. In the 1980s, after uncovering one of these posts under the snow while felling trees in the forest, our informant decided to mark the corners of the mass graves with new wooden posts. He also numbered the graves and marked the number of deceased in each grave on the posts, so that the information would be there if he passed away before he could relate it to someone else. He perceived that in the Cold War years, nobody was interested in this information, and thus he felt obliged to manage the graves, although he had no "Soviet-Russki sympathies," a point which he emphatically repeated to us several times. Later, he also placed central posts next to the graves with brass numbers, indicating the number of dead soldiers buried in them (Image 014).[24]

A decade after the collapse of the USSR, in May 2002, the prolonged period of Russian silence and neglect ended unexpectedly, much to the surprise of both the local public and officials. Siivola told that in the Salla hardware store his colleague accidentally met a Russian man (henceforth R1)

20 Interview, August 8, 2016.
21 In the later part of WWII, during the so-called "Continuation War" of 1941–1944, Finland was closely tied to a Nazi German attack on the Soviet Union (a *de facto* ally), and there were over 200,000 German soldiers in the northern part of the country. After Finland entered into a ceasefire with the USSR, the Finno-German "Lapland War" of 1944–1945 broke out due to Soviet pressure. It resulted in widespread devastation of Lapland.
22 Petri Hakkarainen, "Venäläisten sotavankien haudat ovat hyvässä hoidossa," *Kaleva*, September 30, 2012. Available at http://www.kaleva.fi/uutiset/pohjois-suomi/venalaisten-sotavankien-haudat-ovat-hyvassa-hoidossa/607344/.
23 Interview, August 8, 2016.
24 Ibid.

who was trying to buy a bag of cement and who carried an engraved memorial plaque. He had been sent to Finland to place the plaque somewhere on Mäntyvaara Hill, in order to commemorate the Russian soldiers who had died in the battle.[25] R1 had no idea that he needed any permissions for this from the local landowner, the municipality of Kemijärvi; the task of placing the memorial plaque on the Finnish side of the border had been assigned to him by the Russian regional authorities, who also financially support a search for soldiers' bodies on the battlefields.[26] In the end, our informant and his colleague agreed with R1 that they would assist in the placing of this memorial plaque in cooperation with the Kemijärvi municipality.

Russian memorial at Mäntyvaara

The Finnish officials were completely unprepared for a Russian memorial plaque to be placed at Mäntyvaara, and they did not want to make it too public. Thus, it was quietly assigned to Siivola and his colleague. At first, they took the task somewhat begrudgingly, their initial thought being: "Wasn't it enough that they invaded? We already gave them a bullet and a shroud of soil, [but] do we now have to celebrate them also with a memorial stone?" However, after pondering his stance for a couple of days, Siivola came to the conclusion that: "Well, even so, I guess they were also as human as we are and young sons of some mother, so what the hell!" And he went ahead with raising the monument. [27]

Siivola had immediately noted a typographic error in the Finnish translation of the engraved text. The Russian engraving states "*Вечный покой 325 русским воинам 122 стрелковой дивизии погибшим в 1939–1940 гг*" ("Eternal peace for the 325 Russian soldiers of the 122nd Infantry Division who died in 1939–1940 [sic]"), whereas the Finnish started "*Kuinen rauha…*"; there was a crucial '*I*' missing at the beginning of the first word, changing its meaning into "Monthly peace…" This was fixed as "*IKuinen rauha 122 ampumadivisioonan 325 kaatuneelle venäläiselle soturille*" at a stone workshop in Rovaniemi, where the plaque was also fitted into a memorial stone paid for by the Kemijärvi municipality. Siivola also remarked that the number of dead soldiers was wrong, as Russian war historians had recently found from archival sources that the actual number seemed to be 417 soldiers. However, the stone mason did not fix that part of the inscription.

Our informant and his colleague were given free license in placing this memorial stone at Mäntyvaara. They decided that it was not their

25 Ibid.
26 И.Н. Сосна, ed., *Патриотическое воспитание молодежи в Российской Федерации: состояние, актуальные проблемы и направления развития. Сборник материалов "круглого стола" на тему "Опыт субъектов Российской Федерации по военно-патриотическому воспитанию молодежи." 21 мая 2015 года* (Совет Федерации, Федерального Собрания Российской Федерации, 2015), 189–190; see below.
27 Interview, August 8, 2016.

responsibility to make any public announcement about the new memorial, and so they unceremoniously erected it deep in the forest of Mäntyvaara next to the largest of the Soviet mass graves (where 90 men and a horse were interred) (Image 014). The Russian monument at Mäntyvaara is a simple, grey, rough-cut block in which the black memorial plaque was attached. Siivola and his colleague dug it securely in place, enforced the foundation with natural rocks so that the frost heave would not move it, and placed two flagstones in front in an altar-like setting. Our informant remembered wondering when digging the foundation pit if anyone would ever even visit the place, but to his surprise a large official unveiling ceremony was organized by the Russians later in the summer of 2002. Officials from both sides of the border took part in the event, including the Mayor of Alakurtti (Russia), Russian WWII veterans, and members of the Russian search groups for the fallen soldiers. Subsequently, the Russian search groups have organized an annual delegation to the site on "Victory Day" (May 9).[28] When we visited the memorial in August, their plastic flowers and wreaths were still scattered around the stone.[29] Visitors have also assembled a small collection of mementos from the battlefield, such as Russian cartridges and ammo clips, and placed these at the foot of the memorial stone.[30]

Denying and re-remembering the Soviet transnational dead of the Winter War

Why, then, were the graves of Soviet soldiers from the Battle of Mäntyvaara ignored for decades? At first glance, it seems odd, since the USSR had demanded Finland to uphold the graves of POWs, essentially regarded as traitors of their own state,[31] and war memorials and the "cult of the fallen" had a very high status in the Soviet Union.[32] The USSR had a complicated relationship with the Finnish Winter War, and following Hitler's attack on the USSR in 1941, the overarching idea of the "Great Patriotic War" against fascism in 1941–1945 took over. This master narrative, ultimately leading up to Victory Day on May 9, 1945, in Berlin,[33] fundamentally transformed the

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28 See also Olga Davydova-Minguet, "Voitonpäivänjuhla Sortavalassa. Juhlinnan ja muistin politiikkaa rajakaupungissa," *Elore* 22, no. 2 (2015).
29 Interview, August 8, 2016.
30 See the discussion of these mementos below.
31 Rolf-Dieter Müller and Gerd R. Ueberschär, *Hitler's War in the East, 1941–1945: A Critical Assessment* (New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2002), 219.
32 Johanna Dahlin, "'De dog för att vi skulle leva': Rysslands patriotiska fostran och de levandes plikter mot de döda," *Nordisk Østforum* 28, no. 1 (2014): 29; see also Johanna Dahlin, "'Now you have visited the war': The search for fallen soldiers in Russia," in *Heritage of Death*: *Landscapes of Emotion, Memory and Practice*, ed. Mattias Frihammar and Helaine Silverman (London and New York: Routledge, 2018). Catherine Merridale, "Soviet Memories: Patriotism and Trauma," in *Memory: Histories, Theories, Debates*, eds. Susannah Radstone and Bill Schwarz, (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 365.
33 Antero Uitto and Carl-Fredrik Geust, *Mannerheim-Linja. Talvisodan Legenda* (Helsinki: Ajatus, 2006), 209.

Image 014: Top: Our informant Alpo Siivola, next to the Russian war memorial raised in 2002 in front of mass grave 2, the last resting place for 90 men and a horse, which he has marked with wooden posts. Plastic flowers and wreaths brought by a Russian delegation on "Victory Day", May 9, 2016, litter the surroundings of the memorial. Bottom: Soviet WWII ammo clips and cartridges collected by the visitors from the battlefield and placed at the base of the memorial. Photo by the author.

Soviet image of WWII. It also meant that any events before 1941, including the Winter War, were largely suppressed and ignored. Consequently, in the Soviet post-war historical perspective, the Winter War became marginalized and separated from its wider context, and it was paralleled with some minor 1930s border skirmishes of the Far East and the "Sovietizing" of the Baltic countries in 1939–1940.[34]

The USSR essentially denied its role as the aggressor in the Winter War and instead emphasized the "defensive nature" of Soviet acts to protect St. Petersburg. Accordingly, any memories of soldiers killed deep in northern Finnish territory were ignored, since they did not fit into this canonized "defensive doctrine."[35] This Soviet attitude effectively lasted until Perestroika and the Glasnost of the 1980s[36] and the following collapse of the Soviet Union. In the 1990s, with the opening of formerly inaccessible archives, Russian historians (also in cooperation with Finnish historians) started reassessing the WWII histories.[37] Thus, for the first time since 1941, the Winter War became widely recognized in Russia, and a flood of Russian books were published on its 60th anniversary in 1999.[38]

Siobhan Kattago,[39] discussing the 2007 case of moving the so-called Soviet "Bronze Soldier"[40] in Tallinn, Estonia, has described how modern Russian elites have established the Great Patriotic War, and especially the role of the May 9th Victory Day over Nazi Germany, as a foundational myth of modern Russia and contemporary Russian identity. This normalizes the Soviet communist past into the longer sequence of the Russian state's history.[41] Soviet war memorials already often exploited an alleged continuity from pre-revolutionary Imperial Russia,[42] and the rhetorical power of this connection is tapped into by the current Russian administration whenever beneficial. Lately, even longer historical continuities have been called on. As an example, President Vladimir Putin defended the annexation of Crimea from Ukraine in 2014 by invoking the enduring legacy of "sacred" sites related to Vladimir the Great (ca. 958–1015 CE) and the Christianization of Russia, the Crimean War (1853–1856), and WWII: "Each of these places are sacred to us as symbols of Russian military glory and unparalleled proficiency."[43] Alexander Etkind has aptly described the Russian historical memory as

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34 Ibid.

35 Juri Kilin, "Rajakahakan hidas jäiden lähtö," in *Sodan totuudet: Yksi suomalainen vastaa 5.7 ryssää*, ed. Markku Jokisipilä (Helsinki: Ajatus, 2007); Uitto and Geust, 209; Timo Vihavainen, "Talvisota neuvostohistoriakirjoituksessa," in *Talvisodan pikkujättiläinen*, ed. Jari Leskinen and Antti Juutilainen (Helsinki: WSOY, 1999).

36 Kilin.

37 Uitto and Geust, 209.

38 Ibid.

39 Kattago, 158–159.

40 Est. "*Pronssõdur*," Ru. "*Бронзовый Солдат*."

41 Ibid.

42 Ibid., 156.

43 "Обращение Президента РФ Владимира Путина (полная версия)," Первый канал, accessed December 24, 2015, https://www.1tv.ru/news/2014/03/18/46116-obraschenie_prezidenta_rf_vladimira_putina_polnaya_versiy.

"multihistorical."[44] It is represented by a fluid and de-centered combination of simultaneously experienced symbols, which can also contradict each other. However, these inconsistencies typically escape public awareness due to a lack of agreed upon historical anchor points, and they can be shaped to answer fluctuating political and cultural needs.[45]

A new rise in public awareness and interest in the heritage of WWII could already be seen in the final years of the USSR with the opening up of Soviet society. This was exemplified, for instance, by the establishment of a national volunteer organization, the "Union of Russian Search Groups," in 1988.[46] The search groups are dedicated to the commemoration, search, and repatriation of the "unknown soldiers" lost on the battlefields. Their activities were revitalized at the beginning of Putin's leadership,[47] and they have now been promoted as an "all-Russian public 'Search Movement in Russia.'"[48]

In January 2001, the Russian state also launched its first five-year plan for the "Patriotic education of citizens." Now it is engaged in the fourth such plan (2016–2020).[49] Under Putin, a link between this patriotic education of youth and military service was formalized as well.[50] This emphasis appears to have its roots in the legacy of Soviet-era ideals (for instance, in the Pioneer movement).[51] According to Johanna Dahlin's research,[52] the search groups offer a popular way to take part in this "military-patriotic education."[53] Their work has been described in Russia as "a counterforce against neo-fascism,"[54] as well as valuable in developing beneficial mental abilities through communal camp life and fieldwork "in mud and swamps."[55] This again

44 Etkind, 208.
45 Ibid, 208–209.
46 Ru. *Союз Поисковых Отрядов России*; the national organization consists of over 600 local search groups with over 40,000 members. The search groups have reportedly located the remains of over 450,000 soldiers. This organization had an indirect predecessor already during Soviet times in the Komsomol (Communist Party youth organization), "Red pathfinder"; Dahlin 2014, 2018.
47 President 2000–2008 and 2012 onwards, Prime Minister 2008–2012.
48 Сосна, 58; Ru. *Поисковое движение России*.
49 "*О государственной программе 'Патриотическое воспитание граждан Российской Федерации на 2016 – 2020 годы'. Утверждена постановлением Правительства Российской Федерации от 30 декабря 2015 г. № 1493*," Federal Archival Agency of Russian Federation, accessed July 17, 2016, http://archives.ru/programs/patriotic.shtml.
50 Dahlin, "'De dog for att vi skulle leva'"; Dahlin, "'Now you have visited the war'".
51 See Catriona Kelly, "Shaping the 'Future Race': Regulating the Daily Life of Children in Early Soviet Russia," in *Everyday Life in Early Soviet Russia: Taking the Revolution Inside*, ed. Christina Kiaer and Eric Naiman (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006); Margaret Peacock, *Innocent Weapons: The Soviet and American Politics of Childhood in the Cold War* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 34–36.
52 Dahlin, "'De dog for att vi skulle leva'"; Dahlin, "'Now you have visited the war'".
53 See Сосна, 17.
54 Dahlin, "'De dog for att vi skulle leva'", 36.
55 Ibid, 33.; see Татьяна В. Яшкова, *Вклад поискового движения в патриотическое воспитание современной молодежи – материалы межрегион* (Киров:

appears to reproduce the Soviet rhetoric of a communal patriotic upbringing as a counterbalance to the harmful influences of Western youth culture.[56] The responsibilities of children to the Motherland have also been compared to those to their own mothers and families, thus equating patriotism with love of the mother.[57] As part of this, a duty to remember the past defenders of the Motherland is emphasized, representing an unpaid debt to the fallen, since subsequent generations did not fulfill their responsibility to bury their remains in a proper way.[58] The honorary debt to the fallen is also often mentioned as an important incentive by the members of the Finnish search groups that we interviewed.

The placement of the memorial plaque at Mäntyvaara coincides temporally with both the new interest in the Winter War in Russia since the late 1990s, the revitalization of search groups, and the commemoration of fallen soldiers under Putin's five-year plans on military-patriotic education. The Mäntyvaara memorial appears to be part of the wider ongoing Russian patriotic project,[59] as underlined by the recurring visits of the Russian search group members at the battlefield. The renewed Russian emphasis on the remembrance of the war dead has also developed into a fruitful and ongoing transnational, cross-border cooperation with Finnish search groups organized under the national Association for Cherishing the Memory of the Dead of the War since 1998.[60] However, the work of the enthusiastic volunteer search groups has provoked ethical alarm among heritage and forensics professionals in different countries, owing to the amateurish and rough field methods these groups often use when uncovering the graves.[61] Having observed some of the Finnish and Russian search groups in the field in Russia, I can concur with these worries. From a professional perspective, the typically very coarse fieldwork techniques, an often total lack of documentation, and rough treatment of the deceased do raise ethical concerns. Furthermore, if the located bodies turn out to present some other nationality, there is also a tendency of lack of respect toward the deceased.

Старая Вятка, 2009), 9; Татьяна В. Яшкова, "Увековечение памяти погибших защитников Отечества как одна из форм военно-патриотического воспитания современной молодежи," *Педагогическое образование в России* 3 (2011).

56 Dahlin 2014, 33.

57 Ibid., 34; see Яшкова, *Вклад поискового движения в патриотическое воспитание*, 213.

58 Dahlin, "'De dog for att vi skulle leva'"; Яшкова, *Вклад поискового движения в патриотическое воспитание*, 169.

59 Ibid.

60 "Association for Cherishing the Memory of the Dead of the War," Association for Cherishing the Memory of the Dead of the War, accessed April 1, 2016, http://www.sotavainajat.net/in_english.

61 See Birgit Grosskopf, "Why? The Non-Archaeological Removal of Historic Conflict Related Mass Graves: Case studies," paper presented on September 22, 2016, at the Fields of Conflict Conference, Dublin; personal observations while in the field with the Finnish and Russian search groups.

Russians nowadays have a strong interest in repatriating Soviet soldiers left on battlefields on the Finnish side of the border in Lapland. Newly located bodies are annually reburied on September 14 in the Alakurtti military graveyard with the appropriate military honors. As mentioned, on Victory Day, May 9, the Russian search group members also often visit and decorate Soviet soldiers' mass graves in Finland, including at Mäntyvaara.[62] However, this renewed interest has not extended to the dead Soviet POWs. Russians have not been interested in the repatriation of POWs and do not visit or decorate their gravesites, which is typically left to representatives of the Finnish-Russian Society.[63] This may mirror the Soviet legacy of seeing POWs as traitors of the Motherland. However, contemporary Russian sentiments toward WWII prisoners are generally poorly known and warrant detailed research in the future.

During the war, most, if not all, of the Soviet POW graves were marked with Greek Orthodox crosses, some of which also bore the names of the fallen prisoners. Even though the Soviet Union was officially atheist, many soldiers showed religious faith on a personal level.[64] They relied on religious trinkets and rituals in an otherwise uncontrollable situation, as is typical of wartime, in an apparent hope to gain some – no matter how illusory – sense of control over their own fate.[65] Many common soldiers, for instance, wore crosses around their necks, prayed, and crossed themselves in battle,[66] and they also marked their comrades' graves with Orthodox crosses, at least in POW camp settings. After the war, the POW grave sites were marked by the Finns with anonymous, stereotypical, and secular tombstones. Often made of concrete, these were decorated with a Soviet star and engravings, ambiguously indicating the number of "Soviet soldiers" buried there, often only in Russian. In an extreme case, a mass grave of Russian civilian internees at the site of a former Finnish-run concentration camp[67] in Miehikkälä, eastern Finland, is marked with the text "Here is buried … Soviet servicemen."[68] Lately, some of the POW gravesites have been refurbished with large orthodox crosses by the activists of the Finnish Orthodox Church and Finnish-Russian Society.[69]

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62 Interview, August 8, 2016.

63 Ibid.

64 Merridale, *Ivan's War*, 89, 203.

65 Simon P. MacKenzie, "Beating the Odds: Superstition and Human Agency in RAF Bomber Command, 1942–1945," *War in History* 22, no. 3 (2015): 382–400.

66 Merridale, *Ivan's War,* 89, 203.

67 During the war, Finland established several camps for Russian civilian internees from the areas occupied by Finnish troops in 1941–1944. These were originally called concentration camps (Fi. *keskitysleiri*); except for the Miehikkälä camp, the other camps were renamed as "transfer camps" (Fi. *siirtoleiri*) in 1943 in order to avoid undesired associations with the Nazi concentration camps; see, e.g., Antti Laine, *Suur-Suomen kahdet kasvot. Itä-Karjalan siviiliväestön asema suomalaisessa miehityshallinnossa 1941–1944* (Helsinki: Otava, 1982).

68 "Здесь погребено … Советских военно-служащий"; see also Catherine Merridale, *Night of Stone: Death and Memory in Russia* (London: Granta Books, 2000), 348–349, for an analogous example of the Soviet Jews massacred at Babi Yar by the Nazis being ambiguously commemorated as "Soviet citizens."

69 For example, at Hautaniemi in Salla and at Kankiniemi in Inari.

Finnish Orthodox priests have also carried out field services and blessings at some of these sites and battlefields. The Mäntyvaara memorial appears as something in-between secular and religious; although the memorial has no Christian symbols, "eternal peace" in the engraving does have Christian undertones. Put in the wider context, the Christian connotations reflected at the war memorials are tied to the Russian conceptual triad of "Orthodoxy, autocracy and nationality," which was inherited from Czarist Russian ideals[70] and invoked by officials whenever appropriate.[71] Interestingly, the ambiguous term "Soviet," used earlier, has been replaced in the recent memorial with the equally ambiguous "Russian." In fact, many of the fallen (for example, at Mäntyvaara) were Belarusian.[72] This reminds of an essential distinction made in Russia between what is seen, on the one hand, as harmful nationalism and, on the other, as positive patriotism within the frame of patriotic education, and the distancing of the mythologized Great Patriotic War from the Soviet communist heritage.[73]

The location of the Russian memorial at Mäntyvaara is also noteworthy. If one does not know where it lies on the forested hill, the Russian memorial is very difficult to locate at the end of a small, unmarked footpath. The memorial itself is very inconspicuous in the landscape, being in the shadow of large spruce trees. In this sense, it is by both its placement and accessibility comparable with the POW gravesite, which is practically impossible to find on the other side of the hill without good knowledge of the local landscape. On the contrary, the Finnish and Swedish memorials have signposts in a prime spot along the main road, with a small parking lot and a large information board with maps of the battle. The location of the Russian memorial was decided, as mentioned above, by our local informant, and he justified selecting the site on the basis of the immediate proximity of the largest mass grave. However, in the light of a recent incident at Mäntyvaara, selecting this remote and discrete location does not appear fully coincidental.

In late summer 2014, the Mayor of Kemijärvi, the Chairman of the Kemijärvi City Council, and two National Coalition Party representatives visited the battlefield and noticed that near the Finnish memorial there had recently been erected a small Orthodox cross and a plaque with a Russian-language engraving: "For the memory of the 417 Red Army members of the 122. Division of the 596. Regiment who fell and were left on the battlefield in the Battle of Mäntyvaara on 20.12.1939."[74] The chairman of the local search group started investigating the case through his Russian contacts, and he found out "in an hour" that this was a private memorial placed in

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70 Dahlin, "'De dog for att vi skulle leva'", 36; Davydova-Minguet.

71 Dahlin, "'De dog for att vi skulle leva'", 36.; Etkind; Merridale, *Night of Stone*; Anatoli Rapoport, "Patriotic Education in Russia: Stylistic Move or a Sign of Substantive Counter-Reform?" *The Educational Forum* 73, no. 2 (2009): 141–152; Vera Tolz, *Russia: Inventing the Nation* (London: Arnold, 2001).

72 Airio, 28.

73 Dahlin, "'De dog for att vi skulle leva'", 36 and "'Now You Have Visited the War.'"; Etkind.

74 "Luvaton muistomerkki Kemijärvellä – epätoivoinen venäläismies etsi ukkinsa hautaa," *Lapin Kansa*, August 1, 2014.

Mäntyvaara by a "desperate Russian man" (henceforth R2) from Moscow, who had been "searching desperately for his grandfather's grave."[75] R2 had tried to contact the Russian search groups before his visit to Finland, wanting to consult them on how he should have acted in placing his own memorial, but could not reach them. Then, when R2 visited the battlefield at Mäntyvaara, he did not want to carry the memorial plaque back to Russia, so he decided to leave it and a small cross at the site to honor his grandfather and others who died in the battle. He apologized if the "memorial violated or hurt people's feelings."[76] In the memorial plaque, the information about the number of fallen and the time of their death, which are both wrong in the Russian state-affiliated memorial, were accurate. Furthermore, the deceased were vaguely called "Red Army members"[77] instead of (the perhaps more political) "Soviet" or "Russian"; at least in Finland, however, the notion of the Red Army has very strong associations with the USSR's communist regime.

Despite R2's public apology, this private act of commemoration caused an immediate local reaction[78] and the municipality was quick to remove the memorial from the site.[79] This rapid response to a private, small memorial project seems perhaps surprising almost 70 years after WWII, although legally the memorial was illegitimate and lacking proper permits from the landowner. It would be interesting to know what finally happened to the removed memorial; unfortunately, at the time of writing, I have not received answers to my questions regarding this matter from the municipality, and our informants did not mention anything about the 2014 incident when asked about the Russian commemorative policies at Mäntyvaara. Interestingly, this incident also became drawn into local political discussions.[80] The public dialogue sparked by the removed Russian memorial became intertwined with a wider discussion about the rights of commemorating non-local Finnish troops (originating from southern Finland) at Mäntyvaara and the plans to raise a memorial for them. This was strongly opposed by some locals, including local politicians. Under the title "Battle over Mäntyvaara," one of them objected in Lapland's leading newspaper to the plan of raising a monument for the southern Finns.[81] The locals apparently felt a need to protect the memory of local intrepidness at the Battle of Mäntyvaara, sensing that the southern Finns were trying to seize "their" glory and the battle fought on their "own land," by unjustly invading their memoryscape. As a response, the advocates of this memorial questioned what rights the "small-souled" (right-wing) politicians had to "annex the Mäntyvaara memorial area as

75 Ibid.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid.
78 Kalervo Björkbacka, "Pienisieluiset kokoomuspoliitikot," *Uusi Suomi*, August 11, 2014, accessed August 15, 2016, http://kalervokassubjrkbacka.puheenvuoro. uusisuomi.fi/173599-pienisieluiset-kokoomuspoliitikot; *Lapin Kansa*.
79 *Lapin Kansa*.
80 Björkbacka.
81 Björkbacka; Jaakko Ojaniemi, "Mäntyvaarasta taistellaan," *Lapin Kansa*, August 11, 2014; "Ei satakuntalaisia Mäntyvaaraan," *Suomi24*, accessed August 16, 2016, http://keskustelu.suomi24.fi/t/12413546/ei-satakuntalaisia-mantyvaaraan.

their own."[82] For now, the planned memorial for southern Finns seems to have been put to rest, possibly owing to the hostile local attitudes against it.

Leaving small mementos at war memorials is a relatively universal practice of commemorating and personalizing the dead.[83] Typically these items are modern objects, such as small coins, cigarettes, or wreaths; in Russia, these mirror the simple, casual offerings of everyday items at Orthodox graves.[84] However, placing martial finds recovered from the battlefields at the foot of battlefield memorials, such as those documented at Mäntyvaara and at several other Russian memorials on the Russian side of the border, appears to represent a more uniquely Russian tradition and a different approach to remembering than state-sanctioned memorials or rituals.[85] These items relate directly to the individual soldiers who fought, suffered, and died at those places. The philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty has expressed that "to move one's body is to aim at things through it; it is to allow oneself to respond to their call…," referring to humans' embodied immersion in their world.[86] In this sense, perhaps the visitors who climbed to Mäntyvaara to pay homage to the deceased metaphorically answered the call of the dead soldiers through these small items. They possibly felt a more intimate and direct relationship with the past when they collected, touched, and held items that had been handled by the soldiers buried there, often their own ancestors. There can also be other interpretations of this, of course, since we have no direct information of the visitors' motives. These originally deadly martial finds could also be seen as silent but persistent witnesses of what happened at a place, especially a battlefield denied for decades after the war. At the same time, they illustrate in a very concrete way the brutality of war and the suffering faced by the ordinary soldiers buried there, and they also remind us of the past political framework that their deaths relate to.

Conclusions

The mass graves of Soviet soldiers at Mäntyvaara illustrate well how the engagements with and attitudes toward the transnational, orphaned burials and associated war memorials from WWII have changed over the decades in Finnish Lapland, and also more widely in Finland and Eastern Europe.[87]

82 Björkbacka.
83 See Davydova-Minguet, 17; Kristin Ann Hass, *Carried to the Wall: American Memory and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).
84 Davydova-Minguet, 17–18; Merridale 2010, 355.
85 Davydova-Minguet, 18.
86 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London/New York: Routledge, 1962), 161; see also David Seamon, "A Lived Hermetic of People and Place: Phenomenology and Space Syntax," in *Proceedings, 6th International Space Syntax Symposium; 12–15 June 2007, Istanbul, Vol. I*, ed. Ayse S. Kubat, Özhan Ertekin, Yasemin İ. Güney, and Engin Eyüboğlu (Istanbul: Technical University Faculty of Architecture, 2007), iii-01–iii-16.
87 Kattago.

The decades-long official Soviet/Russian renunciation of these soldiers' last resting places shows the political complications related to remembering, or rather ignoring, the Finnish Winter War until the last few decades. The years 1939–1940 are essentially lacking from the Soviet/Russian memorial landscape, which has been taken over by the "grand narrative" of the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945.[88] Consequently, the Winter War was dismissed as a minor "border skirmish" until the 1980s. The opening up of Russian society toward the end of the Soviet era allowed for the emergence of new perspectives on WWII, which also enabled recognition of the battles fought deep in modern Finnish territory, leading to memorialization of these battles and the soldiers fallen there. This is exemplified, for instance, by the placement of the Russian war memorial at Mäntyvaara.

The establishment of the memorial for Soviet soldiers at Mäntyvaara in 2002 coincides with both the public interest in the Winter War following its 60th anniversary and the revitalized military-patriotic education under Putin's regime, reflected, for example, by the intensified activity of search groups.[89] The memorial was authorized and funded by the Russian regional government, which also supports the search groups' activities. This appears to be closely connected to the ongoing interest by the Russian government and elite in establishing and promoting the historical continuities behind modern Russia. Greek Orthodox Christianity is strongly present at recent war memorials and in the rituals surrounding the repatriation and reburial of fallen soldiers.[90] This closely intertwines with the perceived continuity from the Czarist times, connecting the Orthodox religion, a strong autocratic ruler, and the "Motherland."[91]

Raising new war memorials and reburying fallen Soviet soldiers outside Russian borders seems to be part of a wider rearticulation of the Russian past in a form approved by the authorities, augmented by Orthodox rituals, and mediated by the material culture at the monuments.[92] At these monuments, the political, cultural, and social capital is applied through the "cult of the

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88 Kattago.
89 Dahlin 2014; Kilin; Uitto, and Geust, 209.
90 Lucy Ash, "Digging for their lives: Russia's volunteer body hunters," *BBC News, Russia*, January 13, 2014, http://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-25589709; Davydova-Minguet; Merridale, "Soviet Memories: Patriotism and Trauma," 380–381; "Austria: Remains of Soviet soldiers reburied in Oberwart to commemmorate WWII," YouTube, accessed September 15, 2016, https://youtu.be/TU5lgpa0QQQ; "Latvia: 107 Red Army soldiers reburied at Priekule cemetery," YouTube, accessed September 15, 2016, https://youtu.be/GieKa4Iygzc?t=30s; "Lithuania: Reburial ceremony held for 75 Soviet soldiers killed in WWII," YouTube, accessed September 15, 2016, https://youtu.be/Y6XS9CdfUpo?t=1m12s; "WRAP Remains of Soviet soldiers reburied, Russian ceremony," YouTube, accessed September 15, 2016, https://youtu.be/FJe2fsJsZGU?t=1m50s.
91 Dahlin 2014; Davydova-Minguet; Etkind; Merridale 2010; Rapoport; Tolz.
92 See Davydova-Minguet; YouTube, "Latvia: 107 Red Army soldiers reburied"; YouTube, "Lithuania: Reburial ceremony held for 75 Soviet soldiers"; YouTube, "Austria: Remains of Soviet soldiers"; YouTube, "WRAP Remains of Soviet soldiers reburied."

fallen"[93] in a "double process of identification"[94] of these long-dead soldiers, who supposedly sacrificed their lives for causes defined by contemporary society and its claim for commemoration.[95] Commemorations – as performed, for example, at Mäntyvaara every May 9 – also act as broader demonstrations of Russian state power.[96] These public performances can be seen as manifestations of the state-sanctioned past in the present, projecting into the future.[97] On the other hand, the small, outwardly insignificant, rusty cartridges and ammo clips collected by some visitors and carefully placed at the base of the memorial tell probably of very different, intimate, and personalized acts of remembrance. These differ noticeably from the state-organized approaches, also discussed, for example, by Olga Davydova-Minguet, in connection with "grassroots" war memorials in Russian Karelia.[98] Offering martial items at the memorial could be interpreted, for instance, as individual visitors' response to their "call" and, through them, the call of the dead soldiers from whose hands they had fallen. At the same time, these small finds act as concrete material witnesses to and evidence of what happened at the battlefield to the soldiers long neglected by their country.

Since commemorative presentations always affect and redefine the space where they are performed, they can also be understood as representational acts that accumulate cultural capital and ownership value.[99] Thus, they might be interpreted as attempts to gain slivers of the public space and to stake commemorative claims on that space.[100] In the transnational case of Mäntyvaara, these attempts take place within the Finnish villagers' everyday lifeworld, which is, even after seven decades, a highly controversial social space to commemorate the Soviet military invasion in WWII. However, at Mäntyvaara the Russian memorial space is most likely not what it was originally intended to be by the Russian authorities, as their plans took an unexpected turn when our informant and the municipality took over the raising of the memorial. Then again, the remote location that our informant selected for the Russian memorial is a naturally beautiful spot deep in the silent forest and, as such, it offers excellent possibilities for quiet and intimate reflection and reckoning.[101]

93 Kattago, 153.
94 Kattago, 151.
95 Shanken, 170; see also Etkind.
96 Davydova-Minguet; Kattago, 153
97 See Marie Smith-Solbakken and Hans-Jørgen Wallin Weihe, "Preserving the past and intervening in the future through memorials and gravestones," in *Painful Pasts and Useful Memories: Remembering and Forgetting in Europe. CFE Conference Papers Series* 5, ed. Niklas Bernsand and Barbara Törnquist-Plewa (Lund: Centre for European Studies at Lund University, 2012), 193–206; Yuliya Yurchuk, "The Nexus between Cultural Trauma, Collective Memory and Social Trust: A Glass Half-Full, Half-Empty or Shattered. The Case of post-1991 Ukraine," in *Painful Pasts and Useful Memories: Remembering and Forgetting in Europe. CFE Conference Papers Series* 5, ed. Niklas Bernsand and Barbara Törnquist-Plewa (Lund: Centre for European Studies at Lund University, 2012), 73–90.
98 Davydova-Minguet, 18; see also Merridale 2010, 379–381.
99 Shanken, 170.
100 Ibid.
101 Davydova-Minguet; Kattago, 155; Koskinen-Koivisto.

The easily accessible and well-marked central, dominant Mäntyvaara memorialscape with the Finnish and Swedish monuments appears to be of high symbolic importance for the locals. Thus, it is no surprise that our informant decided to place the Russian memorial in a less visible place, yet justifiably next to a mass grave; Soviet war memorials were often placed next to soldiers' gravesites.[102] However, the local public and official attitudes against commemorating the Russians at the main memorialscape, alongside the Finnish-Swedish memory, were manifestly displayed by the swift action taken by the municipality to remove the private memorial plaque and cross left at the site by R2 in 2014.

Compared to the other incidents surrounding the Mäntyvaara memorials, such as the objection to commemorating southern Finnish or Soviet soldiers as part of the central memorialscape, it is intriguing that it was in fact originally our local informant and his family who maintained the memory of the mass graves hidden deep on the forested hill throughout the decades of Soviet/Russian non-admission. He seems to have felt obliged to act as a somewhat reluctant custodian of this ignored heritage. Thus, he carried on his family knowledge about where the graves were located and how many bodies were buried in each grave, and he also marked them unobtrusively in the landscape. In our recent studies, we have come to comprehend how strongly the Indigenous northern Finnish perspectives on WWII often diverge from the generalized nationwide views. As an example, many locals have a strong sense of ownership and a need to act as stewards of their local heritage in their "own lands," which they feel are too often ignored by typically southern authorities.[103] However, the Soviet mass graves at Mäntyvaara differ from most of the other cases that we have documented, since there the locals felt, rather humanely yet at the same time somewhat reluctantly, a duty to preserve the memory of the invaders' final resting places for future generations. Without their active contribution and caring approach toward the remains, the exact locations of these overgrown mass graves would most likely have been lost through the decades, and an intensive archaeological survey would have been needed to relocate them in the forests. However, despite the continued local stewardship and awareness, and the sites' transnational importance, neither the Mäntyvaara battlefield nor the mass graves are at the moment recognized or protected as official, state-acknowledged heritage.

102 Kattago.

103 See Vesa-Pekka Herva, Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto, Oula Seitsonen and Suzie Thomas, "'I have better stuff at home': Treasure hunting and private collecting of World War II artefacts in Finnish Lapland," *World Archaeology* 48, no. 1 (2016), http://www.tandfonline.com/; Oula Seitsonen, *Digging Hitler's Arctic War: Archaeologies and Heritage of the Second World War German Military Presence in Finnish Lapland* (Helsinki: Unigrafia, 2018); Oula Seitsonen and Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto, "'Where the F… is Vuotso?': Heritage of Second World War Forced Movement and Destruction in a Sámi Reindeer Herding Community in Finnish Lapland," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 24, no. 4 (2017).

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Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto

Transnational heritage work and commemorative rituals across the Finnish-Russian border in the old Salla region

The Salla municipality, located in Eastern Lapland in the borderland between Finland and Russia, has a complex transnational history due to the events of the Second World War. The borderlines between Finland and Soviet Union were redrawn twice in the 1940s: first after the Winter War (1939–1940) and again after the end of the Continuation War (1941–1944). Additionally, as a result of the Moscow Peace Treaty, almost half of the territories of Salla were ceded to the Soviet Union. It has been argued that the WWII mass evacuations and territorial losses that Finland faced have turned into a national story of suffering.[1] Karelians in the former southeastern parts of Finland as well as the residents of Salla and Pechenga (Petsamo) in Eastern Lapland lost their homes and the connection to their ancestors' lands, consisting of farmland, lakes, and forests that had provided their livelihood for centuries. In particular, Karelia has become a place for nostalgic reminiscence and pilgrimages full of myths, utopias, and emotions. The heritage societies of former Karelian residents are still active after 70 years, organizing tours in the area, putting up memorials, and holding annual festivities.[2]

Compared to the public memory culture of ceded Karelia, the evacuations and territorial losses of the area of Lapland have received much less attention

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1   Outi Fingerroos, "'Karelia Issue': The Politics and Memory of Karelia in Finland," in *Finland in Word War II: History, Memory, Interpretations*, eds. Tiina Kinnunen and Ville Kivimäki, (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012); Kristiina Korjonen-Kuusipuro and Anna-Kaisa Kuusisto-Arponen, "Emotional Silences. The Rituals of Remembering the Finnish Karelia," in Painful Pasts and Useful Memories. Remembering and Forgetting in Europe. CFE Conference Papers Series 5, eds. Barbara Törnquist-Plewa and Niklas Bernsand (Lund: Centre for European Studies, 2012); Nina Sääskilahti, "Ruptures and Returns. From Loss of Memory to the Memory of Loss," *Ethnologia Fennica,* 40 (2013): 40–53.; Davydova, Olga. Voitonpäivänjuhla Sortavalassa. Juhlinnan ja muistin politiikkaa rajakaupungissa. *Elore*, 22, 2 (2015), 2.
2   Fingerroos; Korjonen-Kuusipuro and Kuusisto-Arponen; Ulla Savolainen, *Muisteltu ja kirjoitettu evakkomatka: Tutkimus evakkolapsuuden muistelukerronnan poetiikasta.* (Joensuu: Suomen Kansantietouden Tutkijain Seura, 2015).

in the national narrative.[3] However, over the past decades, both official and unofficial heritage forums related to WWII in Lapland have become remarkably active, resulting in fruitful collaboration, for example, between museums and amateur history hobbyists.[4] In the area of Salla and across the border in the ceded territories, these groups have created a range of activities to cherish the WWII heritage. The ceded parts, including the old village center where the Lutheran church of Salla (named Kuolajärvi until 1936) was located, were not accessible in Soviet times. For about 50 years, the ruined church and the surrounding cemeteries were not accessible to Finnish citizens and were left without maintenance.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the abandoned and overgrown churchyard and deserted cemeteries across the border were turned into scenes of regular commemorative rituals. In 1992, the Salla Society (Salla-seura ry) was created in order to take care of the cemeteries and church ruins and to cherish the memory of Old Salla and its many villages.[5] The society offers a chance for the descendants of the former residents of the annexed territories to gather in Salla, to cross the border, and to pay their respects to their ancestors. This chapter explores the heritage work and the commemorative practices and rituals taking place in ceded areas. What kinds of meanings are attached to the transnational commemorative practices of the Salla region? How are they organized and who participates in them? What motivates the heritage activists, as well as the former Salla villagers and their children, to take part in the transnational heritage work?

As part of the research project "Lapland's Dark Heritage,"[6] I visited Salla, the local museum of war and reconstruction, and the many historical war sites on the Finnish side of the border. Furthermore, I conducted interviews with the history hobbyists and heritage activists who maintain the cemeteries and memorials in Kuolajärvi. These key members of the Salla society also organize guided visits to the historical war sites and hold a yearly commemorative service at the Old Salla churchyard. In addition

to interviewing these heritage activists, I have analyzed media materials (videos, photos, and written reports) of visits to the Old Salla cemeteries and the annual commemorative services held across the border, as well as the web archives of the Salla Society's activities.[7] Instead of traditional ethnographic fieldwork, my approach uses a combination of different methodologies: ethnographic interviews and a close reading of media materials. I would have obtained different kinds of data by being there and taking part in a commemorative service and experiencing it for myself.[8] However, written and recorded materials (edited video as well as reports and photos from different decades) highlight other dimensions of knowledge,[9] bringing to the fore, for example, the agency of individuals who engage with the heritage work around commemorative practices and the social and cultural meanings of this participation.

WWII and the heritage scene in Salla

The municipality of Salla was a central stage of the WWII events of Finnish Lapland. Some of the most decisive battles of the Winter War between Finland and the Soviet Union took place there. When the Winter War broke out in 1939, the aim of the Soviet troops was to cut Finland in half at its narrowest point near Salla.[10] This plan did not succeed, but the area suffered significant territorial losses: the municipality of Salla lost around half of its area – altogether nine villages – to the Soviet Union.[11] In addition to these, the provisions of the subsequent peace treaty also required the construction of a railway line from Kemijärvi to Kelloselkä. The construction of this "Salla line" employed people during the period of Interim Peace (from March 13, 1940 to June 25, 1941), as did the construction of new defense fortifications, garrisons, and bunkers constructed at Joutsijärvi in Kemijärvi and the tank barriers that were built in Salla and Savukoski along the Salpa defense line (*Salpalinja*). The threat of a new war clearly hung in the air.[12]

7 The photo and video materials are courtesy of the Salla Society and the Salla Museum of War and Reconstruction. I would like to specifically thank Jarkko Sipola, Pekka Moilanen, and Eeva-Liisa Vuonnala for their generous help in gathering the research material and enhancing my knowledge of the cultural heritage work in Salla.
8 See for example, Korjonen-Kuusipuro and Kuusisto-Arponen.
9 According to Sarah Pink, the modern project of ethnography is to translate the visual into words. Pink herself has introduced a different approach that explores the relationship between visual and other (including verbal) forms of knowledge making meaningful links between different research materials. See Sarah Pink, *Doing Sensory Ethnography* (Los Angeles, California: Sage 2007).
10 Pasi Tuunainen, "The Finnish Army at War. Operation and Soldiers, 1939–45," in *Finland in War II: History, Memory, Interpretations*, eds. Tiina Kinnunen and Ville Kivimäki (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012).
11 Hanna Snellman, *Sallan suurin kylä – Göteborg. Tutkimus Ruotsin lappilaisista.* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2003).
12 Pertti Airio, Minna Hamara, and Kaisa Hytönen, *Eastern Lapland during the Winter and Continuation Wars. (*Kemijärvi: The Local Federation of East Lapland, 2013).

Image 015: The Salpa defense line is a 1200 km-long row of bunkers on the eastern border of Finland stretching from the Gulf of Finland to Pechanga in northern Finland. The line crosses the Salla municipal center, connecting with other WWII memorials, August 8, 2016. Photo by the author.

At the start of the Continuation War, German troops arrived in Eastern Lapland. From the end of 1940, some 200,000 German troops were based in Finland, mostly in the northern parts. Together, Finland and Germany launched an offensive on the Soviet Union from the direction of Salla in the summer of 1941. The offensive, codenamed "Silver Fox," was meant to proceed to Kandalaksha (Kantalahti) and later to Murmansk, but it was stopped for three years at the Verman River. The following period of trench warfare ended when the German troops, experiencing a counterattack by the Soviets, retreated back to Finland and toward northern Norway in autumn 1944. The German presence in Lapland, under Colonel General (*Generaloberst*) Eduard Dietl, enjoyed relative harmony with the locals until late 1944. In October 1944, however, Finland's treaty with the Soviet Union required it to declare war with Germany. What was at first a "pretend" war escalated into actual conflict, the Lapland War (1944–1945), with devastating consequences for northern Finland. Retreating German troops adopted "scorched earth" tactics, destroying not only their own military settlements but about 90% of the infrastructure and dwellings of Lapland.[13] In the area of Salla, the destruction was complete: all villages except two were fully destroyed. In addition to the dwellings, hay sheds, agricultural machinery, cellars, and even wells were smashed and burned.[14]

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13 Marja Tuominen, "A Good World after all? Recovery after the Lapland War," in *The North Calotte: Perspectives on the histories and cultures of northernmost Europe*, eds. Maria Lahteenmaki and Paivi Maria Pihlaja (Helsinki: Publications of the Department of History 18, University of Helsinki, 2005).

14 Hanna Elo and Sirkka-Liisa Seppälä: *Raivaajien ja rakentajien Salla. Sallan kulttuuriympäristöohjelma.* Suomen ympäristö 31. (Helsinki: Ympäristöministeriö, 2012).

After the war, the people of Salla had to rebuild their lives from scratch. Those who had lived in the ceded parts of the municipality were moved to the western part and settled in villages where they had to clear new farmland from forests and wetlands. The center of the municipality had to be relocated, too.[15] The effects of war on the local community were profound; the postwar years were characterized by a collective trauma, as well as silence and a sense of rupture. On the other hand, the process of resettlement and the reconstruction of Salla also rooted perseverance and a sense of community in the postwar generation.[16] Interestingly, present-day Salla bases its identity strongly on the war and postwar time: local histories emphasize the postwar efforts, calling them "the miracle of Salla" (*Sallan ihme*). The vast voluntary heritage work carried out in the area resulted in the establishment of the Salla Museum for War and Reconstruction (*Sallan sota- ja jälleenrakennusajan museo*), henceforth the SMWR, in 2010.[17]

The SMWR, which is now run by the municipality, employs three museum workers. The idea of having a local museum was already in the air in the 1950s, but it was not until 2003 that local heritage activists, including members of paramilitary and reservist organizations and the Salla Society, joined forces to convince the municipality that the local war heritage has both national and transnational significance, as well as the potential to lure tourists to the area.[18] Together with municipal officials, the activists created three EU-funded projects to document and study the local WWII heritage.[19] The museum was started mainly by amateurs with help received from the professionals of the Provincial Museum of Lapland. Collectively organized action on this scale around war heritage, including the establishment of a new museum, is rather unique in Finland. In the case of Salla, the key group of heritage activists also includes local military history hobbyists, such as members of the Salla search group for fallen Finnish soldiers (*Lapin sotavainajain muiston vaalimisyhdistys ry*),[20] which was established in 2002, as well as members of local reservist associations and guilds, who are experts in different fields of military history. The local hobbyists often act as experts and guides for visitors who wish to familiarize themselves with the war history of the surrounding area. Our research on the WWII history hobbyists of Lapland has indicated that the intersection of expertise in military history

15 Snellman, 39–40; Elo and Seppälä, 48–49.

16 Snellman.

17 Salla-wiki. As the local tourism site describes, the aim of the museum is to offer a realistic picture of the complex history of the Kuolajärvi-Salla region on the Russian border, which has lived through both good and bad times (http://loma.salla.fi/en): "Salla in the middle of nowhere." While the emphasis of the museum exhibitions is clearly on war efforts and events, the prewar history of the municipality is also featured.

18 Interview 2.

19 See, Airio et al.

20 The group is a member of the national Association for Cherishing the Memory of the Dead of the War, which since 1998 has coordinated the search for and repatriation of remains of Finnish soldiers from battlefields currently located in Russia (http://www.sotavainajat.net/in_english).

and local knowledge of war historical sites in the wilderness personally motivates the hobbyists to engage in so-called *serious leisure* activities.[21] In addition to enhancing local tourism, which is of crucial importance to the economy of the area, the other important motivation for safeguarding the local war heritage lies in "honorary debt," a patriotic spirit that is still strong among the generation whose family members fought in WWII and struggled to rebuild the area after the war.[22]

In the case of cultural heritage work and transnational encounters and rituals, patriotic ideologies do not exclude friendly collaboration between local Finnish and local Russian authorities who honor the victims of the war, regardless of their nationality. The current chair of the Salla Society speaks fluent Russian and has good relations with local Russian authorities, as well as heritage hobbyists from the local Russian search group for fallen soldiers. The SMWR has received a significant donation of objects from the Russian search group. The museum has also hosted a joint cross-border exhibition, created together with local Russian museums of the Kandhalaksa area.[23]

Heritage sites and practices of commemoration across the border

The first section of the SMWR's permanent exhibition introduces the destruction of the old Salla church, an eight-cornered log building designed by C. L. Engel and constructed in 1838. There are photos and a scale model of the church right next to the entrance of the exhibition hall. The church was set on fire during the first days of the Winter War in 1939, right after its renovation had been finished. The event was very tragic, as it was the local Finnish soldiers themselves who had to set the fire, because they did not want to leave the church for the Red Army.[24] For a long time, the ruins of the church and the cemeteries around it were abandoned and overgrown with vegetation. Today, the churchyard is a large nature area with trees and wildflowers hiding the barely visible ruins of the church. The area of the hero cemetery is a cleared empty space encircled by a white fence. In 1995, an iron cross was put up inside the fence and, a year later, a stone memorial with the names of fallen soldiers was erected in front of the cemetery.

In the case of Finnish soldiers, it is rare for the hero cemetery to be located on foreign ground. The remains of fallen Finnish soldiers were evacuated from battlefields and, when possible, buried in the soldier's home region with honorary rituals in so-called hero cemeteries. These cemeteries followed the model of the hero cemeteries of the 1918 Civil War in Finland, which were dedicated to the civil guards (*Suojeluskunnat*), also known as

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21 Koskinen-Koivisto and Thomas. For more about the concept of serious leisure, see Robert A. Stebbins, "Volunteering: A Serious Leisure Perspective," in *Nonprofit and Voluntary Action Quarterly, 25 (*1996*): 211–224.

22 Interview 2.

23 Interview 2. For an overview of the goals of the joint museum project, see http://www.salla.fi/museohanke/Museohanke.pdf.

24 Interview 1; Elo and Seppä, 98.

Image 016: Close to the church ruins, the hero cemetery and the memorial erected there commemorate the Salla-based soldiers who fell during the Finnish Civil War, the Winter War, and the Continuation War, 2010. Courtesy of the Salla Society.

the Whites, the winners of the Civil War.[25] In the post-WWII years, the hero cemeteries became important sites for personal mourning, remembrance, and strengthening national identity. Today, the hero cemeteries continue to function as a central locus for rituals that construct the collective and national memory of war.[26] At Old Salla, located apart from the church in Peterinselkä, there is also a cemetery of German soldiers established in 1941 during the Continuation War. There rest the remains of 7,000 Nazi soldiers who fell in the battles near Kandalaksha and in the battles near Kiestinki and Kalevala. In recent years, access to these places in the Russian border zone has become more restricted, especially for tourists of other nationalities than Finnish.

In Finland, the culture of death is centered on cemeteries, which are most often located in the proximity of Lutheran (or Orthodox) churches.[27] It is a common habit to visit the graves of beloved ones and ancestors on special days such as Christmas Eve and Day, All Saints' Day, Father's and Mother's Day, with people lighting candles or bringing flowers to the graves.[28] In addition to this remembrance, official ceremonies by the Finnish army and reservist and paramilitary organizations take place at hero cemeteries during

25 Petri Raivo, "'This is Where They Fought.' Finnish War Landscapes as a National Heritage," in The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration, eds. by Timothy G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson and Michael Roper, London: Routledge, 2000), 150–151; Ilona Kemppainen, *Isänmaan uhrit. Sankarikuolema Suomessa toisen maailmansodan aikana.* (Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2006), 71, 73.

26 Raivo, 153–154; Tiina Kinnunen and Markku Jokisipilä, "Shifting Images of 'Our' Wars: Finnish Memory Culture of World War II," in *Finland in War II: History, Memory, Interpretations*, eds. Tiina Kinnunen and Ville Kivimäki. (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2012), 235.

27 Ilona Pajari, "Kuoleman rituaalit Suomessa," in *Kuoleman Kulttuurit Suomessa,* edited by Outi Hakola, Sari Kivistö and Virpi Mäkinen. (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2014).

28 Marja-Terttu Knapas, "Vanhat hautausmaat – monien muistojen puistot," in Puistot ja puutarhat – suomalainen puutarhaperinne, ed. Anna-Maija Halme, 75–83. (Helsinki: Suomen Kotiseutuliitto, 2005).

national holidays and flag days, such as Independence Day (December 6) and the Flag Day of the Finnish Defense Forces (June 4). There are also several other official commemorative days such as National Veterans' Day (April 27) and the Commemoration Day of Fallen Soldiers (the third Sunday in May). As explained earlier, visits to the Old Salla churchyard and cemeteries were allowed after the collapse of the Soviet Union, with the establishment of new national and regional administrations and the opening of the border station. In the beginning, lots of paperwork and negotiations with both border authorities and local administrations were required.[29] Since 1991, however, visits have been possible with a visa. Since its foundation, the activists of the Salla Society have managed the paperwork with the help of local connections, and they have also begun to regularly organize trips to Old Salla, first clearing out and later maintaining the heritage sites.[30]

The annual commemorative ritual held in the Old Salla churchyard in July includes a Lutheran memorial service, a practice which is typical of the Finnish culture of commemorating the dead and paying respect to fallen soldiers.[31] Typically, the event includes a coffee service and, in some cases, continues as a more informal festivity, similar to the tradition of Finnish village gatherings. In 1992, the governments of Finland and the Russian Federation ratified an agreement regarding visits to the cemeteries and memorials of fallen soldiers, as well as the treatment of their remains. This also made it easier to organize group visits and festivities across the border. Since 1993, a Lutheran liturgical (field) service has been held in the Old Salla churchyard every summer in July. In 1994–1995, the Salla Society rented some land next to the churchyard where they could put up a maintenance building. In 1996, the commemorative service also included an inaugural memorial to the fallen soldiers, which was attended by over 550 participants. The festivity offered many participants the first opportunity to cross the border.

Representatives of the local Russian authority and regional administration are always invited to the commemorative service. As part of the ritual, the organizers and the invited representatives also pay respect to the fallen Soviet soldiers. In the 1996 ceremony, official representatives of both countries included regional (provincial and municipal) and religious authorities (bishops of Oulu and Murmansk), and the service included both Lutheran and Orthodox liturgies. These, as well as the speeches by Russian representatives, were translated into Finnish.[32]

29 See descriptions and photos of the first visits by heritage activists and preparations of the festivities in 1991–1998 at Salla Society's webpage (http://sallaseura.fi/?page_id=279) and the webpage of Kuolajärvi village (http://kuolajarvenkyla.nettisivu.org), updated by the members of the Kuolajärvi Facebook group, consisting of descendants of the annexed Salla .

30 Today, a visit to Old Salla in the border zone requires a tourist or permanent personal visa as well as notification for the border authorities.

31 Raivo; Knapas.

32 The Lutheran ceremony was led by a respected bishop of Lapland, Olavi Rimpiläinen, who also officially dedicated the memorial statue for the fallen Finnish soldiers buried in the hero cemetery.

In addition to the Lutheran service, the commemorative ceremony always features the placement of funeral wreaths and flowers to commemorate the ancestors buried on Russian soil. This part of the ritual is often very important to family members and relatives, who can thereby personally pay their respects to their loved ones. The event can be described as holy, as it ritually materializes the emotional bond to the deceased.[33] For the Russian participants, this moment offers a chance to express empathy and solidarity. At the documented 1996 ritual, one of the most distinguished Russian representatives, Vladimir Ahremejko, the mayor of Kandalaksha, brought flowers and greetings from the people of the nearest Russian town. His words sought to express the collective condolences of his people and to articulate that they understood the difficult time that all the Salla residents had gone through. He also acknowledged that the war had been initiated by the Soviets and that, in his view, it had been unfair to the Finns. In my interpretation, his words reflected the spirit of the reestablishment of Finnish-Russian relations in the 1990s and the reevaluation of history that took place after the collapse of the Soviet Union, which enabled transnational collaboration in organizing memorial practices.[34]

Reestablishing the connection to the ancestors' lands

In the 1990s, most of the participants of the annual memorial service still carried living memories of the Old Salla region from before WWII. As the generation who experienced the war and evacuation has now aged and can no longer take part in pilgrimages or the annual memorial service, their children, most of whom belong to the so-called Baby Boomers born in the end of the 1940s, have become more interested in this family heritage. Most of them have moved away from the Salla region, thereby losing the connection with some of their relatives, former neighbors, and friends. One of the ways of reconnecting with this transnational cultural heritage is to engage with the Salla Society through the internet, visiting the Society's webpage, and leaving messages in the virtual guestbook. The activists of the Salla Society also maintain a separate webpage for those who are interested in the history of Old Salla and family histories, and a closed Facebook group entitled "Kuolajärvi village" (*Kuolajärven kylä*), referring to the former name of the village center.

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33 See also Kristiina Korjonen-Kuusipuro and Anna-Kaisa Kuusisto-Arponen, "Muistelun monet muodot. Kertomus, kehollisuus ja hiljaisuus paikan tietämisen tapoina," *Elore*, 24, 2 (2017): 10. Elsewhere I have analyzed the emotional ties expressed by placing objects with national symbols and colors on gravesites. See Koskinen-Koivisto.

34 This period of reevaluation did not last long. Since the beginning of the 2000s, the commemoration of WWII and the interpretation of history have returned to the highly patriotic tones emphasizing the victorious past of one nation, and a narrative that connects the heroic deeds of the Soviet Union in WWII with the success of Russia today. See Davydova.

The digital age helps people to engage and participate in heritage work in new ways, allowing people to cross geographical distances, and to autonomously create, publish, and distribute content through social media.[35] The wider social and cultural impacts of this participatory heritage work are yet to be discovered. As discussed in many other chapters of this volume, transnational death often brings up questions of belonging and identity. In the case of Old Salla, digital platforms enable people to rebuild and engage with a village community that has disappeared and scattered around the country—and even across national borders, mainly to Sweden.[36] The main activities of Kuolajärvi village's webpage and the Facebook group are channeling genealogical information, sharing photos, and identifying dwellings and locations in the photos. Shared background and knowledge seem to foster a sense of belonging and regional identity in the second generation.

Kristiina Korjonen-Kuusipuro and Anna-Kaisa Kuusisto Arponen have studied the pilgrimages of former Karelian residents to the annexed territory, emphasizing the embodied, material, and emotional dimensions of place-making. They argue that the trips to the lost territories enable visitors to engage with the place through ritualized and embodied practices, such as walking in the landscape and collecting stones and flowers, which represent ways of knowing that transcend word and language.[37] Indeed, connecting with the remaining physical landscape is regularly mentioned in the descriptions of trips to Old Salla. A female visitor who took part in the ritual at the Old Salla cemetery in 2016 described how crucial it was for her to visit the site and how it allowed her to understand the suffering and longing that she had heard in her parents', aunts', and uncles' stories. For her, it made a difference to see and experience the pretty, unconstructed landscapes of Old Salla, which she likened to a natural park.

It seems that engaging virtually does not suffice when it comes to connecting with ancestors and their land. Instead, the personal physical and embodied experience of visiting the territory—"being there" and "seeing and sensing the place with one's own eyes"—is also of crucial importance for the subsequent generations.[38] The virtual guestbook of the Salla Society regularly features questions about the possibility to attend a journey to Old Salla and the next summer's memorial service. The amount of participants in the annual ritual is not as high as it used to be in the 1990s and 2000s, but every year there are new people who want to join the trip.

35 Elisa Giaccardi, "Introduction: Reframing Heritage in a Participatory Culture," in *Heritage and Social Media: Understanding Heritage in a Participatory Culture*, ed. by Elisa Giaccardi (London: Routledge, 2012).

36 In the 1970s, Salla lost more residents than any other Finnish municipality. A significant amount of them immigrated to Sweden. For more information about the immigration, see Snellman 2003.

37 Korjonen-Kuusipuro and Kuusisto-Arponen 2017.

38 For visits to WWII sites as quests and pilgrimage in the Russian context, see Johanna Dahlin, "'Now you have visited the war': The search for fallen soldiers in Russia," in *Heritage of Death: Landscapes of Emotion, Memory and Practice,* eds. Mattias Frihammar and Helaine Silverman. (London and New York: Routledge, 2018).

Present and future of heritage work and transnational collaboration

Cherishing the cultural heritage of WWII and the ceded land is still very much alive—and even flourishing—in Salla. There are several heritage activists and societies working together in various organizations and collaborating cross-institutionally and transnationally. The work of the Salla heritage activists has resulted in a municipal local museum specialized in war heritage and reconstruction, employing two people fulltime and offering a place for official heritage work to be done in the area. The leading heritage organization, the Salla Society, is also active online, offering a chance for the second generation to reconnect with their families' past and to explore the history of Old Salla. The annual commemorative service in the churchyard there has also become an important means of reconnecting for the children of the former residents of Old Salla.

The acts of commemoration across the border require transnational collaboration between Finnish activists and the Russian administration and heritage scene. In the area of Old and New Salla, these groups help each other in the search for the remains of fallen soldiers on foreign ground and take part together in commemorative rituals. This tendency of blurring the questions of victimhood and victory, along with approaching war as a universal human experience rather than simply in terms of national triumph, seems to characterize many contemporary practices of commemoration.[39]

It has been argued that through commemorative rituals, people bond beyond themselves, connecting participants and generations to come with their ancestors.[40] Thus, the rituals have both personal and collective meaning.[41] In this vein, it is interesting to see how the future of heritage work will unfold in Salla: will there be continuity and interest among the third generation to continue engaging in active heritage work and transnational collaboration? Will those descendants also want to cross the border to see their ancestors' land, maintain the gravesites, and hold commemorative ceremonies? Or perhaps the municipality and its official heritage institution, the Salla Museum of War and Reconstruction, will assume some of these responsibilities and continue to specialize in transnational war heritage and collaboration, enticing Russian and German tourists to learn about the manifold layers of war history in the region. Of course, this would require greater financial investment in heritage work, which currently relies on the keen and rather unique volunteer work of the local heritage activists, as well as smooth collaboration between organizations and individuals across the border.

39 Mattias Frihammar and Helaine Silverman, "Heritage of death – Emotion, memory and practice," in *Heritage of Death: Landscapes of Emotion, Memory and Practice*, eds. Mattias Frihammar and Helaine Silverman (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), 7.

40 Barbara Myerhoff, "Rites and Signs of Ripening: The Intertwining of Ritual, Time and Growing Older," in *Age and Anthropological theory*, eds. Keith Jennie and David Kertzer. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984), 306.

41 Dahlin.

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Abstract

Transnational Death

Edited by Samira Saramo, Eerika Koskinen-Koivisto
and Hanna Snellman

With so much of the global population living on the move, away from their homelands, and in diasporic communities, death and mourning practices are inevitably impacted. *Transnational Death* brings together eleven cutting-edge articles from the emerging field of transnational death studies. By highlighting European, Asian, North American, and Middle Eastern perspectives, the collection provides timely and fresh analysis and reflection on people's changing experiences with death in the context of migration over time. First beginning with a thematic assessment of the field of transnational death studies, readers then have the opportunity to delve into case studies that examine experiences with death and mourning at a distance from the viewpoints of Family, Community, and Commemoration. The chapters highlight complicated issues confronting migrants, their families, and communities, including: negotiations of burial preferences and challenges of corpse repatriation; the financial costs of providing end-of-life care, travel at times of death, and arranging culturally appropriate funerals and religious services; as well as the emotional and sociocultural weight of mourning and commemoration from afar. Overall, *Transnational Death* provides new insights on identity and belonging, community reciprocity, transnational communication, and spaces of mourning and commemoration.

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